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Teddy bear window display a Christmas toy tradition

By Pippa Fisher



The window display at the Lafayette McCaulou's. Photo Pippa Fisher

years collected antique toys for his display.

It's a Lafayette tradition every Christmas season - the McCaulou's shop window. From Thanksgiving onward lights twinkle and music tinkles as the display of cuddly moving teddy bears enchant in a different winter wonderland scene each year.

McCaulou's Founder Dave McCaulou, still working to keep the empire of 22 stores running every day, started with the Lafayette store in 1963. "We were the first tenants in the shopping center," he says explaining that the store was built to suit their need, including the corner window, which is such a perfect spot for the annual display.

McCaulou remembers seeing the Breuners Furniture store featuring a Christmas living room scene with mechanized people in downtown Oakland as a small boy with his parents. It made such an impression on him that he decided to do the same in his store and over the

McCaulou credits Store Supervisor Sue Borges who, he says, is very artistic. Each year a group of employees work on the window at night. They are helped by talented Lafayette carpenter Ron Gilardi who builds whatever they need to create the scene. "They have fun," says McCaulou.

For several years, McCaulou explains, they rotated the different displays around as many as eight or 10 of their stores, thus keeping each store's window fresh each year. Borges kept detailed records for the following year. Now, however, the display is only found at the Lafayette store. The collection is kept in storage throughout the rest of the year.

McCaulou says families sometimes take their Christmas card photos with the display as a backdrop.

"A million fingerprints on the glass and we know we're successful," says McCaulou, noting that all the fingerprints are at child-height.

Reach the reporter at: pippa@lamorindaweekly.com

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