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Apple to open second Inland store



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By **LOU HIRSH**
The Press-Enterprise

Starting this weekend, fans of Apple who live in southwestern Riverside County will have less drive time when it comes to shopping for the company's latest high-tech gadgets and gear.

According to Apple's Web site, the company will open its second Inland retail store Saturday at 10 a.m. at Promenade Temecula mall, 40820 Winchester Road.

For several years, Apple's only Inland store has been at Victoria Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga. Apple representatives on Wednesday did not immediately return calls seeking comment.

The store will be in the mall's 126,000-square-foot, open-air addition, which opened in March and includes several chain stores and eateries.

Melina Ferraez, marketing director for Promenade Temecula, said construction barricades were posted outside the Apple space about two months ago, with a graphic noting an Apple store was coming, and the barricades came down about two weeks ago.

Otherwise, until Tuesday, there was no advertising or advance announcement about the new store outside the mall premises.

Several shoppers at the Promenade mall on Wednesday said they welcomed the Apple store.

"I think it's convenient," said Desiree Daou, 18, of Temecula. "I plan on checking it out."

Jazmine Navarro, 19, of Murrieta, said she now will be able visit an Apple store to look at products rather than go to an electronics department store.

She said problems with products that would have prompted a call to a service technician now will be handled by a technician face-to-face.

"They can visually show you the problem and how to fix it," Navarro said.

Chris Norton, chief strategist for consumer research firm Fingerprint Strategies Inc., said Apple in recent years has become part of a select group of companies -- which includes firms such as Audi, Mini and clothing retailer Anthropologie -- that has succeeded by making themselves an extension of consumers' personal values, rather than trying to compete on traditional factors such as pricing.

Those companies have cultivated a deep loyalty, to the point where customers are unlikely to switch away from them even in tough economic periods.

"Even though they are a multibillion-dollar company, they appear small and personal against the leviathan that is Microsoft -- a position they reinforce constantly through their marketing," Norton said by e-mail Wednesday.

Among the latest technology being touted by Apple in its stores are a new iPod Nano with a built-in video camera and microphone; an aluminum unibody MacBook Pro family of laptop computers; and the iPhone 3GS, with enhanced photo and video features.

Staff writer Gene Ghiotto contributed to this report.

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Apple store

Opening: 10 a.m. Saturday

Location: Promenade Temecula mall, 40820 Winchester Road

Other Inland store: Victoria Gardens, Rancho Cucamonga
