Bob Bruglio (left) and Frank Torre claim their trucks are the most attractive in all of Michigan.

The Grainer residence, right, one of Torre & Bruglio's pieces of art.

KEEPING IT CLEAN

Frank Torre and Bob Bruglio are Italian, and proud of it. They enjoy a good meal. They like fancy trucks. They are meticulous dressers.

"We like to touch everything," Torre admits over lunch in a Mount Clemens, Mich, restaurant. For emphasis—to let you know he delivers the next line with some emotion—he grabs the salt and pepper shakers and squeezes. Tightly. Very tightly: "I don't think we want to lose that touch. When something gets out of reach, you can't touch it any more."

He is talking about the size of Torre & Bruglio Landscaping, a company he and Bob Bruglio began with a Massey-Ferguson truck and leased tools back in 1976.

Today, they own 42 trucks and $1 million worth of equipment. Today, an autographed photo of Lee Iacocca hangs on the reception room wall, testament to the job they are doing on Chrysler's 40-acre world headquarters and five divisional offices.

A class act
The key to their success? Class. Lots of it. Everything from an immaculately-landscaped headquarters to designer trucks to uniformed,
cleanly-shaven workers. They simply don’t allow anything to “touch” their business that doesn’t reek of professionalism.

“Everybody wears white shirts and green pants,” explains Torre, the younger and more talkative of the duo. “They’re on time, they shave in the morning, they have presentable haircuts. If they don’t, they’re home. That’s very important.”

When it comes to rule enforcement, Bruglio says his partner is “the hatchet-man.” And you believe it.

Their fire-engine-red trucks are hand-painted (some say “Torre & Bruglio—The Dagos’”) and pin-striped.

Their landscapes are, likewise, picture-perfect. “When we walk away from a job, it’s spotless,” Torre says.

Things haven’t always been as profitable for Torre & Bruglio; but they’ve always been exciting.

Torre remembers 1976: “There were just the two of us. The first summer, we did everything by hand. People were saying we were nuts moving dirt with wheelbarrows. But it was a challenge: can we knock out this job today?”

The memories begin to wash over Bruglio’s face. “We always tried to outdo ourselves,” he reminisces. “People could pick our jobs out. A lot of people couldn’t figure out how we got so big so fast. But if they had followed us around, they’d know: we worked our asses off. The first five years, it was seven days a week, sun-up to sun-down.”

Some say partnerships are the worst way to organize a business. But it’s worked for Torre and Bruglio.

“What has kept us together is that our goal is the same,” says Torre. As if to emphasize the point, Bruglio repeats it: “We stand back-to-back on everything.”

That doesn’t mean agreeing on everything. In the early years, when they won a new job, they would separately plan on how to implement what the client wanted. Then they would compare plans and come up with the best alternatives. It wasn’t always easy. “If we both agreed on everything, then one of us shouldn’t be here,” says Bruglio now, chuckling to himself at the memories.

Diversified services
Torre & Bruglio has developed into a full-service landscaping company. It has an architectural department, construction division, maintenance divi-
Lebanon Total Turf Care introduces double trouble for turf spoilers: Lebanon Turf Fungicide with 1% Bayleton and Lebanon Granular Lawn Insecticide with 5% Dylox. So effective, most troublemakers will think twice before invading turf protected by Bayleton and Dylox.

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