

# THE CUSTOM TAILOR

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CTDA Heads  
to San Diego for  
the 116th Convention

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## President of the Custom Tailors & Designers Association



**S**inger in a blues band... communications major in college... executive of a major jeanswear retailer ...Doesn't sound much like the stuff fine tailors are made of, does it? Still, those pursuits and more are all part of CTDA President Gian DeCaro's background.

Gian's background also includes a father who fellow tailors refer to as "Il Maestro" and who allowed Gian to start ripping seams at age 11. Silvio DeCaro also watched his son head off to Seattle to find his own career following college and accepted it with his customary grace and supportiveness when Gian picked the jeans business.

Gian was a happy man...or so he thought. In 1980, he agreed to keep his father company on a trip to the CTDA Convention in New York. Just a trip with dad, Gian thought.

Who could have predicted that Gian was actually on his way home on that trip? Certainly not Gian. But that's where he wound up. When he found himself among other sons of tailors and found he spoke the language and spoke it passionately, he knew he'd come home. He went to New York as a Seattle jeans retailer and returned to become a tailor in his hometown of Spokane.

After a few years working with Silvio, Gian spread his wings again and headed back to Seattle in 1988. When he got there, he bought into an existing tailoring shop and began to make it his own. The initial location of the shop in an off street location with no exposure on the street did not hamper Gian's ability to expand the shop's following among Seattle's business elite.

Just two years later, he moved Gian DeCaro Sartoria to a prime corner location, just up from the famed Pike Street Market, with windows galore and exposure to the passing parade of downtown Seattle. The present day store is bright and functionally modern. The coldness of the movable steel racks and mammoth marble tables (custom made, of course) is contrasted by the soft of the bolts of cloth, artfully arranged accessories and gift items and subtle background music.

Another fateful event coincided with Gian's arrival back in Seattle. A friend set him up with a blind date for a dinner par-

ty. The match was a disaster but had he not accepted the date he might not have met his wife Trish, who was also suffering through a mismatched blind date at the party. Immediately they had something in common. The more they talked the more they had in common. Trish was a buyer for a major department store in the Northwest and loved retailing and marketing and high quality as much as Gian. It was kismet.

Today they are the proud parents of Domenico, age 5, and Allesandro, age 21 months. Gian's mirthful side loves to tell people that Trish's sole mission in life is to spend every penny he can make. His earnest side quickly counters that "Trish is an integral part of my success. Her unlimited faith in me is what makes me able to accomplish things and even though she does not work in the shop every day, she is definitely part of the business."

Gian's parents, Silvio and Vera, couldn't be prouder that their blues singer son has turned out to be the consummate family man and successful businessman. But to hear them tell it, there was never really any doubt.

At DeCaro Sartoria, Savile Row meets Seattle in a mix appealing to a diverse clientele from conservative corporate executives to Seattle's thriving core of "Grunge" musicians. Town & Country described DeCaro's shop as "one of the most elegant custom shops on the West Coast." DeCaro and his father were the only Pacific Northwest tailors acknowledged by the magazine in its feature on "America's Top Tailors."

This is what sets DeCaro apart from other tailors. It's not just his styling (a touch Milanese, a touch Florentine with a bit of Cary Grant and Desi Arnaz) but also his lifestyle. DeCaro and his customers share the same, if not similar, interests. He talks baseball while fitting Dave Winfield for a suit, basketball or football while measuring a Seattle Supersonic or Seahawk for a topcoat.

You wouldn't expect Pearl Jam at DeCaro Sartoria, but members of Seattle's hottest bands seek him out for their needs off stage. From billionaire moguls to mere millionaire professionals, DeCaro's exclusive clientele trust him to create apparel that is subtle, substantial and suitably discreet. They also trust him with their privacy, knowing that their preferences and fitting problems will go no further than the dressing room of the shop. This, Gian will tell you, is an important issue with his clients.

And the CTDA has benefited from Gian's enthusiasm and creativity as well. He's been a constant contributor in the areas of marketing and public relations and his glibness has earned him the permanent assignment of commentator for CTDA Fashion Shows.

"I love the CTDA," Gian declares passionately. "It's what helped me recognize my real life's work. My fellow members are a constant source of inspiration and advice. Serving as CTDA President has been the greatest of honors and it does not escape me that I am serving as my father did before me. It's a great life."