

# New independent lab to offer personalised service to independent practices

For the past two years CR Surfacing Laboratories has been supplying Christchurch based Rx lab Lensbiz through a supply partner agreement. To take the business to the next level it was mutually agreed upon by both parties that CR Surfacing Laboratories would start a fresh new company. CR Surfacing Laboratories New Zealand opened for business on 1st August.

CR Surfacing Laboratories is a family owned company and is under the direction of Adam Fletcher both in New Zealand and Australia.

CR Surfacing Laboratories is the oldest independent laboratory in Australia and was the first independent laboratory to produce and supply plastic (CR39) lenses in the Australian market, second only to Sola.

"This will not only

strengthen our brand but will also allow us to expand our network into the New Zealand market without clouded or mixed messages," said Adam.

He sees the potential to drive and grow the lab business in NZ despite the tough economic climate. With regard to the independent lab business servicing independent practices, CR Surfacing Laboratories has had the advantage of working in a climate where Specsavers has established and OPSM is on a larger scale than in New Zealand.

"Initially our focus will be on our existing customer base and gradually bringing on new business. Our goals are long term so we must build the foundations for long term relationships. In Australia we have already experienced the roll out of Specsavers and the franchising of OPSM and its

brands, we understand from an independent point of view what it takes to keep our customers one step ahead of the competition."

Asked if New Zealand wasn't already well serviced with Rx labs, Adam said he believes there is still plenty of opportunity to establish, grow and develop the NZ market.

"Unlike our competitors, we are not after total market share, CR Surfacing Laboratories would rather have 50 very happy customers than 100 upset ones."

The point of difference CR Surfacing brings to the market is that they offer a personalised service backed by quality at very fair prices.

"CR Surfacing Laboratories prides itself on the fact that we only supply to independent practices throughout New Zealand and Australia. Our technologies and processing

techniques are the best in the world. We offer a full range of premium quality products and we are the only independent laboratory in the world to be licensed by Dupont to produce and supply Teflon Easy Care coating. We continue to invest in our future, which more importantly secures the future for our customers."

With the exception of Hoya products, CR Surfacing Laboratories offers a full range of quality products from its supply partners Carl Zeiss Vision, Rodenstock, Younger Optics, Transitions and Essilor.

Adam Fletcher and Sasha Sergejew will be overseeing the NZ operation and have appointed Linton Dodge as manager. Linton has 13 years experience in the optical industry having previously been employed by Lensbiz. He also worked for Morgan & Hall in its lab and has done some



Sasha Sergejew, Commercial Manager; Adam Fletcher, Director; and Dunstan Shepherd, Sales and Marketing

frame repping in between.

Adam believes the forced competition by the larger chains will create a positive vacuum for the independent market.

"There might be some initial margin hits as we all strive to stay competitive, but ultimately service is the key. The public are no fools and are weary of cheap two for one deals. Those that do take up the offers of the larger chains, usually only do it once," he said.

CR Surfacing Laboratories in New Zealand currently employs 5 staff at its Christchurch operation. Its customer base is mainly based in the South Island but does supply to some customers in the North Island. Once the lab has secured a good level of support it will then start processing locally which will include Free-Form and AR coating services.

Currently the lab offers a full range of Rx services including free-form processing, AR coating, online ordering and remote edging. In Christchurch it carries an extensive and comprehensive range of stock lens products on shelf to provide quicker turn-around times for clients.

The lab business has changed over the years. Some of the more recent changes have included free-form processing which is the biggest innovation to be introduced to the optical industry since the invention of the bifocal lens. These changes make for a very exciting future said Adam.

"This technology offers new and exciting frontiers in freedom of design with a larger choice of materials that breaks down a lot of restrictive



Linton Dodge

barriers that are inherent to conventional front surface progressive. In November this year CR Surfacing Laboratories will take free-form processing to the next level offering our customers individual designs as well as being one of the only laboratories in the world processing all products including generic toric and atoric surfaces on free-form technology. This advanced form of processing produces consistent surface geometry over the whole lens surface and eliminates waves and provides exact powers on all materials."

Asked what clients can expect if they have not used CR Surfacing laboratory before Adam said the company prides itself on its quality, technology and reliability.

"As a point of difference we offer a very personalised service combined with the latest technologies. We have strong working relationships with our customers and we base our success on the success of these customers."



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CR Surfacing Laboratories is one of the few independent labs in the world qualified to produce and supply Teflon® EasyCare Coating. Teflon® EasyCare is available on all SOLA Rx Lenses.



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