



Custom-built motorcycles in the Johnny Chop store on Oxford Avenue. . . sales have exceeded expectations

Big boys' toys roar into Surfers

A SURFERS Paradise store selling custom-made motorcycles and quality clothing is proving that some luxury items are in demand from the financial elite.

On opening his Johnny Chop concept store in Oxford Avenue in November, proprietor Paul Depwood said he had expected to sell three or four bikes a year, but already he has sold seven.

Accordingly, Mr Depwood has revised his expectations to 12 bikes a year.

His customers require deep pockets as prices for the motorcycles range from \$15,000 to \$25,000.

Describing custom-made bikes as an "oppositional self-indulgence", Mr Depwood said it was apparent they were a heavy sales piece were not prepared to sacrifice.

"Buying a motorcycle like

this is really, really personal," he said.

"It is something that has probably been in the back of someone's mind for 10 or more 15 years.

"They feel that, even though they have signed up on something, they should still do something for themselves."

Mr Depwood said his clients were typically white collar workers and baby-boomer company executives who had decided to indulge their dream but did not feel comfortable making into a bike workshop.

He said having a showroom for custom-built motorcycles - the Johnny Chop workshop is in Northport - was new in Australia.

"There is nowhere else in the country you can walk into a shop and see custom bikes ranging from \$55,000 to \$125,000 in price tags," he said.

An export arm of the company has sprung up thanks to a Middle Eastern university student living in Surfers Paradise who walked into the store by chance one day.

The student bought a chopper and shipped it home.

As a consequence, Johnny Chop has since received orders from the Middle East.

Mr Depwood said Surfers Paradise was the ideal location for the store as it gave the Johnny Chop brand exposure to locals and interstate tourists, which was essential to his goal of opening another outlets in Sydney and Melbourne.

There are also plans to diversify Johnny Chop's clothing line for men and women through national outlets.

Mr Depwood has taken a two-year lease on the 118sqm store, at 34 Oxford Avenue.

Agent Nicholas Brown, of

Styllis & Sains Commercial Realtors, handled the lease at an undisclosed rate for landlord Monogony, a company linked to artist Ken Done.

"When we were advised by Paul that he would have choppers in the store with fashion, he immediately had the attention of myself and the landlord," said Mr Brown.

"It is great to see a shop with a point of difference come to Surfers Paradise.

"I think consumers these days are looking for that concept with the wow factor."

Mr Done's Done Art & Design store occupied the property's adjoining tenancy, now leased to clothing store Phoenix for Men & Women, until it closed in 2007.

The store had sold distinctive Australian clothing, art, accessories, and homewares on the Coast since the 1980s.