



Mastroieni Furniture

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made TO LAST

Mastroieni Furniture adapts to a retail climate disrupted by unprecedented supply-chain issues and sky-high demand.

by Bill Donahue | photography by Jody Robinson

Near-empty store shelves. Rising fuel and food prices. Stores and restaurants trimming hours of operation because they cannot find enough reliable labor. The signs of economic distress are tough to ignore.

The retail sector in particular has seen more than its share of challenges, according to Nancy Mastroieni, one of the design-and-décor specialists behind Montgomeryville-

or trucking issues, and now there's a backlog for a whole different set of reasons. This has been an ongoing issue, and it's totally out of retailers' control."

After the federal government mandated a shutdown of nonessential businesses due to the pandemic, Mastroieni Furniture re-opened its doors in June 2020. Mastroieni says she started to see the difficulties beginning to take shape by October of the same year. While

every product category in Mastroieni Furniture's inventory—so high, in fact, that if customers cancel their orders out of frustration over long wait times, Mastroieni Furniture will ship the order to the store anyway in order to have more stock on hand.

Just as Mastroieni Furniture has adapted to the current climate, customers have adjusted, too. It's common for customers to come in for a sofa, but once they realize the delivery date for a chosen model is farther out than they had hoped, they instead choose to purchase a new bedroom set. Some customers even ask to purchase floor models, but "we would have an empty store if we did that," Mastroieni says.

When people come to Mastroieni Furniture, they will be greeted by staff members who have decades of industry experience and a genuine passion for helping customers make decisions. The store offers services such as complimentary design and a white-glove delivery experience, though Mastroieni admits the current climate has impacted some aspects of the service side.

"If there are older products that are under warranty, right now you can't get the parts from the manufacturers," she says. "In their minds, service is not as imperative as getting the goods out the door. It can be frustrating for the people who are farther down the line."

Mastroieni Furniture, which traces its roots to a storefront in North Philadelphia, has adapted to a lot of changes in its nearly 100 years in business. A trend toward comfort has lessened demand for formal living and dining spaces—transitional over traditional. Likewise, for better or for worse, some customers now opt for more "disposable" furniture, Mastroieni says, meaning they buy furniture they will look to replace within three to five years

rather than choose more durable options built to last for generations.

Regardless of the need or style, Mastroieni Furniture has options to suit every customer's unique tastes. While the current landscape has few precedents, Mastroieni expects business to return to normal soon enough—likely sometime in 2022.

"It's been a very interesting year," she says. "Despite all the challenges, our business has not slowed down. Things will return to normal sooner than later. In the meantime, we're all going to have to be patient and adapt as best we can." ■



based Mastroieni Furniture. The family-owned and operated retailer has been a leading furnisher of homes throughout the Delaware Valley since 1926, with an emphasis on American-made goods.

"As retailers are concerned, we're doing the best we can," she says. "Please be patient—that's what we're reinforcing to our customers. Initially, we might have told someone six to seven months from the time they order furniture to the time it's delivered to their home, but seven months has become nine or 10 months for anything American made. First it was because of foam shortages

some of the challenges have been tied to weak links in the supply chain, Mastroieni traces most of the current delays to high demand.

"Yes, it's supply chain, but it's also volume," Mastroieni says. "It's about the amount of purchases that have been taking place. Most factories have increased their numbers by almost 150 percent, and they simply cannot handle the business. It's not even that they don't have the workers to do the job; the system is not built to accommodate such a high amount of volume. Things will improve once manufacturers are able to catch up."

Demand remains sky high for nearly