



LEHIGH
VALLEY

BUSINESS

MILESTONES

AN **ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION** OF GREATER LEHIGH VALLEY COMPANIES

AN ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO LEHIGH VALLEY BUSINESS ★ 2014





90 Mort Drive
Easton, PA 18040
610-559-8800
www.famous-smoke.com

PICTURED: LEFT: THE FAMOUS SMOKE SHOP IN MIDTOWN MANHATTAN. RIGHT: SCENES FROM FAMOUS SMOKE SHOP'S LEHIGH VALLEY FACILITIES.

FAMOUS SMOKE SHOP

CIGAR BUSINESS EVOLVES FROM MANHATTAN STOREFRONT TO LEHIGH VALLEY WAREHOUSE

IN 1939, ROSE ZARETSKY OPENED THE DOORS TO A 350-SQUARE-FOOT LUNCHEONETTE IN MIDTOWN MANHATTAN. Three employees stocked cigarette cartons and lottery tickets, while Rose's young son, Arthur, stood outside greeting patrons as they picked up the Wall Street Journal. As the doors closed every evening, Rose dreamed of providing a fulfilling life for her family; what she never could have expected was that 75 years later, the young boy who stood outside the luncheonette would own Famous Smoke Shop, one of the largest retailers of premium cigars in the United States.

By the 1970s, New York City's Garment District was bustling, with a cigar shop on every corner. But changes were soon to come. Cigarette smokers were replacing premium cigar smokers. Arthur Zaretsky knew that he wouldn't be able to support rent at \$30 a square foot by selling cigars over the counter. He began gathering information from customers, and by the late 1980s had established a mail order business to supplement the retail store.

By the early 1990s, New York's cigar tax of 20 percent was prompting Arthur to think of moving out. But it was

the debut of Cigar Aficionado magazine in 1992 that led him to act. The magazine's birth ushered in a cigar boom. To take advantage of the opportunity and expand his business, Arthur knew he would have to invest in technology and a new location.

Moving Famous Smoke Shop represented a huge gamble, professionally and personally. Arthur had spent his life in Manhattan. But his research suggested a move to Florida made financial sense, as most cigars coming into the U.S. were being shipped into Miami. Employees balked, however, and Arthur decided instead to move the store to Pennsylvania, eventually finding a home in the Lehigh Valley.

Fast forward to 2014, as Famous Smoke Shop celebrates its 75th anniversary. Today, Arthur Zaretsky stands in his 35,000-square-foot humidors, marveling at the more than 3 million cigars stacked high on the shelves, and reflecting on the journey that got him here.

What once was a luncheonette that sold cigars and lottery tickets is now one of the largest retailers of premium cigars nationwide. Engaged primarily in the retail and wholesale of cigars, humidors, and cigar accessories through mail order catalogs, along with a brick-and-mortar retail store, on-site restaurant and several websites, Famous Smoke Shop is beginning to plan for the next 75 years.

1939	5	Rose Zaretsky	Cigarettes, candy, cigars, newspapers, pipes, pipe tobacco, lottery tickets, snuff, chewing tobacco	New York City
&	EMPLOYEES (F-T)	PRESIDENT/CEO	PRODUCTS	GEOGRAPHY COVERED
2014	115	Arthur Zaretsky	Cigars, accessories, humidors and other tobacco products	Primarily U.S. and Canada, with a smattering of international customers.