

bedding out of his brother's garage in Marshall in 1978, landed the first dealership for Pennfield Feed Technologies of Lancaster, Pa. in 1979, and opened a storefront in a shared building in Marshall in 1980. By then, Tri-County Feeds, Inc. had a delivery truck and two deliverymen—both of whom still work for Bill today. He steadily expanded his inventory to accommodate the requests of his feed customers and was delivering all kinds of horse-related products to barns and stables throughout northern Virginia, West Virginia and southern Maryland—60 miles in every direction from Marshall.

In 1999, Bill got reacquainted with a childhood friend back home in New York, Jeri Noel. After a two-year, long-distance courtship, Bill and Jeri married. Jeri moved to Virginia with her sons, Jesse and Jeremy, and soon the whole family was involved in the business. Jeri helps with buy-



The men's English clothing department exudes an air of upscale class while providing a comfortable place to try on the latest fashions.

ing, displays and sales, Jesse handles advertising and is developing the Tri-County web site (www.tricountyfeeds.com), and Jeremy does the bookkeeping. They all found themselves hip deep in Bill's longtime

dream of moving the business.

"I told Jeri when I met her that I had a five-year plan. She didn't realize what she was signing up for," Bill said with a chuckle. The move was transformational in several ways. Over the years, the store expanded from the original storefront space to occupy the entire building, then expanded further into a building with a storage shed across the street. Faced with growing demand for more products from his customers, but already over-inventoried for his 3,800 square feet, Bill resorted to warehousing feed and stable supplies in tractor trailers and storage rentals.

"We were renting space all over the county," Bill said. "Driving every which way to find product, get it loaded and delivered was a nightmare."

Parking and deliveries at the downtown location were also a problem. With about 20 percent of sales coming from walk-ins, customer parking was "basically out on the street," Bill said. With trucks coming and going—including semis delivering feed and new inventory—the downtown location made further growth virtually impossible.

In 2004, the Jacksons bought a seven-acre piece of property along John

> CONTINUED



Above: Jeri Jackson has a flair for putting together different elements to create an artfully designed display area.

Left: The beauty of the structure itself and the floor layout of Tri-County Feeds, Etc., can clearly be seen from the second-floor balcony.