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A photograph of two men standing in a professional kitchen. The man on the left is older, with grey hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and khaki pants. The man on the right is younger, with a beard, wearing a light blue checkered button-down shirt and dark grey pants. They are both smiling. The kitchen features stainless steel appliances, including a Wolf oven and a Le Creuset red pot on the stove. The background shows a commercial kitchen environment with metal shelving and other equipment.

For more than 100 years and through four generations, **Kieffer's Appliances** in Lansdale has been synonymous with unwavering quality, service, and value. page 52



# The Only Name in Home Appliances

**For more than 100 years and through four generations, Kieffer's Appliances in Lansdale has been synonymous with unwavering quality, service, and value.**

by **PHIL GIANFICARO**  
photography by  
**JODY ROBINSON**

Above: John and Jace Kieffer represent the third and fourth generations of the Kieffer family to lead the business, which dates back to 1917.



**J**ace Kieffer earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing from Boston University in 2006. Although he gained a great deal from his college education, perhaps the most important lessons he learned about business were imparted to him not from within the walls of academia, but from within the walls of his childhood home.

"What I've learned most in business came from my dad—that the customer is always right, do everything you can to serve the customer, and there's a solution to every problem," says Jace, who leads the daily operation of Kieffer's Appliances, a fourth-generation retail and wholesale appliance store company in

Lansdale. "As we work side by side now for 14 years, I learn more and more from him. We make decisions jointly, but, most importantly, we focus on what's best for the business and our customers."

Now in its 104th year of business, Kieffer's Appliances has served the Delaware Valley through a 18,000-square-foot Lansdale showroom opened in 1963. Whether a customer is in the market for a kitchen stove, microwave, dishwasher, wall oven, coffee system, refrigerator, cooking grill, or clothes washer or dryer, they can shop with confidence at Kieffer's Appliances, knowing that only a family-owned business that treats customers as family can remain in business for more than a century.



Customers can peruse nearly 60 brands of appliances at Kieffer's 18,000-square-foot showroom in Lansdale.

Kieffer's offers nearly 60 brands of appliances including Bosch, Electrolux, Frigidaire, GE, Hotpoint, JennAir, KitchenAid, Maytag, Samsung, Sharp, Viking, Weber, and Whirlpool. In other words, customers will find everything from "A" (Amana) to "Z" (Zephyr).

"I've met a lot of customers who bought appliances from back when my grandfather was around," says Jace, Kieffer's vice president. "We've even had customers bring in old invoices from appliances they bought, and we put them on a wall in the showroom. One of them is from 1950."

Why do customers keep coming back? Jace believes part of the answer lies in the store's well-established track record, but he sees something more. He thinks it has more to do with the company's continuing efforts to maintain relationships with customers—not only by offering top-quality appliances at great prices, but also by offering "service after the sale."

"Not many companies have three generations connected to the company, much less four, like ours," he adds. "But it's more than that. With us, if a customer has a problem and something goes wrong—and in business that's not if, but when—they know they can make a phone call and get one of us to address it. At other stores, they might reach someone at a call center across the country. With us, we will answer that phone call. That's a value to the customer."

Customers shop at ease at Kieffer's, where a stroll through the spacious and inviting showroom is akin to walking through one's own kitchen or laundry room. Customers can peruse rows of appliances and products displayed in real-life vignettes. Friendly and attentive salespeople can direct customers to the precise appliance they may be interested in, and also answer any question they may



have about a particular appliance or brand.

"Our salespeople are not incentivized to make a certain quota week to week," Jace adds. "Many of our customers who may be luxury customers know what they want but don't want to be pushed. When you're ready to buy, we're here."

Clearly, the Kieffer mantra has endured into a fourth generation: Always serve the customer.

### Looking Back, Looking Forward

Kieffer's business roots date to 1917, a year before the end of World War I. John E. Kieffer Sr. founded a tire store, The Girard Rubber Co., in Philadelphia. To make ends meet, he delivered blocks of ice for cooling residential iceboxes, one of which, from 1930, is displayed in the Kieffer's showroom today. When the electric refrigerator was introduced in 1922, making the ice business risky, he capitalized on the trend by selling refrigerators, radios,

and vacuum cleaners from his showroom.

Those appliances were the predecessors of what was to become the Kieffer's concept—offer the newest, most advanced products at the best prices. This concept holds true today, more than 100 years later. To what does Kieffer's President John Kieffer, Jace's father, attribute that longevity?

"A little bit of luck and a lot of determination," he says. "I don't think anybody thought about being in business 100 years back then. But when I took over the business, and we only had 30 years to go, that's when 100 years came into focus, that maybe we can do this. And when Jace came into the business, then it was definitely doable."

When Jace was in college, he had no intention of returning to work in the family business. But when he graduated in 2006,

America was a few years away from entering the worst economic crash since the Great Depression. He decided to do some marketing work for his dad's company, wait out the bad economy, and then set out on his own.

"After about a year working for me, I asked Jace if he'd found a job he wanted to do," John recalls. "He told me, 'Yeah, yours.' When that lightbulb went off, he not only made this career but has put in the work to make it happen. He's here at six in the morning and leaves at five at night. He stumbled into the business and has continued to make it successful."

Jace Kieffer represents the fourth generation to work in the family business. Photographs of his children adorn the wall of the revered appliance store. Might they represent a fifth generation?

"That's their kids' decision," John says. "If they're crazy enough to want to do it, it's theirs." ■

**KIEFFER'S APPLIANCES**  
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