



**Coastal Eye
Specialists**
Medical Group, Inc.

INSIGHT

When a 'Bargain' Isn't: You Get What You Pay For

Not long ago, a patient came into the Coastal Eye optical shop with a pair of progressive lens glasses he bought elsewhere. He told optician Lisa Casas that after paying a substantial sum, he could never wear them and he ended up throwing them into a drawer.

Lisa listened carefully to him describe the problem, examined the glasses, marking them up as though she were fitting the patient. It turned out that the measurements taken by the person who sold him the glasses were hopelessly wrong. As a result, his distance vision had been cut off. The glasses were worthless.

Lisa ended up fitting the gentleman with new progressive lens glasses that were right-on. The optician then carefully explained the concept of progressive lenses and how to adapt to and use them for comfortable vision at all distances.

"He was so pleased," Lisa recalls. "He said 'now I understand why you pay that little bit of extra money. You get it right in the first place, and you have that sit-down time with an experienced professional who can explain it all to you.'"

Coastal Eye doctors and opticians are increasingly troubled by a variety of complaints from patients who take their glasses prescriptions to chain discount optical stores or resort to online opticals in an attempt to save money in this challenging economy.

The Coastal Eye professionals point out that so-

called "bargain" opticals can offer cheap prices in many ways. Cheaper and inferior lens and frame materials, hinge designs, or limited progressive (no-line bifocal) lens options, can be penny-wise but pound foolish. Beyond the actual frame and lenses, though, what is more often missing is the expertise of the professional optician who can select and design the proper eyewear for the patient.

"Problems can occur with anyone's glasses because there are so many factors involved," observes

Dr. Lee Wan, Coastal Eye Medical Director. "As with any complex process, however, the more expertise and experience the optician has, the more likely you'll get the right fit and the proper result from the doctor's prescription. The discount chains have some excellent opticians, but how do you know which ones they are? Some may just be salespeople without the education and training needed to really select and cre-

ate the proper eyewear, or troubleshoot when there is a problem."

Online opticals, say Coastal Eye doctors and opticians, are an even more flawed proposition from the start, because fitting the frame to the face really needs to be done in person by a trained professional.

"There are so many different parts to a frame that a patient is not able to self-evaluate as effectively as

(continued inside)



Using their Expertise to Boost Patients' Vision, Look

Lisa Casas and Eva Hernandez, opticians at Coastal Eye Specialists, have a great deal in common. Both are warm and friendly with ready smiles, and they truly enjoy working with their patients. They both take pride in accomplishing the same professional goal: dispensing quality eyeglasses that precisely meet each individual patient's needs, provide excellent vision and enhance their appearance.



Lisa, who has 11 years total experience in the field, joined Coastal Eye in 2003. When she had first worked as an optician, she joined a budget chain optical store. Once she left that company and started working in a professional optical shop, she quickly realized the differences in quality and service, she says.

"My mentor here at Coastal Eye has been Claudia Umeda," says Lisa. "She has been able to teach me the tricks of the trade that you could never learn in any book. Most of these valuable lessons could only be learned having hands-on experience."

Lisa finds her work rewarding, especially "being able to see the look on patients' faces when they pick up their glasses and they see that you have listened to all their wants and needs," she says.

Eva, who like Lisa is bilingual, has 12 years' total experience as an ophthalmic technician and as an optician.

"I've been here a little over a year at Coastal Eye, and I'm loving it," she says. "I enjoy coming to work every day. The patients and my co-workers are very nice."



Like Lisa, Eva focuses in on the patients as individuals. "I think one of the most important things for an optician is to listen carefully to patients. My commitment to patients is to make sure they select a frame that fits them correctly and a lens type that meets their vision needs."

She describes the philosophy of service at Coastal Eye as "professional, with great customer care. I wouldn't have it any other way," she says.

Both opticians take continuing professional education training programs regularly to keep their skills up to date with the most current products available.

Lisa and Eva agree that continuity of care is one of the advantages of a small, stable, professional optical shop. If they wish, patients can see the same optician each time they visit. The optician gets to know her patients and their needs. Patients appreciate that and develop a relationship of trust with the optician. Another advantage is that the eye doctors are always in the office, available for consultations and to assist them with troubleshooting.



WHEN A BARGAIN (continued from first page)

a skilled optician," says Dr. Meiya Liao, Coastal Eye optometrist. "What is most attractive to a patient on the display is not necessarily the most attractive frame on the patient's face. If the frame is too large or small, the temples too long or short, the nose bridge too wide or narrow, it can result in an uncomfortable or poor fit that may actually impact the vision. And once they get the glasses, who are they going to get to adjust the fit properly, or troubleshoot if things aren't right?"

