

GROWING WITH STYLE AND INDEPENDENCE

David Ridgway, managing director of Ridgway Optical Supplies, explains why it's not just opticians who value their independence – and introduces the company's latest collections.

We all know how important independence is to members of the National Eyecare Group – who are free to run their businesses the way they want to and respond to changes in their local market. The same is true for many of the UK's optical supply companies, which are striving to build highly successful businesses whatever their size. One such company is Oxfordshire-based Ridgway Optical Supplies – a successful business with a reputation for high quality products at good prices, backed up by excellent service – and all focused on the UK's independent opticians.

Although starting relatively small, Ridgway has evolved consistently over the years. The last 12 months has probably seen its greatest growth; not only has it moved into larger premises and expanded its team to 16, but it has taken on exciting new eyewear ranges such as Kliik and Fysh UK. These collections have brought a new dynamic to the company, enabling it to work more closely together with many opticians who already buy their other ranges.



Model F3432

A model from the Fysh UK collection

David Ridgway, Ridgway Optical's managing director, told *Vision Now*: "Earlier this year, it was becoming increasingly apparent that to continue to grow the business, we would need more room. So when the opportunity came up to move into a larger purpose-built unit, just outside of Banbury, we grabbed it with both hands. Although many might see moving to premises twice as large in today's challenging times as foolhardy, we knew that it would open up new opportunities and enable us to continue to support the independent market with the excellent service that they have come to expect from the company." It wasn't just added space that came with the move; developers worked with the Ridgway team to design the entire interior of the unit to maximise the use of space for office, stock room and despatch.

Enviably credentials

The company is also making great savings via the green credentials offered by Alkerton Oaks Business Park where it is situated, as David explained: "Alkerton Oaks is part of a large estate with an abundant woodland resource. This provides fuel for a biomass boiler, which serves the entire estate with heating and hot water. The use of the latest materials in the buildings, and of large glazed areas in the roof which reduces the need for



Model K437

Kliik frames feature innovative designs and materials

lighting for much of the working day, means the premises carry the highly sought after Grade A Energy Performance Certificate rating. Our green credentials don't stop there as by employing all local people and stocking all our frames in the UK, we are reducing our carbon footprint. We are also supporting other local firms by keeping money in the local community."

Shortly after their move to Banbury, Ridgway secured the UK distribution of the eyewear brands Fysh UK and Kliik. For those NEG members who haven't yet viewed the ranges, Fysh frame designs are inspired by the "beauty and freedom of the sea", with unique colouring, style and creative textures. Kliik is billed as an "ultra fashion collection" with innovative designs and colours in contemporary styles and materials. "Both collections have already been received with great excitement," said David, "with 25 new styles per range having been launched at Optrafair earlier this year. They have proved very successful across the country." Adding to these successes, Ridgway was recently awarded the distribution for the Evatik range of frames aimed at fashion conscious men. Customers will shortly be receiving more news about this collection, that is new to the UK.

Although Ridgway is excited by the introduction of these new ranges, it hasn't forgotten its existing collections, which include the new 'next generation' Reaction range. These highly fashionable frames are mostly manufactured in stainless steel with intricate laser-cut temples and some models in acetate. All of the new Reaction models are supplied with a case and cloth. Also in the company's portfolio is North Shore, a fashion range for those with 'active lifestyles' with some models manufactured using TR90 memory plastic temples. Other well established collections are the Allegro range, which encompasses classic gents, ladies and children's mid-price frames, the MX 'designed to fit' range available in multiple sizes and, the o-oframes budget range, giving something for everyone.

For more information on how Ridgway can support your independent practice or to view the very latest styles on offer, telephone 01295 678800 and a local territory manager will visit your practice. They will also be able to discuss the latest exclusive offers available to NEG members. Members who already have an account can visit www.ridgwayoptical.co.uk to view the full range of frames.