



## A Lucky Thirteen Years in Rye

By Robin Jovanovich

Paul and Ruth Riemer, the husband-and-wife kitchen and fine cabinetry designers, moved their business to Rye thirteen years ago. For the first ten, their showroom was on Purchase Street. "It was a great location, right in the middle of downtown, but Ruth and I decided we wanted a less commercial, more relaxed setting," said Paul.

They found the ideal space — with parking — a few blocks away, at 55 Locust Avenue. After months of renovation and customizing the space for their needs, they moved in mid-March 2007. The next day, Rye suffered the first of two major floods.

"Ruth got to work earlier than I did that morning and called to tell me not to come to work," Paul recalled. "I arrived anyway to find that our first-floor offices were underwater. I walked towards Purchase Street to see how the rest of the block was doing and I ran into an elderly man on the street near the Y. He said, 'I've lived in Rye for 60 years and I've never seen anything this bad.'"

Things went from bad to worse for the Riemers and many other business and homeowners April 15, when the next flood hit.

"But we survived," said Ruth, "and we're making it through this recession, which is no small challenge." Paul added, "Years ago there were recessions, but this one is different because the entire housing market has been hit."

After 33 years of doing what they love best, Ruth and Paul are quick to note that they're here for the long term.

"Our way of doing business hasn't really changed," said Paul. "We focus on the individual — that's our strength — and if they can't have melamine cabinet interiors 'because their rabbi, whom they're close to, will look and be upset if they're not solid wood', then we're going to make sure they're wood!"

Over 90 percent of their business is by referral. "A new customer will walk in and show me a picture on her cell phone of her friend's kitchen, 'which she absolutely loves,' but at the end of the job her kitchen doesn't look anything like her friend's and she's really happy with the result."

In this economy, Ruth said customers are ready to compromise, but not yet on appliances. "Appearances are

drawers work. "A few years from now there won't be anything but these soft-close drawers. They're so much better than the old-style self-close ones and they're 'husband-proof!'"

Even though Ruth and Paul are a team, she has her jobs and he has his. "On the feminine side, she's phenomenal," Paul said, "but she doesn't play the man's man role well." Ruth said, "That's OK for both of us. Our job au-



Paul Riemer demonstrates the operational ease of the "soft-close" drawer, which he says is "husband-proof".

still important, and they want the Viking range, the Wolf warming drawer. Unlike most things, appliances haven't really dropped in price yet, so we know that we have to find savings for clients elsewhere in their projects."

The Riemers are lucky to have had long business relationships with two fine cabinetmaking factories, Craft-Maid and Crystal, both of which "are working with us through this recession. They understand that we're all in this together. And together, we find savings for customers and the cabinet drawers all open and close smoothly."

On the subject of drawers, Paul is excited to show how well their custom-

tonomy has kept us together."

What the Riemers say they do best is listen — to the client, to the budget. "Our job is to satisfy a wish list within a price structure."

"At this point in our careers, we just want to work with nice clients and want our clients to do the same, which is why we always recommend they work with Al Esposito at Royal Green Appliances in White Plains, Millennium Stone in Port Chester and Greenwich Tile."

Paul and Ruth Riemer are currently offering all kinds of incentives for customers, along with their standard excellence in approach and design. By any measurement, they're the tops.