



Angela Giofrè in her namesake boutique.

## LA DOLCE VITA

*Italian fashions in Clearwater*

**T**he shimmering gold flooring, glistening chandeliers and marble tabletops of Giofrè bring a European refinement to Clearwater's Fort Harrison Avenue — which is exactly what Angela Giofrè intended when she opened her Italian women's boutique in February 2007.

"Everything is Italian: the chandeliers, the flooring, the tables, the clothes," says Giofrè. "Everything was flown in especially from Italy for this store."

And that includes Giofrè herself. Born and raised in the south of Italy, Giofrè established her flagship boutique in Milan in 1986 to showcase her ever-growing women's collection. Eventually Giofrè decided to expand her business; after several scouting trips to the Bay area, she launched her second location in Clearwater. These days, between frequent trips to Italy and New York City, Giofrè enjoys mixing family time into her busy boutique schedule, welcoming her daughter Erika and granddaughter Grace for visits in her boutique.

"I fell in love with the shop in Milano because there were so many artists in the area and it had a great feeling about it," she explains. "And I hope to do the same thing here."

The local boutique carries the same pieces from Giofrè's own extensive women's line that are carried in the European location,

with a few considerations.

"I have a lot of cashmere here but I don't carry as much of the leather pieces," says Giofrè. "The style of a European woman is completely different than an America woman, but I'm trying to give them a new sense of taste and a way of showing off their style identity."

With every happy client she peruses the sleek retail space filled with evening gowns, tailored jackets, dress slacks, shoes and other must-have pieces, Giofrè's dream comes closer to reality.

"I love fashion so much and I want to wake up this area with my store," she says. "I love to make a woman think differently of herself and feel more confident when she leaves the store."

And when the busy fashion designer and boutique owner isn't traveling, she's thinking of the future. Founding an art school in Clearwater — Giofrè dreamed of being a painter as a young child — tops the list, along with opening a store in New York.

In the meantime, she bounces her granddaughter on her knee and proclaims: "Grace, you will be the future. You will be an amazing fashion designer, too." — *Melinda Tam*

*Giofrè, 8 South Fort Harrison Avenue, Clearwater, gioffre.fashion.com, 727-442-4172.*