

Outfitting the shorter man

Lou Brown wants to be remembered as an icon for short men.

The Toronto retailer is a little on the shorter side at 5-foot-7, but he's always big on wit.

When Brown noticed a shortage of clothing designed for shorter men, his business mind started brewing. Brown's golden egg idea? High-end clothing tailored to men who stand between 5-foot-1 and 5-foot-8. Brown says that trying to find stylish clothing fitting his body size had always been impossible for him. So the outgoing businessman decided he would change all that.

Brown was literally born into the world of clothing. His mother gave birth to him in the attic above his father Willie's second-hand clothing shop on Queen St. W. He worked with his dad until

taking over the shop in the 1960s. That's when Brown's Short Man store was created.

It's not immediately obvious that the entranceway at Brown's second location on Avenue Rd. is slightly lower than an average door, as are the ceilings. The salespeople, they, too, are a bit short. It's all a part of Brown's concept.

"When they (customers) come into Brown's, it's a short man's world," beams the 73-year-old. But one thing Brown isn't trying to do is make a man look taller than he is. That is not the point, he says.

Instead, he wants his customers to stand tall and proud in clothing that fits properly. No more shirt cuffs draping over the wrists, pant legs that hang too long or pajamas that are just too big. Brown will have none of that.

"We're an image maker," he says. "I am trying to make the word short gorgeous. Brown's can't make you look taller, but we can make you look as tall as you are," says the entrepreneur.

He's got smaller suits, ties, pants, jackets, and who would have thought, shoes and socks for

smaller feet.

While selection in casual and formal clothing are to be expected at Brown's, there's one thing shoppers won't get - a deal.

"Nobody gets a discount," Brown says. And he means nobody. "We're extremely fair. We service you to death, but we don't have sales every month. We don't drop prices for anyone."

Brown is eyeing a new market - clothing for the short and stout. But all he truly wants is to be remembered for improving the life of the short man.

TANYA ENBERG/METROTODAY



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Lou Brown's store has all the short man needs in clothes.