Dr. Ruth Marquez, Coastal Eye optometrist, concurs. "When it comes to eyeglasses, I think the old saying, 'you get what you pay for,' is true. Our experienced opti-



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No Shortcuts to Quality Eyeglasses

Fitting eyeglasses is a complex and exacting art. Here are the essential steps taken by Coastal Eye opticians:

- ◆ The optician begins by analyzing the doctor's prescription and spending some time with the patient, asking about work life, recreation, everyday vision needs and the ways in which the patient will use the glasses.
- ◆ Based on the patient's needs and wants and the prescription, the optician recommends a lens, and lens coatings if appropriate.
- ◆ The optician carefully assesses face shape and facial features, and has the patient try on frames that will enhance their appearance.
- ◆ To make sure the frame fits properly, the optician considers several factors such as nose bridge fit, temple length, frame width, lens size (height and width), etc.
- ◆ The optician takes careful measurements of the patient's face and distance between the eyes.



Accurate measurements are essential.

- ◆ Then the optician transmits the order to the lab.
- ◆ When the finished glasses come back from the lab, the optician uses a lensometer to verify that the glasses match the prescription. Then she checks for quality, making sure the lenses are mounted properly and that the bevel is correct. If they are sunglasses, she verifies that the tint is accurate.
- ◆ If the glasses pass all the quality checks, the optician calls the patient in to fit the glasses, making sure the frame is adjusted to fit the face and align with the eyes correctly. She again verifies the prescription, and "demos" the glasses to confirm that they provide excellent vision for their purposes and that the patient is fully satisfied.

Throughout the process and afterwards, the optician is a resource for the patient, offering explanations, answering questions and troubleshooting any concerns.



Lensometer verifies prescription.

Opticians take pride in offering only the best products and values available. They keep our stock of frames up to date on a weekly basis. They meet with representatives from frame designers, lens manufacturers and laboratories regularly to ensure that we have the newest and best products possible. And if they don't have a product, they are happy to investigate to see what we can do for our patients. We send them regularly for professional education and training. I am very proud to say that I fully trust them in making my own eyeglass prescription."

Dr. Liao says that a skilled optician can actually help a patient save money by using their expertise to evaluate

all the patient's options — how much a new prescription will help, whether their old glasses are still serviceable, what lens and frame options will provide the best long-term value and satisfaction.

Confidence counts, she says. "When you purchase a pair of glasses from Coastal Eye, we stand behind the product because we know the amount of skill and expertise that our opticians put into it, and they work right alongside us constantly. At Coastal Eye, there is continuity of care that starts with the doctor's examination and ends with the optical dispensary."



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Optician Retires, Leaves Department in Good Hands



Claudia Umeda, the personable and popular optician who has dispensed eyeglasses to Coastal Eye Specialists patients for the last eight years, has retired from fulltime service. She will continue to work part-time, limited days.

"Claudia is really a special person," says Dr. Lee Wan, Coastal Eye Medical Director. "Any patient she's worked with over the years would almost certainly agree. She inspires such trust and confidence in her patients, as well as the doctors.

"While we are sorry to see her retire, we know she

deserves some time off to be with her family. We are also glad that she has had the opportunity to help train her fellow Coastal Eye opticians, Lisa and Eva, for some time now, and we know that she leaves our optical department in capable and caring hands."

Claudia says she has always valued and appreciated every patient. "I respect their trust in us to fit them with glasses," she says. "I am so grateful for the opportunity I've had to service and provide eyewear to so many over the years, and I treasure all the friendships I've made. The whole journey and experience and the lessons learned have so enriched my life. I feel truly blessed."

Claudia began her career as an optician in 1974 with an ophthalmology practice in Camarillo

An active retirement lies ahead for her, with time for home renovations, travel with her husband, Yas, and volunteer work. She has just started a yoga class. To the delight of her coworkers and patients, she may also work occasionally to fill in as needed for vacations and peak times.

"I also look forward to the days that I work, to re-connect with my co-workers and the patients," says Claudia. "I do miss them."



Notice: Coastal Eye Specialists distributes this newsletter to educate our patients about eye health and care, and the services we provide. It is normally mailed to patients who have had a recent appointment in our office. If you wish to be added to or removed from our mailing list, or receive a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices, please call (805) 983-0700 or send an e-mail to info@coastaleye.net.