

LOMARDIAN PAPER WRITES ON OUR PRESIDENT

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 Jane Charmelo **OUT AND ABOUT**

Enterprising resident starts own clothing line

As the saying goes, "There's a lot of money in the market of business," and one saying entrepreneurs believe there is a necessity in our world.

A recently that is, for men's and women's clothing that with significantly, "Chicago," without being of the same-old-same-old variety, according to Rich Sante, who, along with partner Chris Martinez, founded the Chi Clothing Co. about a year ago.

Sante, 22, a 1998 graduate of Lakeside East High School and a Lakeside resident, said the idea to create a line of clothing for Chicago grew in about a year (approximately), yet not without a major coincidence.

The entrepreneurial pair, married Sante, came from a conversation he had, with a stranger, on a trip to Acapulco about four years ago.

During the phone trip, he happened to mention, as did Martinez, the "business" had "I just have two" shirts," and the man began talking about their beloved city, Chicago.

Sante said that he and Martinez talked about their career, the being the West Side and Martinez's being the South Side. The pair agreed that Chicago is "one of the best cities, one of the great cities," around Sante.

One of that shared passion, a new "business," an idea for a company and a partnership was born, he added.

After arriving at their mutual

about with their plan.

And the pair continued to talk "more about we got back here," added Sante.

Sante works for Spectrum Electronics as an electronics tech, having studied at College of DuPage and with Level 750, Martinez is an Illinois state trooper. The occasional part of the whole story though, is that Sante's background, and other job, involves the manufacture of clothing.

An Sante tells it, his family's business, of silk-screening and embroidery apparel goes back to the 1970s, when his grandfather founded Art-Five Products in Orem, where, along with Berens, Sante lived as a child before moving to Lakeside.

The company, which has three work for the Chicago Cubs merchandise, sold inside Wright Field, Boston Red, Comcast and others, has employed Sante's parents, as well as his uncle, uncle, cousin and other relatives, including Sante himself.

Remembering that there are over 20 family members working in the business, Sante added with a chuckle that "We have a large family."

It would be his first with the company that he was 11 years old, when he would make and sell the finished product. Today, he works as a customer for Art-Five products.

Sante recalled how he

and all others have Sante Sante or Sante, such as Al Capone and Frank Sinatra.

Sante is confident that there's something for everyone, whether it's hip-hop, punk or casual attire a customer is looking for.

Whether it's a tailored look, tight slacks, T-shirts or jeans, well-tailored jackets, shirts, a loose, baggy fitting shirt, or everything in between, "the more you see Sante, you can tell this is," he added. "It's not just the

line in Chicago we make what."

The process has not been without its glitches, though, as Sante has discovered. Trying to get the company Web site ready for online shopping, he said "the whole e-commerce thing" has been an eye-opening experience.

And, finding manufacturers in Chicago has proved to be a challenge, especially when "someone is so much cheaper."

There there's the day-to-day operation of the business, of manufacturing clothing from said Martinez is largely in charge of production and marketing, with Sante usually in charge of everything else.

"We're taking a piece of fabric, sewing it into a shirt, putting a design on it, packaging, marketing and selling it. There there's shipping it, then collecting the money. It's no thing is," he chuckled. "I'm every part of it."

"We've learned that there's a big market in this," he added, noting that silk-screening and embroidery is done at Art-Five.

Looking ahead, Sante said he is looking to find a broader market for his clothing in boutiques, but emphasized that his shirt are "not a necessity."

Sante said he has used his contacts as an Art-Five salesman to get the word out about Chi Clothing Co., and has done promotions at clubs and



Photo courtesy of Rich Sante

RICH SANTE: Not that other than business, there weren't any clothes that inspired the "Chi-cow" look, as he dubbed a line himself, with the help of Chris Martinez. Sante hopes Chi Clothing Co. will take off, running when the company adds more dress shirts to its selection, as well as online shopping.

see that all day long."

With these words in the back of his mind, and a desire to earn money to provide Chicago, he and Martinez launched Chi Clothing Co.

Sante explained that "Chi" stands for Chicago, and the "Co" stands for "company."

However, he continued, the whole idea behind the new clothing line was not to launch a complete replacement, but to employ local people and bring the whole

METROMIX WRITES ON OUR FASHION SHOWS

646-2345 W Belmont Ave, 773-750-7563

Blitzrock
Wed. Video clips featuring today's music presented on large screens, 8 p.m. Thu. Video clips from stand-up comics and comedy shows, 8 p.m. 5245 N. Halsted St. 773-477-0888.

Blitz's Lounge
Thu. Chris Quinn, Hinkel and guests spin down-tempo, house, hip-hop and soul. 62 p.m. 105 N. North Branch St. 312-622-0006.

Boomerangs
Sat. Super DJ spin. 9 p.m.-2 a.m. 1444 N. Chicago Ave. 312-625-7600.

Tranzit
Fri. DJ's Frankie J, Juan the Predator and Green Eyes spin. Sat. DJ's Martin "Bragman" Luna, JayFunk and Doves spin. 6 p.m.-2 a.m. 433 W. Lake St. 312-433-8800.

Wet
Thu. 25 live martini, DJ spin dance music. 209 W. Lake St. 312-623-6232.

Zetta
Wed. DJ's Felix, Julie "The Wild Thinker" and Mercedes spin. Thu. DJ's Heral, Chris Quinn and Frank Salerno spin house. Fri. DJ's Selma, JayFunk, Chris Santiago, Jan Huang and Frank Salerno spin. 9 p.m.-4 a.m. Sat. DJ's Panther Shock, Andre Harris, Shaka 23, Mike Meyers, Jay Wander and Chris Moe spin. 9 p.m.-6 a.m. 523 W. Wood St. 312-757-0400.

Find more clubs info at metromix.com

NIGHTCRAWLERS: SEEN ON THE SCENE



Runway rehash
The clothes were easy and the moves were smooth at NY Lounge (1206 N. State Pkwy.) for Friday's Fashion Week event. Did we keep your stylish self? Peruse our online photo gallery at metromix.com—and don't forget to submit your own weekend event photos to metromix@tribune.com.