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Center Story #2

Hudson Dry Cleaners: 'We Are Happy Here'

In this article, Diane delves into the back story of Hudson Cleaners and its husband-and-wife owners. How did the expansion of the Las Vegas Convention Center impact this business? What major event in the city has participants shipping their clothes to Hudson Cleaners instead of bringing them by plane?

Read on and find out!

Let's say you are a customer of Hudson Dry Cleaners at Commercial Center. Do you know the names of the husband-and-wife couple who run the cleaners? You might if you, too, were born in Ethiopia, the oldest independent country in Africa.

The husband's name is Tesfaye Amide, but his U.S. customers call him Tess. His wife is Frezewed Asfaw and she tells us she has no American nickname. Both owners learned English while in school in Ethiopia.

Historically, the countries of Greece and Ethiopia are linked and maintain close ties of friendship. Because of this, Tesfaye and Frezewed both traveled

to Greece from Ethiopia as young people. That's where they met, fell in love and ultimately then decided to come to America, "the Land of Opportunity".

They first settled in California, but a year and a half later, in 1994, they came to Las Vegas at the recommendation of friends. The couple has one daughter, Kelemua, who is now 27.

In Las Vegas, Tesfaye and Frezewed opened a restaurant, Meskerem Ethiopian Restaurant, in the Somerset Shopping Center on Convention Center Drive. Next door was a business, Hudson Cleaners, which was for sale, so Tesfaye and Frezewed purchased it.

They were running both businesses when the Las Vegas Convention Center expanded and bought the property where the two businesses were located. When this happened, the couple decided to hold on to the cleaning business, and four years ago they then moved to Commercial Center.

“Business in the new location (at Commercial Center) was slow at first, but it is now much better,” says Tesfaye. “We are happy here.”

And what IS their business? Everything from laundry to dry cleaning to alterations. Because Las Vegas is a convention town, a good deal of convention and banquet business comes their way, although “walk in” traffic is their day-to-day business.

“When the rodeo is in town, we get some outfits that are mailed to us for cleaning and pressing,” Tesfaye explained. “You know the airlines don’t like people carrying large luggage these days. So, when their (rodeo) clothes are ready, the customer picks them up and they are pressed and ready to wear.”

Frezewed, who handles the alterations, says that Las Vegas as a marriage capital also gives them business. “A bride might bring a dress to Las Vegas and give it to me for an alteration and pressing and need it in one day! If we can do it, we do it.”

Other customer items that they handle include church vestments, comforters, uniforms, costumes, tablecloths, seat covers, every-day clothes and even Ethiopian dresses for celebrations.

On a related note, the Clark County Ethiopian community numbers some 40,000 people and in Las Vegas, the couple tells us there are three Ethiopian churches and an area known as “Little Ethiopia” at Flamingo and Decatur.

“The Land of Opportunity” has indeed done well for Tesfaye and Frezewed.

Store hours: 8 am to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

By: Diane Taylor