

SNAG visits The Apple Store

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Story and Photos
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With the opening of Summit Sierra and the long anticipated Apple Store, a new era in Reno has begun and 'we be stylin' now!' On March 15, the day broke the storm pattern long enough for dry roads and snow free skies so that the curious as well as the serious could navigate to Mt. Rose Highway and South Virginia Street, site of the 200 plus acre ultra outdoor shopping mall. The most intrepid were on hand when the doors opened, to get the free Apple T-shirt, so by 1:30 pm when the rest came through the entryway, none were available.

Our 'Snagglers' as Del so adroitly has named the members, trickled in during the two hours we were there and agreeably lent themselves to a photo session in front of the store. Your reporter had some concerns about taking pictures inside the confines but none of the staff objected, unlike the experience at the Sacramento location several years back, as you may recall, when we were chastened and told NOT! Perhaps the festive Grand Opening was as much a part of the privilege as any other reason but whatever, we were grateful and took advantage of the opportunity.

Right from the moment you see the store front, the sense of Apple's clout is evident. Distinguished by a silver mirror like panel with the logo in white, amidst the mustard

yellow facades of everything else in the mall, Apple creates an elegant understated look. There are no doors on the Apple Store either which makes openness very welcoming. For the gala, lots of music played throughout the interior which admittedly was hard on the ears after a while, and definitely a challenge for conversation. Whether this will remain as part of the store philosophy, only time will tell. We personally hope not!

As you might expect, the iPods are prominently showcased near the entrance however many of the accessories are more mid-point located. Undoubtedly for customer flow purposes. It could be no surprise that many young people came into the store just for the iPods, and purchases of same, as we witnessed. Down the sides of the interior are the various Apple computers set up for demonstration. At about the halfway point on the right, is the famous Genius Bar.



Imagine our delight to discover Hunter Halcomb seated behind the counter ready to answer the toughest questions. Hunter used to work at Computer Base, and though still in college is a very sharp young man and so personable. Our Bill Ragsdale tried to stump him and came away impressed. *We'll find out if the 'fix' worked or not at the meeting.* Despite the noise and hubbub, there were some quality moments, of visiting with Hunter, before relinquishing the black stool perched before the bar.

Allocated towards the rear of the store is the software. The left side deals mainly in either Apple applications or high end Adobe



etc. while the right side has games, and other 'stuff'. Certainly for Mac fans, this is the best selection in town, by far, of software and a must visit if just for that reason alone. Your reporter couldn't help but note that Corel's Painter IX was on the shelf, a long coveted desire!

Another face familiar to most 'Snagglers', Nick Carter, who greeted everyone at the door with smiles and an encouragement to fill out the drawing card for \$2700 in Apple gear, if selected. Kinda hard to refuse that!! Nick will be a real asset for the store and probably for us as well. We sure enjoyed seeing him and felt happy for his success. We were told, not by him, that none of the staff are commission based, so that translates to probably a nicer environment for both the employee and the customer. Less stress and emphasis on making the sale. Certainly, the well trained individuals we met were friendly and eager to help but not excessive on either count.



A brief conversation with Jason Roe, the Store Manager, proved pleasant and accommodating albeit non-committal. We could hardly expect otherwise on opening day. Some of our Board members hoped to leave applications for SNAG membership, with him, to distribute but that didn't take place, nor probably will it; but, the door is not closed either. It's truly too early to tell. This doesn't discount the significance of having such a store in our community or the resources of it.

While Del noted that there were no female employees visible, Jason hurriedly claimed that indeed there were some part timers on the staff. Would have been nice to see at least one!

During our hour plus visit, we heard the shrill alarms go off throughout the building which had staffers poised and customers nearly frozen in their tracks. It was quite disconcerting but very effective. We didn't see any particular action take place i.e. an arrest or strong arming, but did note the mood in the place shifted dramatically each time the alarm shrieked. I think we all felt guilty by association somehow. That mass consciousness thing. Between the music, the alarms and the general conversations, the noise level was very high and certainly not overly conducive to a long term stay. One did not envy the staff on that score.

It appears that Reno is growing up whether we like it or not. With the addition of the Apple Store, the local Mac user has something wonderful within reach and even to show off to visitors outside the area. The store will provide ongoing demonstrations of software, on a posted schedule basis, and offer immediate gratification to those with any money to spend on Apple gear. We should no longer feel like orphans in the storm. Apple has validated our community by its presence and we should feel proud to have the store here. For whatever shakes out of this, we hope all benefit. That includes Mac-O-Rama who have supported us fully in the past few years. Yes, Reno is growing up and can nearly rival much larger communities now in offering goods and services. Pretty amazing for the Biggest Little City. Maybe that moniker is more true now than ever. -LLE-

A big SNAG welcome to the Apple Store



Visiting were:
Patty and Jim Bunch
Laura Lea Evans
Del Missier
Joe Nishikida
Bill and Peggy Ragsdale
Bernie Stolzman
Mike Strem
Anyone missed on this list is because your editor didn't see you!
Please forgive the oversight