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## Automotive News

### Dealer's wine shop spawns bar/service lane

#### Upscale Texas store brings millennials, Cadillacs together

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When Will Churchill and his twin sister, Corrie Watson, opened a small fine wine shop inside their Fort Worth, Texas, Cadillac dealership three years ago, it was a novel idea they hoped would at least break even and maybe help with customer satisfaction.

But it has done so much more than that.

Not only does the 250-square-foot Cadillac Wines generate about \$700,000 in annual revenues for Frank Kent Cadillac; it has been directly responsible for selling at least a car a month, Churchill said.



Churchill: "Such a new concept"

And it has helped the store become a GM Dealer of the Year for three years straight.

What's more, the little wine shop has spawned an offspring 20 miles away that seems to be kicking that success into a higher gear.

Kent & Co. Wines is an upscale wine bar in a trendy part of Fort Worth that draws mostly young people who sample wines while sitting amid new Cadillacs.

But the 3,500-square-foot wine bar, which opened in June 2014, has a second purpose: It serves as a satellite service lane for customers who live or work near downtown to drop off their vehicles for service.

So far, Churchill said, the wine bar is used by just a handful of customers each day. They drop off and pick up cars being serviced at Frank Kent Cadillac some 20 minutes away.

The cars are shuttled back and forth by the dealership's employees.

"It's such a new concept that people are trying to get their mind wrapped around how it works," Churchill said. "But it gives a customer 45 minutes or an hour back to their lives from not having to go to the dealership and then catch a shuttle or another ride downtown."

The wine bar opens at 6:45 a.m. each day and is run by a sommelier. When it opened, there were two new Cadillacs with one above the other in a corner of the seating area. Another new Cadillac was parked outside on the lawn. But as the wine bar grew busier, the Cadillac that was placed on the floor inside was removed to make space for additional tables, Churchill said.

"Those are our busiest tables, underneath the car," Churchill said. "In our industry, we take it for granted because we see the underside of cars all the time, but those seats are really coveted" by the wine bar's clientele.

Kent & Co. has attracted largely millennials and mainly women -- exactly the type of customers Cadillac covets,

Churchill said.

"Our job was to get [the Cadillac] brand out in front of these younger consumers, to get them comfortable with it," he said. "They won't come to a Cadillac dealership, but they'll come to a cool, trendy wine bar. It's a very long-term approach. It's one of those deals that we hope will pay huge dividends maybe five or six years down the road."

While Kent & Co. expands the brand downtown, Cadillac Wines within the dealership now hosts sold-out monthly wine tastings that have a waiting list of national winemakers eager to sell their finest vintages amid a bevy of Cadillacs.

"When was the last time that you had people pay to come to a dealership that wasn't a one-off charity event?" Churchill asked, adding that the monthly events draw about 70 people at \$50 to \$150 per person.

Cadillac Wines Manager Brad Kimura said the little dealership wine shop is the largest retailer of \$245-per-bottle Opus One wines in a 17-state region. And when Kimura doesn't have a wine customer, he hangs out in the service lounge.

He keeps the Cadillac customers happy, either with complimentary tastings or just making sure they stay satisfied with their service.

Churchill said: "This little 250-square-foot wine shop has spawned all of this."



Kent & Co. Wines, left, in Fort Worth, Texas, is an offspring of the wine store at Frank Kent Cadillac. The downtown wine bar allows service customers to skip the trip to and from the dealership, 20 minutes away.

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