

Elevator Boutique's Luxury Home Elevators

by Elizabeth Pate

In 2003, Les Katz, CEO and founder of Lift Shop in Australia, saw an opportunity to expand his elevator-service and installation business into a specialist business focusing on luxury home elevators. His goal was to offer designer elevator solutions exclusive to residential applications. As a result of the combined efforts of Katz and team members, Lift Shop was established and currently has offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, all in Australia.

In the beginning, Lift Shop focused on various aspects of the elevator industry, but Katz always had a vision for the company to eventually focus exclusively on luxury residential installations. In 2006, Katz began investing in research and development in the company's U.S. operations, and this March, Elevator Boutique in Los Angeles officially launched. More than 300 architects and designers attended the showroom event, which displayed four elevator models capable of being tested by prospective clients. The launch of Elevator Boutique follows the success of



Elevator Boutique's FreedomLift model

Lift Shop, and, according to Katz, the company's expansion into the U.S. was a natural progression for the brand, as Lift Shop designs were already being sold internationally (ELEVATOR WORLD, June 2012). In addition, Katz believes the U.S. is an appropriate location for the new boutique due to the relative affordability of an elevator compared to the price of a home. The elevator designs are developed through the collaboration between Lift Shop and its manufacturers: Elevatori Premontati in Italy and DNDT in China.

Katz believes residential accessibility is its own category within the elevator industry and "has a wider scope in that it includes design and architecture." In addition, home elevators have different requirements than commercial elevators do, such as speed, travel and number of starts per day. Katz said the aging U.S. population and increase in multistory homes has created more demand for home elevators. The company offers various designs



Grand opening in Los Angeles



Lift Shop receives award at DesignEx 2011 at the Melbourne Convention Center in Australia

and styles of residential elevators and can customize solutions to meet a range of budgets and applications.

Elevator Boutique provides support to its dealer network and is available from the initial design through manufacture, logistics, construction, support and routine servicing. Its Trip 24/7 provides a live online tracking system, which includes all details and service records for one's elevator. Elevator Boutique has designed all elevator components to be carried into the home by hand, through a regular-sized door opening, making the retrofit simple. The designs also include shallow pits and low overhead spaces, which enables the elevators to fit under normal ceiling heights.

Product Line

One of the main features of the company's product line is that the landing doors are available in a range of finishes, which are installed by the dealers. This reduces on-site construction and eliminates the potential hazard that

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sometimes occurs when a builder constructs the landing doors. Elevator Boutique also works with its manufacturing partners to design features such as in-cabin emergency lowering buttons, light-ray safeties and quick-erect shafts. In addition, all designs come with optional steel or aluminum shafts, making them easy to install. Among its first residential products was the ElfoLift, which is manufactured by Elevatori Premontati. The elevator has minimal spatial impact and offers flexibility in design and sizing. ElfoLift's interiors and landing doors are sized and styled to meet the specific requirements of each installation. Elevator Boutique also offers ElfoLift 2, with doors that slide open and closed by pushing a button.

The Supermec, a post-hydraulic, traction elevator, is also manufactured by Elevatori Premontati and is exclusively sold by Elevator Boutique in the U.S. Its machine-room-less design and battery drive system enable it to use 87% less energy than traditional hydraulic drive systems.



Lift Shop booth at DesignEx 2012, which took place at Darling Harbour in Sydney



Supermec model with shaft

Equipment Specifications

ElfoLift

Capacity: 5 persons and/or 881 lbs.

Speed: 59 fpm

Drive: Hydraulic

Maximum floors: 6

Control: Automatic with key isolation

Power requirement: Single-phase 220-230 VAC, 25 A/60 Hz

Supermec

Capacity: 7-9 persons and/or 1,058-1,389 lbs.

Speed: 59-98 fpm

Drive: Traction

Maximum floors: 6

Control: Automatic

Power requirement: Single-phase 220-230 VAC, 20 A/60 Hz.

FreedomLift

Capacity: 3-5 persons and/or 551 lbs. (Classic), 705 lbs. (FreedomLift) and 881 lbs. (Maxi)

Speed: 49.2 fpm

Door type: Swing

Drive: Hydraulic

Maximum floors: 5

Power requirements: Single-phase 220-230 VAC, 32 A/60 Hz

Maximum travel: 39 ft. 4 in.

Supermec is one of the only elevators to be displayed at Energethica, a European exhibition for innovation and energy and environmental conservation. Supermec can also be designed to meet any style or size requirement. It has sliding doors, minimized pit depth and marginal overhead clearance. Supermec 2 features an improved drive and computer system, faster speeds and greater passenger capacity than the original Supermec model.

Manufactured by DNDT, FreedomLift is also exclusively sold by Elevator Boutique and is a standard home elevator available in three models: Classic FreedomLift, FreedomLift and Maxi FreedomLift. The elevators are also available in a range of styles. FreedomLift features an emergency lowering button, which is hidden behind a panel inside the elevator cabin. The elevator can be installed with glass infill panels where light is required or composite aluminum panels, which are offered in various colors. Many of Elevator Boutique's designs feature glass and lightweight Italian design work.

Lift Shop strives to maintain effective business relationships with its manufacturers and clients. "Clients get to comment on products and help with improvements, such as tooling and installation," Katz said. Katz also believes getting to know clients is how a company grows, because employees can better understand their needs,



A FreedomLift installation in Sydney



EffoLift model

which in turn leads to new products and design changes and improvements.

From 2006-2010, Lift Shop was recognized by *BRW* business magazine as one of the fastest-growing companies in Australia. In 2010, its FreedomLift package with aluminum shaft received an award from DesignEx, an architectural event in Australia. In 2011, its Supermec 2 model received the DesignEx Best New Product Award for Building Technologies.

Katz and Lift Shop encourage other companies to join their accessibility efforts to continue improving residential-elevator applications, because they require a different industry focus than large commercial projects. By tailoring home elevators to meet the needs of various homeowners, customers can personalize their home transportation needs similar to the way they personalize the rest of their living spaces. 