

Welcome

to Viney Court

Where old meets new in a wonderful historic building which was once the backbone of Taunton's industrial heritage. This is a new phase in the life of the former Van Heusen factory which was renowned worldwide for its fine shirts and garment manufacture. This contemporary redevelopment has sympathetically incorporated the finer features of this Victorian building with the latest technology demanded by businesses today. The result is a unique opportunity to occupy office space which can be structured to your individual needs where you and your staff can work in a very light and airy environment right in the heart of Taunton.



Amenities

Viney Court provides contemporary, open plan offices totaling 10,000 ft² (929 m²) with individual suites ranging from 460-2,500 ft² (42-232 m²).

Viney Court is a 10 minute walk from Taunton's main shopping area yet easily accessible by car. Nearby facilities include restaurants, office services, health clubs, public car park and a convenience store with fuel station.

- Open plan offices in a three storey former factory.
- The factory theme is carried through to staircase areas to produce a unique office environment.
- Passenger lift access with DDA compliance.
- On site car parking.
- Fully finished offices with carpeting and feature lighting to Cat 2 standard.
- Staff facilities in the building core area on each office level.
- Fully inclusive Landlord's Services to include all heat, power, utilities and maintenance of common areas.

He Collared The Shirt Market

He helped revolutionize men's fashions with a small item others said was impossible to make.

After helping his father develop the Van Heusen collar he moved to England to help introduce it in Europe.

Later, changing from technical expert to salesman, he enjoyed a brief but successful second business career that ended with the great depression. Then, deciding he'd had enough of business, he retired at the age of 35, to live the life of a country squire in England.

Today, John M. Van Heusen Jr., still retired and living in Driftwood subdivision in St. Petersburg, is convinced he made a wise decision in 'learning from the southern Englishman how to make the best use of freedom.' In the years since, he has developed his latest talents - writing composing, painting and gardening. Mrs. Van Heusen agrees. They have had a very happy and leisurely life together.

But there was uphill sledding in those early days. A typical Yankee inventor in Albany, N.Y., where John Jr. was born the elder Van Heusen had a number of inventions to his credit, including the sterilizer physicians still use in modified

form to clean their instruments. Then, in 1920, he really hit the jackpot, according to his son.

About 10 years previous, he had the idea of making a semi-stiff collar that would wear long and be more comfortable. He took three pieces of cloth and wove them together thread by thread. The result was a fabric so heavy it was theoretically impossible to turn it.

For Nine Years he performed experiments, trying to make a machine that would weave and shape the new collar. Officials of the Cluett Peabody Co., in neighboring Troy, thought he was "a nut" and turned the ideas down cold. Finally, a machine was built capable of applying a terrific pressure per inch, doing the impossible by force and the use of electric heat.

"It was a wonderful machine that cost like the devil," recalls John Van Heusen.

In 1919, the elder Van Heusen signed a contract with Isaac Phillips, of Phillips-Jones, biggest shirt company in the world. Isaac's company put its every cent into the manufacture of the new collar.

The new collars couldn't be made fast enough to meet demand. A patent battle was fought and won.

By this time, John Jr. had married Emily Kent, an old schoolmate from Montclair, N.J., and was working in a textile mill to prepare himself for a job in New York. Since he was the only person who knew how to run the new machines, his father sent him to England in 1922 to start manufacture for the European trade. By that time, Isaac had manufactured some 450,000 dozen collars.

In Taunton, centre of English shirt and collar industry, John Jr. set up his plant. There was trouble ahead. Garage mechanics had to be converted into collar mechanics. Wholesalers wanted no part of this new Yankee product. The cloth had to be changed to make it white enough for British tastes. By the end of six months, however, the new factory was turning out 1,000 dozen new white collars every week.

John and Emily had gone to Taunton originally for six weeks. They stayed six years. Their daughter, Emily, was born there.

John stayed to demonstrate the new collar in France and Germany. Through the years, the Van Heusen collar evolved into a collar-attached shirt, still in demand all over the world.

No longer needed in the shirt business, John went into the printing business on his return to New York in 1926. After 18 months he had a fine office on Madison Avenue, selling a new rotogravure process. The crash of 1929, and the subsequent depression, ultimately brought the business to an end, and John applied for a job in Macy's advertising department.

For some time, he and Emily had been homesick for England, but his father wanted him to remain nearby. In December, 1931, John Sr. died. John Jr. never took his job at Macy's. By May 1932, he and Emily were back in Taunton, where they took a long term lease on Langford Court, a baronial mansion near the village of Langford Budville.

Here they "enjoyed the simple things." John composed show music, ballads, folk music, was encouraged by composer Jerome Kern to go on with it. He had a lullaby published. He wrote a novel.

They left England in 1937 and came to St. Petersburg, where they had heard there were good schools. Emily, then 14, went to Mirror Lake Elementary. In 1944 they moved to Southampton, L.I., to be near their daughter, now Mrs. Hugh Halsey II, the wife of a doctor.

They tried living in Spain for a time, found they didn't like it, and in November 1961 returned to St. Petersburg, buying their home at 2617 Driftwood Road.



Location

Taunton is strategically located in the heart of Somerset midway between Bristol and Exeter and at the interchange of the M5 and A303, with a 30 minute drive time population of approximately 300,000. It is a designated centre for growth due to it's excellent road and rail communications.

Viney Court is to be found just off East Reach, the main route from the Town Centre to junction 25 of the M5 Motorway. With its sister building, Victoria House, it forms part of a cluster of office buildings housing Somerset County Council, Diabetes UK, Think!, DSA Driving Theory Test Centre, Television Research Partnership, NHS & Care Direct and NSPCC.



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