

Eyeglass frames that come to you

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By **LESLIE KELLY**

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Lisa Fritzer knows that walking into a retail eyewear shop can be mind-boggling.

“Just seeing hundreds of frames hanging on all the walls is enough to overwhelm anyone,” said Fritzer, owner of Go-Girl Eyewear. “People feel like they have to make a decision right then and they’re not ready.”

That’s one of the reasons why Fritzer decided to open her business, a mobile optical boutique, where she brings the frames to you.

“What I do is vastly different than someone stepping out of an exam room and having to make a decision right then,” she said. “I offer personalized style sessions with a limited, but very unique selection of frames.”

Fritzer’s career working for eye doctors is what led her to open Go-Girl Eyewear in January 2015. She grew up in Port Angeles and spent time in Seattle in her early 20s. She was attending school to work in the dental field when she decided that wasn’t for her. She saw an advertisement for a job in an eye clinic and applied. She was hired and spent time working in all aspects of the office.

“I was drawn to helping people select frames,” she said, “because it’s the creative piece of the optical world.”

She studied on her own and became a licensed optician in 2006. She worked in two private practices and then for a corporate eyewear company.

“I learned I loved the boutique European eyewear,” she said. “But not many places were carrying them.”

That type of eyewear, she said, is vastly different in design, due to the architecture of the frames, the color combos and the quality of the work.

“They are very smartly made and very style-conscious,” Fritzer said.

She began to think that, because not many companies carried the unique eyewear, maybe she should. Hence, she created Go-Girl Eyewear, named for the fact that she comes to you — the customer.

“At the time, I’d spent 15 years in the profession and I’d taken some time off to have my daughter,” she said. “I wanted to sell the eyewear I knew people would love.”

To begin, she purchased sample eyewear from a number of European companies, including LaFont, Dutz and Woow. She signed contracts with independent laboratories where her customers’ individual prescriptions would be made and fit into the frames they selected. And then she went on the road.

“It’s really been by word of mouth,” she said of finding customers. “Usually someone who’s purchased from me will refer their friends or family to me.”

She does have a website and a Facebook page and offers a free email monthly newsletter where people can see new frames and see how some of her customers have been fitted for frames.

Fritzer recently did a trunk show in Poulsbo, but she prefers to work with customers one-on-one.

“I usually take two to three hours with each client,” she said. “We keep working until I see something that’s perfect and then I tell them ‘This is the frame for you.’”

Her ability to know what frame looks good on what size and shape of face is “intuitive,” she said.

“Every face is very individualistic,” she said. “I talk with the person about their character, their hobbies and their interests. I get a feel for who they are and their sense of style.”

She encourages color because “color enhances you,” she said. “Too much wire, or neutral color, or rimless doesn’t do anybody any favors in bringing out a youthful appearance.”

Most of her customers get an eye exam elsewhere and come to her with their prescription in-hand. Once the frames are selected, she sends the prescription and the choice of frames to the lab where the glasses are made.

She doesn't bill insurance companies, but she will work with the customers to help them get any reimbursement that may be due to them.

"Being in this industry for so long, I know how the insurance companies work," she said. "With my business, customers self-submit claims, but I make sure they have the needed paperwork."

She charges a \$50 fee for each session, but if the customer buys frames, that \$50 goes toward the cost of the frames.

Some of the frames she has in stock include laser-cut work on the frame. They range in color from blue to purple to green. There are some that are marbled in brown, yellow and blue. And there's even a denim inlay pair and a pinstriped pair for men.

And, yes, she fits both men and women in stylish frames, ranging from \$100 to \$300 on the average.

She hopes to get people who are wearing readers to buy a pair of progressive lenses in a colorful, unique frame.

"With all the screen time these days, people don't need to be looking over the top of their frames, wearing readers down on their noses," she said.

"Progressive lenses are the answer. People worry about the cost, but think about it — people spend more money on their coffee in a couple of months."

And she said, a good pair of glasses should last two years.

Her goal is to get her customers in eyewear that compliments their face and their style.

"The eyes are the first place people look," she said. "You want to have eyewear that nobody else has, that nobody's seen before. People just need to have more fun with their glasses."

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