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## A Family AdVenture

By Sophie Braccini



Rosylyn Stenzel (right) shows a merino wool shirt to a customer at Venture. Photo Sophie Braccini

ruggedness and refinement, with attention to detail that is mostly designed and manufactured in California," says Stenzel. "The garment industry in California is still vibrant and is even going through resurgence," he adds.

For example, Venture carries Tellason jeans that are cut and sewn in San Francisco with fabric from Cone Mills' White Oak plant in Greensboro, North Carolina. "You can't find better anywhere," says Stenzel. "When you come to our store we will fit you and send the jeans to the factory for hemming in the original stitch, for no additional cost."

Taylor Stitch shirts found at Venture are also San Francisco made. This is a very young company that recently attracted national attention manufacturing for Banana Republic. Horny Toad and SeaVees shoes are out of Santa Barbara; Marmot, which makes merino wool shirts (unbelievably soft), is from Santa Rosa. "This is the lifestyle that's good for our community, made by local guys for local guys," says Stenzel. The Stenzels even carry ties created by a Lafayette mom, Summer Albin.

Some of the manufacturers are actively supporting the Lafayette couple. "Taylor Stitch felt so strongly about their new style of shirt that they told us to take some of the models on consignment; they want us to be their test store," Stenzel says. "This is our adventure, we want to be part of the spirit that drives all these local creators."

The store is not only inviting to women, who often shop for men, it is also an easy shopping spot for the whole family. "We have games for little kids, water and treats," says Rosylyn.

So far, they have been pleased with the community's response. "The sales are on target," Stenzel says.

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The first impression when entering Venture Men's Goods on Mount Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette is olfactory; it smells of wood and leather, definitely a male store. The visual input corroborates the initial feeling: the tones are subdued in the browns, beiges, blacks and greens. The softness of the colors and materials, and the quiet neatness are inviting, yet this is not a frivolous store. This is a store for men, where women are welcome.

Venture is the new quality casual men's apparel store that Rosylyn and Tom Stenzel opened at the beginning of the month. Tom Stenzel has spent all his life in the garment industry, first at Levi Strauss, then at a start-up in the Bay Area. Unfortunately, the latter business lost its funding and Tom lost his job. He and his wife decided to take a big plunge and start their own business in the area Stenzel knows best, the clothing industry. "We opened a store where men would find the quality design and great craftsmanship for casual clothes they couldn't find on this side of the tunnel," he says.

The couple's choice of brands has not been haphazard. "As I started researching the quality and style I wanted, I noticed that I gravitated toward a look of



Tom and Rosylyn Stenzel with their sons Aaron (left) and Colin in front of the new store. Photo provided

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