

ECONOMY

Try this on for size: Tejon Ranch unveils men's clothing line

BY LOUIS MEDINA, Californian staff writer

e-mail: lmedina@bakersfield.com | Tuesday, Jul 8 2008 10:52 AM

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Product diversification is something the Tejon Ranch Co. truly believes in: Farming, ranching, hunting, land development, oil, gas and mineral extraction activities, filming and, most recently, men's fashions.

PHOTOS:



Photo by Alex Horvath / The Californian

Herb Walker and Barry Zoeller model pieces from the Tejon Ranch Clothing collection offered at H. Walker's Clothing Co.

Uh, men's fashions?

“What we wanted to do with the clothing line is to give people the opportunity to own part of Tejon Ranch and all that the Tejon Ranch brand represents,” said Barry Zoeller, vice president of corporate communications.

The Tejon Ranch Clothing Collection is being sold exclusively at H. Walker's Clothing Co., a local retailer downtown, and features American-made, 100 percent-cotton long-sleeve sport shirts and chino pants, according to store owner Tracy Kiser.

“The way I would describe it is all-American, traditional, multipurpose. Casual or dressy — it wears nicely,” she said.

“Phenomenal. It’s the best word to use,” Kiser said when talking about sales since the men’s line was introduced at a May 22 party attended by some 200 guests. “It was a lot of fun,” she said of the launch.

“It’s a sportswear-driven line for now,” Kiser said, but “new styles are added to the collection every month.” Shirt sizes range from medium to XX and pants are available in waist sizes 32 to 44, she said. Pants retail for \$95 and shirts start at \$125.

COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

“What we really want to emphasize is the concept of comfortable, casual, classic,” Zoeller said, especially the “classic California” connection of the Tejon Ranch, which has been around for 165 years. “Our target market is anyone looking for something that is authentic, comfortable and of premium quality.”

Zoeller said 18 months of research and development preceded the launch, and a lot of that time was spent finding “the finest manufacturers in the U.S.”

Gitman Bros. Master Shirt Makers in Ashland, Penn., which also sews its own line as well as shirts for Burberry, Brooks Brothers and Saks Fifth Avenue, was chosen as the designer/manufacturer of the shirts, which bear the Tejon cattle brand, Zoeller said.

For the pants, Tejon Ranch decided on Charleston, S.C.-based Berle Manufacturing Co., which was established in 1946 and whose Web site boasts it is “the country’s oldest family-owned trouser manufacturer that is still in the hands of the original family.”

LOCAL RETAIL CONNECTION

Kiser, who bought her store from her father, Herb Walker, in 1997, said Tejon Ranch approached H. Walker’s Clothing about selling its collection. “We’re a local store. We’ve been in business for 37 years. We support the community like they do,” she said.

“It was definitely important that we launch the clothing line here at home,” Zoeller said. “Tracy Kiser has been a real help to us in our research and we thought it was appropriate that it would be her establishment that would be the first to sell our clothing line.”

Future product plans, according to Zoeller, include the addition of a denim line, outerwear, accessories, belts, eyewear, “and then we will make the move into women’s apparel.”

Sales expansion efforts in the works include online sales followed by the signing on of other retailers locally and statewide. “And if we continue to be as successful as we have been at the beginning,” Zoeller said, “then nationwide.”

ON THE WEB

“Timeless clothing you can wear anywhere from outdoors to the office” is how the Tejon Ranch Clothing Collection of men’s wear is advertised on www.tejonclothing.com.

The Web site is for marketing purposes at present — “To try to communicate what this brand represents,” according to Barry Zoeller, vice president of corporate communications — but online sales will eventually be possible.

Although some models wearing the clothes are shown, the Web site mostly features a slide presentation of sweeping vistas highlighting the natural beauty of the 426-square-mile Tejon Ranch that was founded in 1843.