

PBA SPOTLIGHT

Kendall Chevrolet is on a roll



Van Olp holds Kendall Chevrolet's Mark of Excellence Award

BY LINDA RODRIGUEZ BERNFELD

In just two years, Kendall Chevrolet has become one of the top Chevy dealerships in the nation. In fact, the dealership won the Chevrolet Genuine Leader 2005 Mark of Excellence award.

"That's for outstanding sales and customer service," says Van Olp, an ownership partner and the dealership's general manager. "We try to make customers feel really comfortable."

To do that, the Kendall Chevrolet sales staff does not pressure customers, but instead tries to give them a good experience.

Olp moved to Miami from Atlanta to take over the dealership.

"We had an amazing opportunity to own a Chevy store in the number two car market," he says. "It was such a good opportunity I moved my young family here. We took a chance and it's working out great for us."

One reason for his belief that it was a good opportunity is the location.

"U.S. One is the best location you can have for a car dealership," Olp says. Added to the value is its proximity to Dadeland Mall.

"We have 7.4 acres, four entrances and our own red light to U.S. One," he says.

Not only does the dealership have a strong selection of cars, it also has a strong used car operation.

"We have anywhere from \$500 used cars to \$90,000 used cars," Olp says. "We stock all kinds of makes and models. Chances are we have it, or we can get it pretty quick."

Kendall Chevrolet sells GM certified cars, which means the cars must pass rigorous inspections.

"All of our used cars go through an

81-point inspection," he says. "We look for clues to identify that a car has been under water or has had major damage. We don't sell those kinds of vehicles."

Kendall Chevrolet is gaining quite a reputation as the place to buy Corvettes. The dealership sold only four Corvettes in 2004 but it sold 96 in 2005.

"We are pacing 120 this year," Olp says. "We stock more Corvettes than anyone in South Florida and we are the number one Corvette dealer in Miami-Dade County."

The dealership keeps the interest in Corvettes high by hosting events such as the Sunshine Corvette Club's annual Spring Meet.

Other cars and trucks also fuel the increased sales. Olp says the Tahoe, Suburban, the HHR and Silverado are all new this year, with the Silverado the vehicle that is the most highly anticipated.

"We've been waiting seven years for this new truck," he says. "The Tahoe sales are up. The Tahoes, Suburbans and Avalanches are just smoking right now."

Even with the huge increases in gas prices, consumers are still buying the big SUV's. Some of the new models come with a new displacement on demand fuel technology, which allows the engine to shift from eight to four cylinders on the highway. With that system, the Tahoe can get 24 miles to a gallon of gas on the highway.

"Right now, if you buy an Impala or a Monte Carlo, Chevy caps the fuel prices at \$1.99 a gallon for the first year," Olp says. "If you are paying \$2.95 at the pump, GM will pay 96 cents of that gallon of gas during the first year you own the vehicle. They track that through the new On-Star system."

For more information, call 305-740-7475 or visit <www.kendallchevy.com>.