A Fairline Name in Shopping

Posted on

Vilma Wimaladasa



There is a wide range of the best names in cosmetics and won1en’s wear at Fairline.

Fairline Emporium, the super deluxe store marketing a variety of merchandise is also the largest exporter of ready-.made garments. It is so similar to the fashionable departmental store in Europe and is already way ahead with its new and exciting displays of shoes, handbags, bed sheets and bed spreads, and children’s toys for the Christmas season. Special counters display these seasonal and special items. 111e entrepreneur Fairline Group Companies Chairman, N. M. Buhardeen who started his business with a mere Rs. 500 with the blessings of his father, is now rated as one of the biggest local exporters of ready-made quality garments to the United States of America, Canada and several European countries. He sells 90% of exports to the USA and the other 10% to European countries. There are three Fairline retail outlets, one at Galle Road, Kollupitiya in Colombo, the other in Kandy and the third recently opened at New Bazaar Street, Nuwara Eliya, which is a triple level shopping arcade for retail and wholesale buyers.

Last year export earnings of the Fairline group totalled Rs. 2,200 million. Five garment factories with over 2000 modem production line machines employ a workforce of more man 7000 young people. Most of the Fairline employees have been trained by expatriates in different skills. Fairline boasts that its prices are fair prices and it’s true. What is even more interesting is that unlike some other shops, Fairline sells firsts, not seconds. All products meet the highest standards of Fairline Emporium and customers are assured of that very satisfactory opportunity of having their money back if items fall short of stipulated standards. It’s the Fairline motto, “We want you and the world to have only the best. ” Singaporean tailors meet exacting demands with their skill in using the best fabrics which have been printed and finished all the way by equally skilled personnel. So the finished products which range from ready-to-wear garments from cotton knit and children’s play suits to European woolies in a variety of ranges are right up the street of the buyer who is looking for quality and durability. Japan, India and China supply the high quality cottons for slacks, shorts, blouses dress wear and light-weight jackets. The factory in Kandy which employs 3000 local residents and is the first built in a rural area, produces exclusive looking cotton knits and men’s, women’s and children’s sports wear, ‘T-shirts, track suits, casual wear and toddlers play clothes. To let the trend setting women into a little secret, 1988 styles are already available on the dress hangers, yes, even before they reach the displays in the west. Prices are unbelievably reasonable.

Fairline shows that it is no longer necessary to spend all that money on an air passage to shopping stops such as Bangkok or Singapore. Everything is available right here at the Fairline Emporium. The shoes, handbags, cosmetics, toiletries and jewellery to match all imported from leading manufacturers have a very affordable price range. From small beginnings, Fairline has grown to be an enterprise of tremendous success. Its success for the most part due to the enterprise of its Chairman N. M. Buhardeen who began as an assistant in a shop but soon learnt the market potentials and ventured into his own garment manufacturing business at a time when there were rigid curbs on all imported items, and especially textiles and made-up garments. He began with a few pedal machines and today has a business with offices in Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea, a textile Factory in Sri I.anka at Katubedde with American collaboration and the ” Fanshow Inn, NewYork. But Fairline is not involved only in making its enterprise grow from strength to strength. It is concerned with the disadvantaged sections of Sri I.ankan society. The company maintains an orphanage accommodating 25 children and donates generously to charity as well as to religious and educational causes. The Fairline Group took a

bold and innovative step when it sponsored the first contest for Mrs. Sri I.anka to compete for Mrs. World, which brought fame to the island when Sri I.ankan beauty and housewife Rosy Senanayake won the world title. It has also sponsored the Miss Sri I.anka contests for the Miss Universe title.

Vogue shopping can be a real pleasure at any of the three Fairline outlets in Sri I.anka. The labels it carries are more of prominent fashion houses of the West and the secrets very few are aware of is how much of quality western off-the-peg clothes are made in Sri I.anka. It is not unusual therefore to see many a tourist visiting Colombo or Kandy and of late cool Nuwara Eliya making a wide range of purchases of the latest seasonal wear from Fair line. This is true of tourists both from the East and West. The Fashion conscious tourists too think the same. They take away suit cases full of ” buys ” as they shop at leisure at Fairline Emporium and consider prices not merely competitive but cheap by their standards back home. Fairline Emporium is an approved Tourist shop and is authorised by the Ceylon Tourist Board to transact business in foreign currency. The retail stores at Star Tower, Galle Road Colombo 3 (near Kollupitiya junction) is open from 9.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. every day except on Full Moon Poya days. Parking space right by the Emporium helps for easier shopping.



Several well known makes of footwear on sale at Fairline.