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Iconic Ornaments launched by two young entrepreneurs just in time for the holidays

By DIANNE RUSSELL
Photos by Mary Hurlbut

Brothers Jackson and Sawyer Collins – ninth and seventh graders respectively at St. Margaret's in San Juan Capistrano – have joined forces to create Iconic Ornaments, which launched on September 22.

The Laguna Lifeguard Tower at Main Beach is the first in a product line they're hoping to develop into a collection of high-quality glass ornaments portraying legendary landmarks. They chose the name Iconic Ornaments because they liked the sound – it does have a nice rhythm to it.

However, Iconic Ornaments is more than just a business endeavor.

According to Jackson and Sawyer, their dads Clark and Greg raised them to appreciate the importance of giving back to the community. As a result, a portion of each sale will go to the Pacific Marine Mammal Center (PMMC). Even though they launched less than a month ago, they will soon present a check for \$300 to PMMC.



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Sawyer (on left) and Jackson

They chose PMMC because they've visited the facility over the years and have seen the incredible accomplishments firsthand. "What they do is important, and Chief Executive Officer Peter Chang is great," said Jackson.

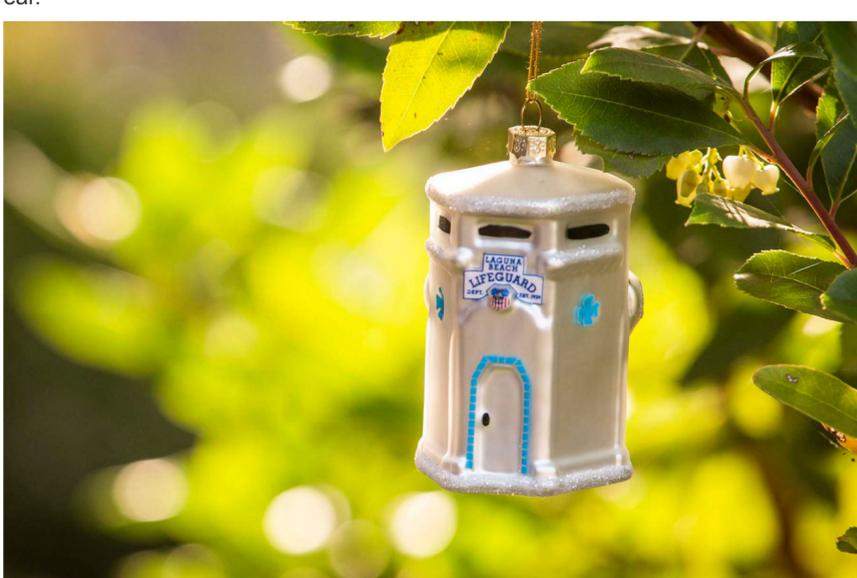
Sawyer added, "We picked them because they do such good things."

"On behalf of the Pacific Marine Mammal Center, we feel so fortunate and humbled to be the recipient of portions of their very hard earned and well-deserved funds," said Chang. "Creatively coming up with beautiful, unique products is tough enough in itself, but then, for these two boys to incorporate a philanthropic aspect is admirable too. That's both fantastic and impressive. Jackson and Sawyer are a force to reckon with for years to come, and it will be fun to watch."

An idea is born

The brothers' habit of collecting Christmas ornaments from places they visit on vacation (like Yellowstone) sparked the idea to make ornaments based on Laguna landmarks. And what more iconic landmark is there than the Lifeguard Tower at Main Beach?

"I did some research and found that there wasn't anything else like it around town," Jackson said. "We did a business plan, and the other steps we're playing by ear."



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Laguna Lifeguard Tower ornament

With the help of local draftsman Keith Lee, who made a drawing of the tower, they decided on the dimensions and found a manufacturer overseas.

