

Austin-tatious Blinds and Shutters

Keeping Austin's Fabulous Vistas in View

THEY SPECIALIZE IN WINDOW COVERINGS BUT THEIR GOAL, SURPRISINGLY, IS NOT TO COVER WINDOWS. "WE'VE GOT VIEWS HERE IN AUSTIN THAT ARE JUST PHENOMENAL," SAYS TRACEY HOPKINS, PRESIDENT OF AUSTIN-TATIOUS BLINDS AND SHUTTERS. "THE LAST THING WE WANT TO DO IS COVER UP THOSE VIEWS. WE WANT TO ACCENTUATE THE VIEWS AND ALLOW THE OUTSIDE TO COME INSIDE, SO PEOPLE CAN ENJOY THEM FROM THEIR HOMES."

The company's philosophy is that windows are people's access to the outside world. And no one wants that access cut off. Austin-tatious also understands there are other factors to consider as well. And it's found that listening to customers is the best way to determine what additional factors are important.

How is each room being used? Are there neighbors close enough to make privacy a prime consideration? Are there delicate furnishings in the room that might be damaged by direct sunlight? "We look at each window, each situation and try to come up with the best possible solutions for each and every criterion," Hopkins says.

Hopkins believes it's the consideration of these factors that distinguishes Austin-tatious from others in the very competitive field of window coverings. "It would be very easy to tell customers this is what your neighbors did. So this is what you should do." But we've made it our policy to do the listening instead of the talking." Often-times, the end result is a product the homeowner didn't even know existed. "It becomes an interesting and exciting challenge for us every day," says Hopkins.

Sisters Tracey and Stephanie Hopkins make up two-thirds of the Austin-tatious ownership. The two of them, along with co-owner Norma Catano, make Austin-tatious surprisingly unique in the window covering field. "We're one of the only female-run and owned window-covering businesses in Austin," says Hopkins. "I think that plays a part in our success because the vast majority of our customers are women. They enjoy and appreciate getting another woman's take on their homes and on their decorating ideas."

"Our primary goal is to give each client the best possible solution with the best possible service," says Catano, one of the founding partners.

That philosophy has paid off. Austin-tatious has quickly risen to the top of the ranks in the competitive Austin market. Its customer referral rate is phenomenal, and business is booming with 700 percent growth over the last four years. In order to maintain their level of service and growth Catano, and Hopkins added a third partner last year. Stephanie Hopkins' background in retail management and operations perfectly completed the management trifecta at Austin-tatious.

"It's been both surprising and exciting to have this kind of success in a market that's so competitive," says Tracey Hopkins. "But you won't find us sitting around the office, patting ourselves on the back. We're still out there every day, making sure we're satisfying our customers to the best of our ability."



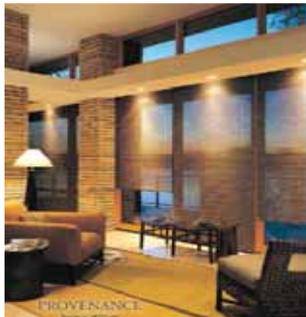
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