

WHERE THE HEART IS

WE SENT OUT OUR EDITORS TO UNLOCK THE FORMULA OF SUCCESS BEHIND SOME LONGSTANDING AND LONG-LOVED INDIVIDUAL RETAILERS IN THEIR HOMETOWNS.



HUGE WAREHOUSE INSIDE THE COURTYARD OF DENIM AND WORKWEAR MECCA MARTIN LUCIANO E FIGLI

MARTIN LUCIANO E FIGLI, MILAN

“Where have all the old Italian ‘jeanseria’ stores gone? My American Market, Di Segni, Fiorucci, Primavera... All these well-known Milanese jeans stores have closed. It’s a pity we are the only ones left,” say Paolo and Graziana Martin, sons of Luciano, founder of the Martin Luciano E Figli dal 1938-Tutto per Operai. The store is based in Milan’s old Navigli area and sells jeanswear, workwear and functional and secondhand military apparel. It opened in 1947 after Luciano started his company in 1938 as a wholesale dealer, taking care of many different activities from buying imported goods to producing sacks before he started dealing with secondhand military apparel, workwear and, of course, jeanswear. “We were the first ones to bring jeans to Milan,” explain the brothers whose store is made up of an old-style “jeanseria” at street level and a huge warehouse inside the inner courtyard. Once the

site of their factory, it now sells vintage US and military apparel, outer jackets, old and new boots and curiosities.

Visiting it is like rediscovering long forgotten memories. Back in the day entering a “jeanseria” and buying a pair of jeans was like dreaming to visit a piece of America. Luckily not much has changed here. Its jeanswear area still has neat red shelves carrying carefully folded jeans pairs divided by size, fit, color and other categories. Walls are covered with light brown wood and display memorabilia includes an old Lee iron bell, antique Wrangler denim flags, cowboy hats and classic style mannequins—all in a neat and perfect environment. This is one of the reasons that the store has been recognized as one of the few historical ones left in the city.

“We always did everything with great passion and curiosity,” the brothers explain. “Our clients have become our friends and some of them have come

here for the last 30 to 35 years. When they enter here they spend time chatting and then buy their jeans.” They add: “We only sell authentic products. Everything we sell here has a true history, differently from other brands that, even if made in China, boast a past and an identity. Our customers simply look for authenticity and this is their meeting point.” Martin Luciano’s broad clientele base includes denim aficionados both young and grown-up, hunters, workers and collectors. At the store they find brands such as Lee, Wrangler, Dickies, Schott USA, Alpha Industries USA, Propper USA, Defcon 5, boots by Magnum, Crispi and Matterhorn, gloves by Mechanix, watches by Mec, glasses by Randolph and American Optical, Fruit of the Loom and Russell Athletic. All the stock fuels that desire to start another journey to the US or to a lost world when products and relationships cared about quality and being genuine. Shopping there is truly a dream come true. [Text: Maria Cristina Pavarini]