

This Member Traded His Hangers For Hondas

By Randy Olson

In April of 2001, Gary Carter traded his hangers for Hondas. Prior to 2001, Gary's family had been in the laundry & dry cleaning business since the 1950's operating Carter's Cleaners on Delaware Street in Fairfield. They also had a Grayville location. The business was started by his father, Newt, and Gary began working in the business after college in 1977, and continued until the Carter's sold the laundry & dry cleaning business 24 years later.

Gary and his wife, Terri purchased LeMonds's Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki from Randy Lemond and have operated it as a family business since that time. The switch from hangers to Hondas did not happen overnight.

"We used to service Lemonds on our laundry route," said Carter. "He planted the seed about selling the business to us, but it was a 2-year process that involved a lot of thinking, soul-searching, and prayer during which time God opened doors for us to make it happen."

Part of the decision to sell one business and buy another stemmed from the fact that his father, Newt, and mother, Joan, were getting up in years, and Gary had sons coming along that he thought might be intrigued by the motorcycle business.

"Both of our sons, Nick and Nate, are active in the business everyday," said Carter, "but my wife, Terri is really the boss."

One thing that hasn't change since the Carter's bought LeMonds is service.

"I realize that every product in our store is not a necessity item," said



Carter. "It is so important to provide excellent service and treat people right. That's what we did in the laundry and dry cleaning business and that's what we strive to do each day in the motorcycle/ATV business."

Part of that service includes giving free hamburgers & hotdogs every Saturday during the summer months.

The Carter's continue to expand their marketing efforts to a larger area. They have a website at www.Lemonds.com which allows users to build their own bike, fill out a credit application, search for parts, and place orders online. They sell motorcycle parts to both retail and wholesale customers worldwide. They also spend 12 days at the DuQuoin State Fair each year to market themselves regionally. The biggest product sellers at LeMonds are still ATV's.

"We sell about 60 percent ATV's and 40 percent motorcycles," said Carter. "But that is beginning to change. Scooters are now a great buy because of their fuel economy and the current price of gasoline."

You can also find Honda and Yamaha generators at LeMonds for a multitude of uses.

LeMonds Honda, Yamaha, & Kawasaki (Carter Ltd) receive their electricity from Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative.

"Our building has been added on to three or four times over the years," said Carter. "Wayne-White crews have helped us correct some service problems by installing a new transformer at the business. This occurred at a very busy time, but the cooperative arranged for alternative power for us while the new installation was being done."

In addition to selling motorcycles and ATV's, LeMonds also have a full-time service and parts department. Be sure to watch for details about their Fall Open House coming soon. LeMonds is located on Route 45 south of Fairfield, or go online at www.Lemonds.com. They are also featured in the business directory of the Wayne-White website at www.WayneWhiteCoop.com. You can call LeMonds at 618-842-9166.



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