

LADIES BUY & SELL LAMBOS

A trend in our economy is to trade up. An article in The McKinsey Quarterly reported that from 1999 to 2004 the growth rate for luxury goods increased by about 9%, compounded annually, while middle goods decreased almost 6%. Manufacturers have been successfully developing emotionally charged, quality products such as luxury sports cars.

Companies try to gain insight into their customers to increase sales. According to Gerald Zaltman's book *How Customers Think-Essential Insights into the Mind of the Market*, 80% of new offerings fail due to a lack of understanding of the subconscious decision-making process customers go through. Customers select an item for purchase when they feel a specific emotion clearly, intertwined with logical reasoning. The feelings of euphoria, empowerment, and satisfaction of achievement must be predominant when deciding to purchase a luxury item. Luxury sports car manufacturers are adept at appealing to those emotions.

Lamborghini Orange County is a Southern California woman-owned business, and the only woman-owned Lamborghini dealership. Not surprisingly, it places a special emphasis on the female customer. Dealership co-owner Nora Keuylian comments on Lamborghini's appeal to her customer base, "It is artistic expression that stirs up positive emotions like excitement and exhilaration along with a desire for quality." As the cars have been redesigned to accommodate requests from female customers, more and more women are buying them for themselves.

The *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management*, Volume 4 says that American consumers are aspiring to trade up to secure luxury goods and trade down to get rid of everyday commodities. James Twitchell's book *Living it Up* observes that luxury spending in the United States has grown four times as fast as overall spending, adding that some political leaders are grateful for this economic boost and hail luxury shopping as an act of patriotism. Twitchell propounds that luxury consumption has united the nation more effectively than any war, movement or ideology.

The woman attracted to high-powered luxury sports cars is educated, confident and unafraid to express herself, a go-getter, a woman who wants to achieve her dreams. As Nora Keuylian puts it, these women "...just project confidence and purchase that Lamborghini, saying, 'Ok, I'm going to do it! I deserve it!'" The purchase is an expression of status and achievement."

Co-owner and sister Sossi Keuylian explains, "I think more and more women are going to be in Lamborghinis.



Nora and I drive them all the time so people can see that we are real people and can drive them. It's a double-take whenever there is a woman in the car. Men are fascinated when they see a woman driving a Lamborghini. They actually love it."

The Keuylian sisters believe in, "engaging our customers constantly so they can enjoy their cars." One event was a three-day luxury drive with guest host Mario Andretti. Nora explains, "We are there for our buyers who have our cell number. If one of them calls, they reach us. They aren't told, 'Sorry, it's after hours.' We accommodate customers if they need to drop a car off for service on the way out of town, or whatever the reason."

Sossi compliments her sister, who is also the dealership's top salesperson. "I think she has a way of being genuine that comes through and makes a customer very comfortable to trust her. She builds relationships with them and honesty is the primary element. These are smart people, they know." The sisters pay tribute to their parents who insisted on integrity in the home and weekly church attendance. The positive influence impacts how they conduct business. All customers are valued and treated with respect and courtesy.

"Our customers appreciate the design of Lamborghini and the culture, art and power behind it as part of its draw. We love coming to work," adds Sossi. Both sisters view the opportunities at their dealership as a blessing and a privilege. "If I am able to touch people's hearts by being honest, living my life, not having to do drugs, drink alcohol or partying, not have the attitude that the world revolves around me, maybe that is being a light in the world."

Lamborghini of Orange County focuses on ways to continually improve the experience for every customer, male or female, and treat them with integrity and honesty. 



G.J. DePILLIS
looks at a growing
phenomenon.
Bright, accomplished women
do not need men
to own - or sell -
a Lamborghini.
Photos by the
author and
PAMELA JONES
- or to photograph

At top: Nora Keuylian chats with a young woman customer. Below: Mena Thiers put a deposit on her Gallardo based on a recommendation, before she had even seen a photo of one. She finally took possession of the tenth car delivered in California. The Gallardo follows a series of Ferraris and a host of street racing muscle cars in her garages. Here Mena is seen on the Giro Lamborghini. She has had her car for two years, has 5,300 miles on the odo, and she's fast.