

Shred's Board Shop: New store rides wave of skating, derby trends

By Jeff Barnet / jbarnet@lcsun-news.com

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Talk about being in the right place at the right time.

When Ed and Rita Romero first opened Shred's Board Shop and Apparel, 1124 S. Solano Drive, the store's sole focus was on skateboarding: decks, wheels, trucks, bearings, hats and T-shirts. They said they were inspired by their nephew, JoRey Hernandez, 19, who has traveled the state competing as a skate pro.

Ed and Rita's son Jake Romero, 23, was brought on to manage the venture, which includes a kiosk in the Mesilla Valley Mall. (Andrew Montenegro, 21, also works at the kiosk.) The store opened in March with a skateboarding contest held on the driveway that runs parallel to the store's alleyway entrance. Thirty-two skaters between the ages of 9 and 26 competed in grinding the edges of a Fun Box and doing other tricks.

Not long after the grand opening, the Romeros were approached by Andre Walker, general manager of the Crossroads City Derby. She said she had been trying to talk area businesses into stocking roller derby equipment for the women's roller derby teams based in Las Cruces.

When Rita heard that people were saying 'no' to Walker's request, she said she knew there was an opportunity there. "That was an indicator," she said. "If others are saying no, then we have to do it."

Shred's quickly stocked all necessary derby supplies, including helmets, knee pads, wrist guards, mouth guards, hip and elbow pads, and, of course, skates.

Now on any given afternoon at Shred's, one might find skateboarders and

derby girls gathered together, either looking at merchandise inside the store or skating outside of it.

"The derby girls are very particular about what they buy," Rita, 49, said. "I am amazed by these girls. I take my hat off to them. They are brave women."

"They are very nice to us," Ed said. "It's fun for us because they are fun people."

Jake said Shred's sells a lot of "completes" - total derby supply packages - to the new derby recruits, who are known as "fresh meat" in derby slang. However, a lot of OG's, the more experienced derby women, also shop at Shred's.

For both skateboarders and roller derby skaters, Shred's is happy to special order anything, Ed said. Fortunately, he said, many skateboard suppliers are also derby suppliers, so they were able to quickly meet the derby demand.

For skateboarders, Shred's offers a variety of decks - competitive skateboards, long boards and cruisers - which they will outfit with wheels, bearings and trucks (a skateboard axle). A person can get into a good skateboard for between \$100 and \$160, Ed said. All of Shred's decks are made from either American or Canadian maple wood, he said.

Of course, you can't have just a skateboard. You are going to need a skateboard hat, T-shirt, sunglasses and other gear. Shred's has everything you need here, including hats from Real, Santa Cruz, Krooked, Organica and Spitfire.

You can't find these skateboard company hats anywhere else, Jake said.

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JoRey Hernandez and all the Romeros emphasized that skateboarding is a real, full-contact sport, requiring long years of practice before one can execute jumps and tricks. Shred's sponsors JoRey, who calls himself a "thrasher" in addition to a skate pro, with all necessary equipment. He is also on hand at the store to help new skaters get started in the sport.

"If you have good balance, you can be having fun your first day on a skateboard," he said.

In addition, cruisers are good, cheap transportation, especially in a university town, said Ed, 51, who is traveling by cruiser more and more often.

Jake said that locally the skateboarding scene has "blown up" in recent years, and his family saw the need for a shop that would offer quality merchandise at an affordable price. In addition, Shred's is on a mission to promote skateboarding in Las Cruces, he said.

The walls of Shred's sport an unusual décor - the broken decks of skateboards signed and dated by local skateboarders. The wall honors the adventurous spirit of skateboarders who have cracked their skateboards in the line of duty.

As a local business, the Romeros said they do everything they can to buy local and to support the community. Before opening Shred's, Ed and Rita were in the construction business, they said. When the housing market slowed down here, they decided they needed to find something different.

"You can't find anything like it in southern New Mexico," Jake said. "It's a hole-in-the-wall, Ma-and-Pa skateboard shop."

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If you go

Shred's Board Shop and Derby Supplies

1124 S. Solano Dr., Ste. C

Hours: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Wednesday

11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Thursday through Saturday

For more information: Call (575) 644-0858 or e-mail shredslc@gmail.com

Shred's Kiosk

Mesilla Valley Mall

Hours: Mall hours, seven days a week

For more information: Call (575) 521-9791 or e-mail shredslc@gmail.com

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Shred's Board Shop

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The advertisement features a pink-to-purple gradient background. At the top, the text 'Live Psychic Readings' is written in a white, cursive font, with '3 free minutes' below it in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Below this, three purple rounded rectangles with white borders contain the words 'love', 'career', and 'dreams' in a white, cursive font. At the bottom, a white rounded rectangle contains the text 'TRY IT NOW!' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, and below that, the 'LIVEperson' logo is displayed in a white, sans-serif font.