

Horsnyder stays local

Drugstore founded in Santa Cruz in 1884 sold to Westside Pharmacy and Medical Supply

By Jondi Gumz

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SANTA CRUZ » Leo Leal, owner of Horsnyder Pharmacy since 1976, is turning over the keys to Chris Quesenberry, owner of Westside Pharmacy & Medical Supply, en-

suring the 130-year-old independent drugstore at 1226 Soquel Ave., will remain in local hands.

"It's going to stay Horsnyder," said Quesenberry, 62, who has owned Westside Pharmacy, at 1401 Mission St., for 22 years.

"If you had a name for 130

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Leo Leal, who has owned Horsnyder's Pharmacy for 38 years, embraces new owner Chris Quesenberry.

SHMUEL THALER
— SANTA CRUZ
SENTINEL

Pharmacy

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years, would you change it?" asked Leal, 73.

The two have spent 10 months working out details of the transaction. The price was undisclosed.

Leal has three sons but none of them is a pharmacy school grad so he hired an East Coast broker to sell the business.

Quesenberry said she heard about it through the pharmacy grapevine, and decided she should buy the business before her competitors did.

Leal and his wife Beverly came to Santa Cruz after he earned his pharmacy degree from the University of Southern California.

Wanting to get out of the smog, they checked out a friend's tip that a pharmacy was for sale in Santa Cruz.

"We fell in love with it," he said.

That deal was done over a handshake.

When his landlord planned to double the rent, Leal moved the drugstore from Seabright to its current location, 1226 Soquel Ave., in 1986.

In the 1990s, seeing other drugstores stock food and beverages, Leal decided to do more in home health care, based on what he had read in magazines and journals.

His wife left her job as a nurse at Dominican Hospital to develop the departments selling diabetic supplies and compression stockings.

Both Leal and his wife attended schools to learn how to run these new aspects of the business.

"Longs came to me and wanted me to train their staff," Leal said. "They can't



SHMUEL THALER — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Chris Quesenberry, left, plans to take the business Leo Leal has lovingly built over nearly four decades to the next level. Most of Leal's employees will stay on the team and work for Quesenberry.

offer the service."

When a customer with crutches struggled to open the door at Horsnyder, Leal, who uses a cane, paused and opened it for the younger man.

Leal hired a classmate from San Francisco to fix shoes for customers on the premises, a hard-to-find service, Pat Showers, a retired sales manager at pharmaceutical wholesaler McKesson, who worked there until he died, and Pat's wife Marilyn, who still works there.

He recalled being pitched when point-of-sale technology came out, surprised it would take two employees to maintain inventory control.

Quesenberry said she installed a newer model about six years ago.

"They have bar codes you scan," she said. "You don't have to enter anything."

Leal said his billing de-

+ **Online:** To view a video at Horsnyder Pharmacy, visit santacruzsentinel.com and click on the story

partment has grown, adding, "it pays for itself."

When he and his wife moved to Pasadena to be closer to grandchildren, their son Tim managed the store.

Nearly 25 people work at Horsnyder; all but Tim are staying on.

Quesenberry, whose father was a pharmacist in Modesto, said, "A lot of the independents are selling out to chains."

Frank's in Aptos, Tom's in the Palo Alto Medical Foundation complex and Lauden's in Capitola remain locally owned.

Quesenberry has about 30 employees, and has expanded into supplies and medical equipment, catering to those in long-term care.

She fills prescriptions for safety-net clinic pa-

HORSNYDER PHARMACY

What: Drugstore offering service from certified foot specialist and orthopedic fitters, a trained mastectomy technician and medical equipment sales and rental.

Where: 1226 Soquel Ave., Santa Cruz

Hours: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday

Owner: Chris Quesenberry

Details: 831-423-2315

tients, which she said offers a better fee arrangement, and expects more customers as health insurance expands.

She plans to give the Horsnyder store a face-lift and she's looking forward to her daughter, Taylor Clark, joining the business.

Clark, 22, will start pharmacy studies at the University of the Pacific, her mother's alma mater, in September.