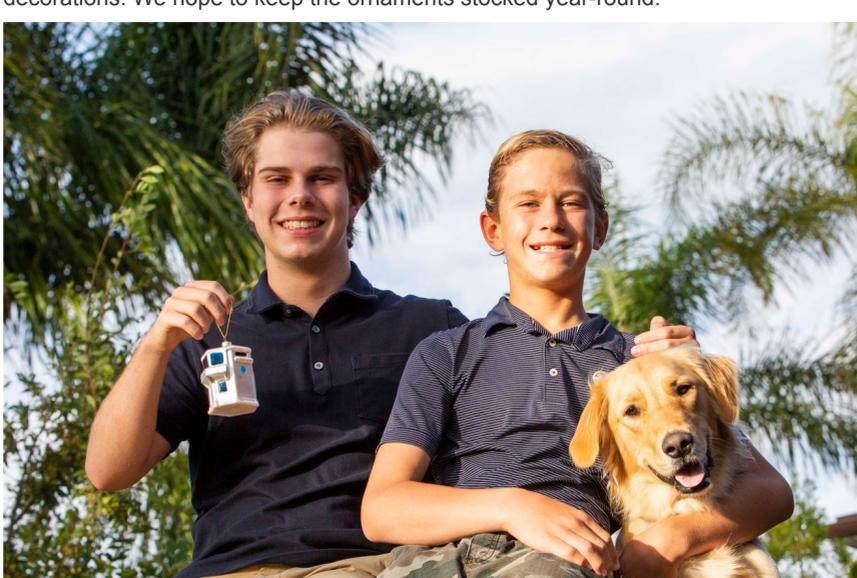
From 20 color options, they chose two samples and got the first order with no problems.

The ornaments' iridescent quality adds to their appeal and the attention to detail is extraordinary.

"Bushard's Pharmacy has been super generous," Jackson said. "A day after we launched, Marisa Bushard said they had been looking for ornaments exactly like this. We've restocked there three times already."

Sheila Bushard-Jamison, owner of Bushard's, is thrilled about finding the ornaments and being the first in town to carry them.

"My daughter Marisa first saw Iconic Ornaments on Instagram and knew it was something special," said Bushard-Jamison. "At Bushard's, we are always trying to support other local businesses, and it is great to see the young entrepreneurship that Jackson and Sawyer have shown by creating these beautiful ornaments. We also love the fact that with each purchase a donation is made to the Pacific Marine Mammal Center. The Lifeguard Tower is quintessential Laguna Beach and we have had so many customers excited about including the ornament in their holiday decorations. We hope to keep the ornaments stocked year-round."



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(L-R) Jackson, Sawyer and Olive
Future plans

"We would just like to say how proud we are that the boys were able to take an idea, just a simple sketch, from the development phase all the way through to the finished product," said Clark and Greg. "They didn't let the inevitable bumps in the road stop them and it's wonderful to see that they are growing, and learning how to give back and building confidence along the way."

Jackson and Sawyer are expanding their market to Corona del Mar.

"We took a tour of Roger's Gardens and went behind the scenes into the Christmas Room with the head buyer," said Jackson.

On October 9, Jackson and Sawyer delivered 36 ornaments to the store.

Both boys are fans of Christopher Radko's ornaments, which are also featured in Roger's Gardens' Christmas Room.

Of course, partnering with family members can be tricky. They are 50/50 partners. Asked if they ever disagreed on business matters, Jackson answered, "No," and Sawyer said, "Yes."

"It's mostly about efficiency, very minor things," Jackson added. "We negotiate."

Although it would appear difficult to balance school and business, evidently, they have it all worked out.

"After school, we pack up orders and get them ready to ship," Jackson said.

They also schedule deliveries from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. on Saturdays and orders can be picked up from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. on Wednesdays.

They ship all over the U.S. and even had one order from Vancouver.

"We are looking to do other iconic Laguna landmarks in the future and develop a collection," said Jackson.

There's no doubt that it will happen. For these creative and compassionate brothers, there's no limit to the possibilities.

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