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Staff photo by Mark Czajkowski

Tuscan Hills proprietor Greg Evans inspects his new space in Kingston as Maurizio Falcone of Pietra Viva paints in the background.

Seller of Tuscan products relocates to Kingston site

By Lauren Otis
Staff Writer

If all goes according to plan, by the end of the week Princeton-area residents will have a better view when in Tuscan Hills.

There is no geographic magic involved, how-

ever. Tuscan Hills, the retail store specializing in artisan-made furniture and home accessories from Tuscany and other regions of Italy, has relocated to a more airy and expansive space.

"I'm going to have close to four times the space I had," said Princeton Township resident Greg

Tuscan

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Evans, 46 — who has operated Tuscan Hills since 2003 and owns it with his wife, Suzanne — of the new 4,000-square-foot space he has moved the store to in Kingston. He hopes to be open for business this Friday at the new location he has leased on the corner of Route 27 and Heathcote Lane.

Patrons "loved the ambience" at the store's space on the corner of Nassau and Harrison streets, Mr. Evans said, but it was difficult for them to see all that he had to offer in the 1,100-square-foot quarters.

"Aside from being a historic building, what I love is the windows, the space is flooded with light from the windows," Mr. Evans said at the new Kingston space last week, while Maurizio Falcone, a Venetian plaster artisan who is now based in Boston, worked on one interior wall.

"Two years ago I started looking, soft looking. I knew I wanted to stay in the Princeton area," Mr. Evans said. He considered splitting the business, with the gift and accessories side in downtown Princeton, perhaps at Palmer Square, and the larger piece furniture business elsewhere. "Then I found this space (last fall) and that really sealed the deal, because of the out-

building, I was able to do both," he said.

As a result of the move "I've been able to consolidate my storage and retail in virtually the same location,"

Mr. Evans said. At the new location, if a customer does not see what they want in the store, he can bring them to an outbuilding on the property he will now be able to use as a storage facility and show them further inventory.

"When I saw the space it was just a frame. Now it is built out and I was able to be involved in the process (of design and planning), which was kind of a unique situation," Mr. Evans said.

"With a bigger, sleeker space we are now going to be able to show much more of our contemporary furniture," he said.

Parking, difficult at his Princeton location, is another plus to the Kingston site, Mr. Evans said. "The flow in and

out of the space is great," he said.

At the new location, one side of the store will showcase beds and other furniture, and the other will feature accessories, Mr. Evans said. The store carries lamps, ceramics, glassware, linens, cashmere products and other accessories.

The new store will feature a large Carrera marble countertop and espresso machine greeting patrons as they enter. "The concept when you come in is it's supposed to have a café feeling," Mr. Evans said.

Mr. Evans, whose background is in management consulting and financial management, opened Tuscan Hills in December 2003 after

way to bring quality products to the U.S. from Italy while supporting local artisans there.

The store's focus is on artisan-crafted furnishings and accessories from Tuscany and Umbria primarily, although he has sought out products made from other regions, Mr. Evans said. Everything he sells is imported

from Italy, Mr. Evans said, adding he seeks out small family-run businesses, many of whom have never had their products imported to the U.S. previously. "What we are doing is bringing in things you can't get anywhere else," he said.

"The thing to me I like is supporting the small family businesses in Italy. The craftsmanship, the workmanship you get is unmatched," Mr. Evans said.

Although the economic situation is less than ideal, Mr. Evans said he believes the worst is over and consumer confidence will re-emerge. Even in a down economy, "you've got to do what you can to keep fresh," he said, surveying the new space.

"We are really excited. Two years ago we outgrew the other space. It's really been waiting to find the right space and I think this is it," he said.

Tuscan Hills has relocated to 4438 Route 27 in Kingston, on the corner of Route 27 and Heathcote Lane. For more information, call 609-921-9015, or go to www.tuscanhills.com.