

Live Oak's tailgate emporium

By JENNIFER KOSS
STAFF WRITER

Rocco Anzaldi's truck of wares is a familiar sight in Live Oak, but it's enough to make the first-time viewer gawk.

Radios, pots and pans, backpacks and a satellite dish seem a bit out of place next to Live Oak Market, where Anzaldi rents a corner. Drivers temporarily held hostage by the traffic lights on 17th Avenue and Capitola Road find it hard not to stare at what looks like a miniature flea market.

Anzaldi doesn't mind; he makes his living from being the center of attention. Once a curious passer-by homes in for a closer look, he's apt to become a customer.

"It's not what they think when they drive by," Anzaldi said.

People are often suspicious of his open-air business, he explained, because they think it's a "fly-by-night opera-

tion."

In actuality he's just like any other store, Anzaldi said, only without the building. He buys his merchandise at the same wholesale stores, he takes Visa and Mastercard, and he gives warranties. And

he has the permits required of any store.

The reason he operates out of his truck is not for quick getaways, but to keep his prices down. "This is the only way the little guy in America can compete with the big chains," he said.

With the days of the mom-and-pop stores all but over,

Anzaldi sees himself as a successor, offering a type of service the big stores seldom match.

"There's a personal touch when you're dealing with the owner of a business," he said. "You're not dealing with some big-wig corporation."

Local resident Valerie Dodd, who said she lives just down the street, agreed that Anzaldi's prices are hard to beat. His name-brand products are "very reasonable," she said. "There's very competitive prices here."

He considers himself an entrepreneur, the 35-year-old Anzaldi said, of the sort this country was founded on. He's been a salesman for a long time; when he was a sophomore in high school, he won a small motorcycle for selling \$378 worth of candy, and began hawking his wares in a flea-market type setting at the age of 19.

He sold merchandise out of his truck for 15 years in Texas, Wyoming and Colorado, before settling in Live Oak about three years ago.

Now he's a regular week-end fixture on his corner, and often during the week as

well; whenever the weather is fair. Though rainy weather prevents him from working full time, he said he can't complain, because "I make a living."

Anzaldi said he's been offered about 50 jobs since he set up shop on his corner, but

he's turned them all down. The security of a company job is tempting, he said, but "I like working for myself."



Rocco Anzaldi's open air 'department store' in Live Oak gives a new meaning to the term 'truck stop'

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REFERENCE

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