

MITCHELLS/ RICHARDS/MARSHS

THE TRIPLE CROWN

What can you say about a family that does it all? They own and operate what are arguably the most well run specialty stores in the country. There are two fathers and seven sons in the business and Andrew Mitchell, VP Marketing, insists, "We don't have a lot of rivalry. Magically we really do get along." That, in itself is an amazing achievement. They hug everyone from their customers to their vendors to their employees and everyone seems to like it.

"We don't have a lot of sibling rivalry. Magically we really do get along."

—Andrew Mitchell

So, it's no surprise that the Marsh family would want to be a part of this hug fest. Last year, the Huntington, Long Island store agreed to be acquired by the Mitchells, extending the retailers' reach to both sides of the Long Island Sound.

But the Mitchells/Richards/Marshs reputation is built on more than just family. They have an

incredibly loyal staff, all of whom are part of the corporate culture.

Mitchells is a sophisticated marketing machine. They do highly targeted mailings and trunk shows just about every week of the season, and their customer tracking software is state of the art. Nevertheless, it's the personal relationships with some of America's wealthiest, most successful shoppers that keeps customers coming back again and again. Whether it's personal notes from Jack, personal touches from the sales associate, involvement in community groups and charities or just a place to bring the family and have the kids relax in front of the TV on a Saturday, Mitchells/Richards and now Marshs are as much a part of their communities as the PTA or the Little League.

And of course, there's the clothing. The store is filled with top designer merchandise from Zegna, Armani, Hermes, Canali, Hickey Freeman and Oxxford, among others, but also the more relaxed style of Vineyard Vines (with whom they are about to open a free-standing store in Greenwich), Bill's Khaki's, Per Lui Per Lei, and Lacoste, plus Diesel, Agave and other casual lines for men. Their women's business continues to expand, and fine jewelry is an increasingly important part of the mix.

What's next for Mitchells? Some say they really want to open in New York City. However, one thing is certain. Whatever they do, it will be with the same combination of business acumen and family values that have made them one of our industry's great success stories.

■ BY JOHN JONES

FAST FACTS

ESTABLISHED: Mitchell's: 1958,

Richards: 1947, Marsh's: 1926

SIZE: 35,000 sq. ft. (Mitchell's)

27,000 sq. ft. (Richard's)

15,000 sq. ft. (Marsh's)

ESTIMATED SALES: \$79 million

KEY VENDORS: Armani, Canali,

Dolce & Gabbana, Hickey

Freeman, Zegna, Loro Piana,

Brunello Cucinelli, Kition, Brioni,

Prada, Zanella, Polo Ralph

Lauren, Vineyard Vines

TARGET CUSTOMER: 40-50 yr.

old, classic to fashion

MENSWEAR BREAKDOWN:

53% clothing, 23% sportswear,

18% furnishings, 6% shoes

MEN'S VS. WOMEN'S: 45/55

MOST EXCITING EVENT: Aretha

Franklin, "the Queen of Soul"

appearing at the grand opening

of the new Richards' store, and

James Brown, "the Godfather

of Soul," at the Mitchell's

re-opening.

FAMOUS FOR: Dressing the

power elite of NYC finance and

media communities. Annual golf

outing and dinner at The

Connecticut Country Club

to thank both vendors and

customers.

KEY CHARITIES: Near and Far,

The Inner City Foundation

STORE PHILOSOPHY: "Hug Your

Customer," of course.

