



BELLA *Italia*

Alan and Kathy Clist adore all things Italian. So much so, they've made it their life's business importing their favourite items from all over Italy
Words and photos by **Parris Bamberg**

Before returning home from a ten-week holiday travelling around Italy, Alan and Kathy Clist soon realised their luggage situation couldn't accommodate the many keepsakes they had picked up along the way. As a result the couple introduced Dream of Italy, an Auckland-based company that imports authentic Italian products.

"Essentially we're bridging the gap between Italy and New Zealand and bringing home our dream of Italy," says Alan. "We want to make it as easy as possible for those who can't transport all their Italian mementos home but would still like to have something to remember their time in Italy by."

The Dream of Italy showroom is a trove of quintessential Italian wares. The selection of traditional Venetian masks is undoubtedly the stand-out of the showroom, decorating the walls in all shades and sizes. "We import

the masks from five different suppliers," says Kathy. "Although you may not see them around a lot, there's such a market for masks and a lot of people collect them."

Glass items – including boutique jewellery, beads, millefiori, ornaments, pillboxes, bowls, carafes, vases, paperweights – all come from Murano, a group of islands north of Venice that are linked by a series of interconnecting bridges. The bronze leaf and solid pewter statuettes of warriors in armour and well-known sculptures are also handmade and sourced from Florence; their fine detail and true-to-life replication is quite remarkable. The couple also source classic hand-painted ceramics from both Vietri sul Mare and Deruta, in Umbria, and the showroom is filled with a good selection of tableware, vases, urns and pots.



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Kathy and Alan have shared a long-lasting penchant for Italy and still find time to travel back every year, using the opportunity to visit the factories and places where the products are made. Milan, Venice, Florence and Vietri sul Mare on the Amalfi Coast are frequent destinations. "Like us, lots of our customers have been to Italy, or at the very least, really would like to go – they just love Italian products and culture," says Kathy.

Dream of Italy also offers online shopping, or you can head straight to their Henderson showroom.

DREAM OF ITALY SHOWROOM
5/1 Tony Street
Henderson
Ph: 837-0911
www.dreamofitaly.co.nz