

New retailer joins Triangle Shops

By Tammy Hayes

Business at Triangle Factory Shops, a manufacturers' outlet in Morrisville, is booming.

With sales per square foot doubled since 1994 and gross sales tripled in the same amount of time, it is no wonder that OFF 5TH - Saks Fifth Avenue Outlet has joined the wave of success by leasing a space at Triangle Factory Shops.

OFF 5TH revealed its decision to place an outlet store near the Bugle Boy Factory Store and The Finish Line in the mall May 15, during an unveiling ceremony.

"We looked at the demographics of the growth and the influx of all the people that are coming to the region and to this area specifically," said Ronald Covin, senior vice president and general merchandise

manager of the New York-based firm.

"We are bringing something that isn't here, something that's unique," Covin said. "And we're offering people what we feel is exceptional value—names that they wouldn't normally find in the environment. That's what we do."

OFF 5TH features American and European designers as well as Saks Fifth Avenue private labels and branded apparel for men and women.

"We don't know that there are too many stores similar to [OFF 5TH] because of the names we carry," Covin said. "Not that you won't find a suit and not that you won't find a pair of pants, but you won't find them from the manufacturers that we have in the store."

"And I don't think you're going to see them at the savings we offer," he said.

OFF 5TH's discounts range from 40 to 70 percent off all merchandise.

The store sells women's ready-to-wear, career and casual sportswear, dresses, coats, footwear and accessories. Men's suits, sports coats, sportswear, footwear, furnishings, accessories and outerwear are also sold at OFF 5TH.

Although Covin would not pick a single most popular category of apparel with customers, he said that the men's clothing department was very successful.

"We have what I think is the finest assortment of men's clothing that you would find under one roof," he said.

"SAKS carries such a name in the industry, it's just phenomenal that we got them," said Alan Kofoed, Prime Retail's vice president of development. "It's wonderful, not only for Prime Retail...but for the entire area."

"We're tremendously excited," Gerry Boyle, general manager at Triangle Factory Shops, said about OFF 5TH joining the mall. "This has been the shot in the arm we've been looking for."

"This will probably boost this property, as far as sales, as much as IBM and Levi did when they came in here 10 years ago," he said.

The mall Triangle Factory Shops now occupies was built in 1982 and went through a number of owners before Prime Retail bought the property in February, 1991. Prime Retail closed the mall until October while doubling the mall's size and changing its landscape and interior design.

The outlet space in Triangle Factory Shops is 239,000 square feet. Saks will use approximately 20,000 square feet.

Boyle said that with OFF 5TH joining the 52 outlet stores in the mall, the move will maintain and guarantee the shops' position in the market.

"That's one thing we're very serious about—continuing to attract people."

OFF 5TH is scheduled to open in late July.

"The response has been very favorable everywhere we go," Covin said. "I'd be surprised if it isn't here."

LakeRidge Townhomes selling briskly

The appearance from the outside is traditional, but once inside, a transitional look evolves with 18-foot-high ceilings, first-floor master bedrooms with paddle fans and champagne baths, curved stairways, and open loft areas. Construction is progressing and the first families are preparing to move into the first phase of LakeRidge Townhomes, a community of luxury town houses located at the edge of a 23-acre lake at the northern tip of Preston Village off Davis Drive.

The town houses are located on a western portion of Morrisville Parkway which has not yet been cut through to Davis Drive. The project owners—Sunstar Homes based in Cary—say the new section of the parkway will eventually be connected to Davis Drive to meet the existing parkway.

The development will consist of 118 town houses, built in clusters of three to five units, which will be realized in three phases. Construction is underway in Phase I, with the land being graded and prepared for Phase II. Depending on the weather and driven by marketing conditions, the final Phase II should be completed by the latter part of next year, according to Marketing Director Ray Osborne.

Four styles of town houses are being offered, each with a basic plan or with a number of upgrades. The largest is the Norman, with 2,198 square feet, followed by The Jordan at 2,082 square feet, The Tillery with 1,721 and The Gaston with 1,490. The first three offer two-level living accommodations, while the Tillery is all on one floor. Prices range from the \$160,000s to the high \$190,000s, with upgrades bringing top units into the low \$200,000 range.

Osborne explained the project gained immediate market acceptance, with a strong response even before the first model was opened last month. "People just like good design," he added.

Each unit has a 2-car garage, 150-square-foot concrete patio, gas-log fireplaces, ceiling fans, landscaping, marble vanity tops, garden



LUXURIOUS LIVING—Models of LakeRidge town houses in Preston Village are open for viewing. Three of the four floor plans available offer two-story accommodations.

tubs, separate showers, compactor and oak kitchen cabinets. Thirty-eight units had been sold as of mid-May.

Sunstar Homes was formed in

1987 and was based in Morrisville until last November when it moved to new corporate offices in Commonwealth Court off Kildaire Farms Road near Maynard Road.



NEW TO MORRISVILLE—Ronald Covin of OFF 5TH announces the firm's plans to open a store in Morrisville's Triangle Factory Shops. Behind him on stage are (from left to right) Alan Kofoed of OFF 5TH, Morrisville Mayor Margaret Broadwell and Gerry Boyle, general manager of Triangle Factory Shops.

Town eyeing best uses for Rover

A 1988 Range Rover seized in a drug raid by Morrisville Police has been turned over to the local department by a Wake County Superior Court Judge.

Police Chief Bruce Newnam said Assistant District Attorney Josh Tharrington made the request to have the vehicle forfeited by the owner and possession given to Morrisville Police.

The problem now, however, is what the department will do with it.

The vehicle has been in storage for the past 18 months, ever since it was confiscated Jan. 16, 1995 while stopped on Airport Boulevard when arrests were made. According to mechanic Mack Baker, who has been storing the vehicle at his garage on Church Street since it was seized, the bill to date for storage and wrecker service is \$946. Commissioners on May 13 approved paying the fee through the town's contingency fund.

Two avenues of action are open. The first is to repair the vehicle and have it used by police in a phase of their official activity, perhaps with drug or canine work. The second is to sell it to someone at public auction, pay Baker's bill, then distribute the remaining monies to the Wake County School Fund, as directed by the court order.

The automobile has been valued at \$7,500 in its current condition and there are no lien holders. Whenever it is determined the vehicle is to be sold, now or after use by the police department, profits from such a sale would go to the Wake County School Fund.

Newnam said the auto needs some cosmetic work, but the cost of repair has yet to be determined. It was pointed out that after sitting for 18 months, some problems may exist that didn't when it was first taken. "It was driveable when we got it," he said.

Mayor Pro Tem Billy Sauls said he felt the auto should be taken out of storage to avoid more costs, and that diagnostic work should be made to find out what it will cost to get it back in shape.

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