

# Obsession with music compels couple to open new-used music store

By Sean Tracy  
SPECIAL TO ARDEN NEWS

Imagine your typical itinerary for a Hawaiian vacation. Most people think about walking and sun bathing on beautiful beaches, relaxing next to the sun-drenched pool, taking in the natural beauty of the islands, and dining in great restaurants. Others, like husband and wife Steven Reule and Petra Wynbrandt, would rather explore music stores on the islands.

Now you have a better idea of why their two-year-old new and used music retail store on a corner of Arden and Eastern is called Obsessed with Music.

"Our friends told us, 'You're obsessed with music,' Wynbrandt explained. "We thought of a thousand different names for the store, but that one stuck."

Reule and Wynbrandt shared a dream to one day open a small business that they could run independently, pick and choose the merchandise, meet new people (especially those who have a sincere appreciation for music), have some fun, and of course, not go bankrupt.

At first, they planned to open a business after they completed their careers with the California Department of Justice, where Reule still works part time as a program analyst. Nevertheless, they could not wait.

"We saved money, collected a huge inventory, talked with our families, found this space and opened our doors," Reule said with a smile. "We had no experience in the retail business, we did not do a lot of market research. We did it the hard way, through trial and error."

"Today, we operate this store without any other employees and that means we do everything from janitorial service to the taxes, and we are loving it!" Wynbrandt added.

"We also get help from her," Wynbrandt said as she pointed to her daughter, Andrea, now a freshman at El Camino High School.

Reule joined in, "Don't forget that Dad built the compact disc and record cabinets!" The small retail outlet, described in advertising literature as located behind "the corner with the Exxon Station," has over 2,000 new and used compact discs, 5,000

records, and 1,500 tapes. Approximately 70 percent of the inventory is used records, compact discs and tapes which have been collected by Reule and Wynbrandt or traded in by customers.

All merchandise is guaranteed against product defects and customers have seven days to review their choice of purchase. Those who don't like what they purchased can participate in the store's buy-back program. This program allows the customer to get 60% of the price applied to their next purchase at the store.

"We do not rent CD's (compact discs), records or tapes," Reule emphasized.

Obsessed with Music sells gift certificates, accepts ATM and credit cards and will help customers special order merchandise that is not in stock or is difficult to find.

The store also deals in posters, calendars, and special limited edition recordings.

Obsessed with Music is the Arden area's trading post for used records, CD's and tapes. Yet, because of the demand for compact discs and their bulging supply of vinyl records, Reule and Wynbrandt have to be very selective about what they buy from walk-in sellers.

"We have too many records," Reule explained. "People want to come in and have us buy their record collections, but many times what they want to sell to us is what we already have. So, we do purchase some records, but CD's are what most of our customers come in for."

"The reason that we are in this business is because we love music," Wynbrandt said. "The greatest part of this business is the opportunity to meet people who love music as much as we do, make new friends, see a growing and repeating clientele come into the store and to be able to pay the bills."

The store itself is small in actual floor space, cozy, very well organized, clean and brightly lit unlike many other "used" music stores. The store's friendly atmosphere is outdone only by the enthusiasm of its owners. Reule and Wynbrandt welcome anyone who comes in, buyer or browser, with a friendly "hello, let us know if we can help," and a warm and sincere, "see-you-later."

The music selections are primarily pop



Petra Wynbrandt, Andrea Wynbrandt and Steven Reule in their store located at the corner of Arden and Eastern.

and rock, but also includes some classics, comedy, country, rap, movie, and musical soundtracks.

"One of the great things about being the boss here," said Reule with a wide smile, "is that we get to choose the inventory, and no matter what is hot in the marketplace, what we like is what is in stock."

The music selection is as eclectic as the favorite performers of Reule, Wynbrandt, and daughter Andrea. Reule's favorites include: Elvis Costello, the Beatles, XTC, and Nine Inch Nails.

Wynbrandt emphasizes that her favorite is the artist formerly known as Prince. She also likes Melissa Etheridge, John Mellencamp and other popular alternative groups. Andrea quickly joins in, "I like everything, except for country. But most of all

I like Oingo Boingo and Alannis Morissette."

This is a family that not only preaches the wonderful benefits of listening to music, they play it — Reule the guitar, Wynbrandt the piano, and Andrea plays both the piano and the flute.

It is obvious from their enthusiasm that they are in the business for the long haul and believe that they are providing Arden area residents with a special place to shop and buy their music. Even a freshman in high school thinks that is OK for Mom and Dad to be in the music business. "It's pretty cool," said Andrea.

Obsessed with Music is located at 4219 Arden Way at Eastern. Hours are Monday - Thursday 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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