

25TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

THE ORIGINALS

Local chains with a NY personality

THE CHAINS didn't start with Starbucks, which made its first New York City foray in 1994, or superstore Kmart, which opened the door to big-box retailers in Manhattan when it leased space here 14 years ago.

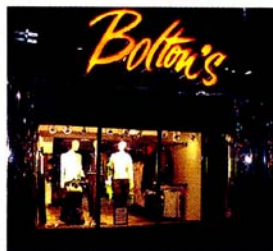
"You had all of this new frontier," says Faith Hope Consolo, chairman of retail leasing at Prudential Douglas Elliman, referring to the onslaught of national retailers attempting to woo Big Apple shoppers for the first time. "Seattle took New York with Starbucks. The suburbs took the city with Kmart."

But before these arrivals, Manhattan had its own breed of multistore retailers, including the following.

Crazy Eddie The electronics store, which was founded in 1971 in Brooklyn, was known for its insanely low prices and its insanely high-energy TV commercials. Before the chain's 1987 collapse due to tax evasion, fraud and money laundering perpetrated by owners Eddie and Sam Antar, it had more than 40 stores in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania.



Bolton's Founded in 1963, it was one of the first off-price women's clothiers in New York City and at one time had more than 20 locations in the tristate area. Competition forced the chain into bankruptcy in 1992. It is now owned by New Jersey-based A & E Stores Inc., which owns similar chains like Strawberry.



Ricky's Since its 1989 launch as a beauty-and-cosmetics store, Ricky's has evolved into an edgy mini-empire that is the go-to destination for costumes, quirky gifts and beauty items. In addition to operating nearly two dozen permanent locations, the family-run store sets up a series of temporary Halloween shops every fall.



Duane Reade The drug-and-convenience store, which began in 1960 and is famously named after its first warehouse between Duane and Reade streets downtown, was one of New York's last independent chains. It was acquired for \$1.1 billion earlier this year by giant Walgreen Co. Now, New Yorkers are left wondering how long it will be before the Duane Reade name disappears.

