

Reprinted from:

## WESTCHESTER COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

# The eyes have it

**Mary Sue Iarocci**

Dec-11-09

Years before a certain Alaska politician brought her designer glasses to the cover of every magazine in the nation, Sharon Decker was always known for her glasses.

As a licensed optician who has worn glasses since the fifth grade, Decker knows eyewear should be stylish as well as functional.

“When people come in and say they want something neutral, I say why,” said Decker, owner of Eye Designs in Scarsdale and Armonk. “You don’t just want to blend in. Eyewear is about feeling good and creating a certain look.”



Decker, who opened the Scarsdale location in 1984, has seen many styles come, go, and come back – but the need for fashionable eyewear remains the same.

“I opened in an area I felt was a very high-end, up-and-coming fashion area, and yet when I looked around there were really no optical stores that offered stylish, unique eyewear,” Decker said. “I felt there was a big need in this area, and we really created a niche for ourselves here.”

The store was so successful that she opened a second location, in Armonk, 10 years ago.

Current trends include bold, contrasting colors and decorative sides.

“Things I have seen back in '84 are now coming back in 2009,” Decker said. “Large aviators and cosmetic tinting are making a comeback, and so are the old, round shapes like tortoise shell. We see lots of styles coming from Europe have thicker sides and different colors and patterns; sometimes it's the sides of the glasses that make more of a statement than the front of the glasses. Also, in the last five years the trend now is a little bit bigger in the sunglasses and regular glasses.”

The fit and the lens recommendations are just as important as an eye exam, Decker said.

“I always like to give an example no matter what doctor you go to, if the person doesn't fit the prescription properly they are not giving you the best comfort for your eyes,” Decker said.

Eye Designs has full-service opticians on staff for contact lens fittings and eye exams.

“What's nice about being in business for 25 years is you see kids who you helped get their first pair of glasses come in with their own kids,” Decker said.

Decker has lost some customers to contact lenses and Lasik surgery, but glasses are still popular even among the non-bespectacled set.

“The business definitely changed with more people venturing into contacts, and some people I lost to the laser surgery,” Decker said. “However, I think on the fashion end of it, eyewear is an attitude of a person. At first I was worried, but it was not the end of eyeglasses. I have people who come in and buy a great pair of sunglasses.”