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Bringing A Bit Of Europe To The States

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NEW MARKET — A touch of Tuscany, some vintage Venice and Latvian linens. Europe seems a bit closer with the opening of a new home-and-garden boutique inspired by culture from across the pond.

Verity blue, owned by husband-and-wife-team Victoria and Mark Cave, caters to brides-to-be and shoppers interested in hand-painted Italian ceramics, European table linens, rustic garden accessories and locally made furniture.

The store, with its colorful ceramics and tabletop linens, exudes the couple's love for the family-oriented fine dining traditions they experienced while traveling in Italy.

Married in Venice, the two found the Shenandoah Valley strikingly similar to the green hills of Tuscany and pleasantly uncrowded compared to their Washington, D.C., home.

The small, tourist-driven town of New Market also possessed the historical qualities that enamored them with Italy.

And with an entrepreneur's eye, Victoria and Mark recognized the area's unfilled bridal registry niche.

"We haven't found anything in the area that really focuses on bridal registry," said Mark, 38.

But Verity blue is a shop providing more than just a place to register for a wedding.

It is a setting, Mark said, for brides to be pampered and their needs tailored to, while selecting wedding china and linens to decorate their homes for years to come.

"That's where we distinguish ourselves," he said.

Combining New And Old

Verity blue returns the 2,000 square-foot building it occupies back to its roots. The space once housed a ceramic shop at the turn of the century.

The Caves have filled the shop with hand-painted Deruta ceramics, made in Deruta, Italy, and colorful Latvian table linens made exclusively for Verity blue. Locally made furniture and concrete garden accessories are also for sale.

The birth of the Cave's son, Sebastian, 2½ years ago, led the couple to re-evaluate the concept of the family meal. With bright ceramics, a variety of china patterns and colorful table linens, the Caves hope to make every meal a fair-

ly occasion.

“Our ultimate goal is to offer beautiful products that help people want to linger at the table,” Victoria, 31, said. “To share that beauty and tradition with your children and family is truly an art — the art of the table.”

Although Verity blue features several Old-World style objects, 260 store products are available for sale online. Mark, who has a background in software sales, worked with a friend to create Verity blue’s Web Site. Placing the store in cyberspace opens a market to consumers who might not be able to physically visit the New Market store.

“We wanted to extend our audience,” Mark said. He believes a majority of online sales will come from friends purchasing gifts from the Web site’s bridal registry and tourists who cannot revisit the store once they return home.

The Caves believe a touch of class will keep shoppers, especially brides, returning to Verity blue. Each bride registering at the shop will receive a complimentary tea with the groom and two other guests and personalized service.

The couple also plans to hold lectures on art, music and literature on the second floor of the shop. and Sunday 1 to 6 p.m. The first of these “Crumpet Series” will be held on June 14 at 10:30 a.m.

Verity blue, located at 9478 S. Congress St., is open Daily 10-6PM. Closed on Wednesday. Contact Kate Lewis at 574-6218 or klevvis@dnronline.com
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