

Family-owned optical shop scrutinizes customers' needs

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By [KATHIE BASSETT](#)

ALTON - At Heitz Optical, the family-owned business has focused on providing attentive personal service and a superior level of care to the community since 1956.

Three generations of the Heitz family - Chuck and Joe Heitz and Drew Rinacke - work side by side at the full-service optical shop and in-house lab, which also has optometrist Dr. Justin Scheiter on staff.

"We pride ourselves on not just being order-takers," said Rinacke, the general manager. "We dig into each individual's lifestyle and hobbies and try to build a pair of glasses that fits their unique needs."

Because they offer a great deal of attention to each person's requirements, their customers tend to be loyal so they develop a relationship over time based on trust.

"We do everything in our power to help, and we try to have something for everybody," president Joe Heitz said. "We offer comprehensive exams with dilation, fit contact lenses, fill outsider prescriptions and have more than 3,000 frames on display along with providing low-vision aids and specialty eyewear.

"We often have people lined up with their broken glasses on a Monday morning from their weekend warrior experience," he said. "We do what we can to put their glasses back together in our lab."

Sometimes it's just a temporary fix until they can get in for an appointment, Heitz said, adding that they will loan customers frames for a limited time if needed until their repairs can be completed.

Noted for their commitment to their clients and the community, Heitz Optical was named the November Small Business of the Month by the RiverBend Growth Association.

"Because we have our own lab, we can offer same day-service on many orders and control our quality," Heitz said. "That's part of standing the test of time over 55 years."

Located at 2415 Homer Adams Parkway, Heitz Optical offers eyewear lines in a broad spectrum of prices and styles for children and adults. Their more popular non-prescription lines include Oakley, Rayban and Maui Jim sunglasses.

Along with a wide selection of frames, Heitz Optical also carries specialty contact lenses for people who are difficult to fit due to astigmatism.

"As the population is putting more birthday candles on a cake each year, we are fitting more people with bifocal or monovision contact lenses," Heitz said. "To produce good vision, this process takes more time and care on our part, and we like the challenges of helping people improve their quality of life - we call it 'lifestyle dispensing.'"

Through a partnership with Dr. Stephen Wexler of St. Louis at TLC Laser Centers, Heitz Optical has the expertise to co-manage laser eye surgery for their patients, providing pre-surgery evaluations and follow-up care for their patients.

For many of their customers the hardest part of purchasing new eyewear is deciding on how to balance fashion and fit, a decision Heitz said they can help with by asking a series of questions to guide them toward their optimal choice.

Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday. Appointments are advised.

For more information, call (618) 465-1712 or visit www.heitzoptical.com.

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