

WHEN YOU WALK INTO SANFORD

Infiniti for the first time, it might take you a moment to process your surroundings. You step through the front doors into a professionally appointed reception area, the kind you might find in a trendy office building or the lobby of an upscale boutique hotel. There isn't a car in sight. On your right, an imposing 10x15 canvas painting by Rocky Bridges titled *Transitions of Infinite Disorder* hangs over the lobby as if it were peering down on an art gallery. Only when you look around the corner and to your left and see a showroom full of glistening cars and SUVs do you remember you're at an auto dealer. The impact is striking, but it's by no means accidental.

In fact, the architecture and appointments are just a few of the elements that contribute to the overall Sanford Infiniti experience, and every one of those elements is carefully orchestrated to produce an optimal customer experience.

Executive manager Sean O'Sullivan sees this as the essence of what his dealership offers its customers.

"There's no shortage of fine automobiles out there, but for Sanford Infiniti customers, luxury is not just the car," Sean explains. "Real luxury is defined by the overall experience of owning a vehicle that was purchased here."

Sean's insight into excellence in the automobile industry began in Wexford, Ireland, where his family was in the car racing business. Sean didn't do any racing himself but spent plenty of time learning about what happens under the hood from his two brothers. After moving to the U.S. in 1988, Sean landed in Winter Park and found his first job at a local Mitsubishi dealership. Soon afterwards, however, he had an opportunity to move to a dealership that was offering a brand new luxury brand called Infiniti. In the years since, Sean has developed and refined a distinct philosophy about taking care of Infiniti customers.

"There's a big price difference between a non-luxury car and a luxury car," he

explains. "The difference in value comes from how the whole experience makes the customer feel."

At Sanford Infiniti, that experience starts with the facility. Every corner and crevice of the building is immaculate and well maintained, and each piece of art on display is from a local artist (including several portraits by celebrity artist Rock Demarco). The Sanford Infiniti experience extends throughout the buying process and then continues with every subsequent customer interaction including, of course, every maintenance and service visit.

Sales manager Christopher Wilson is responsible for ensuring that the dealership's commitment to quality is reflected in every interaction with customers. Towards that end, every employee is required to learn and adhere to a credo that encapsulates the values Sanford Infiniti embraces. The credo addresses dress, safety, and customer care topics but is best summed up with a simple admonition: "We are ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen."

In fact, Christopher might be the most philosophical sales manager you'll ever meet, a genuine believer in the credo and its effectiveness.

"Shopping here is not an intimidating experience," Christopher says. "You're treated like family. We believe that if we take care of our customers, the sales will take care of themselves."

While Sanford Infiniti's approach to customer interaction is low key, it's anything but inattentive. One of Sean's favorite aphorisms is, "The best fertilizer is the footprint of the farmer." He is a hands-on manager, constantly monitoring all of the myriad details that collectively comprise his business's quality. The results of this approach speak for themselves.

"We've had solid growth over the past year and are looking forward to an even busier year in 2016," says Sean.

Used car volume at Sanford Infiniti is up 40 percent over last year, and the dealership has added seven new



Sean O'Sullivan, executive manager of Sanford Infiniti, stands in front of the automaker's signature QX80 SUV.



Is the art on the walls or on the showroom floor? At Sanford Infiniti, the answer is "yes." Christopher Wilson and Sean O'Sullivan, sales manager and executive manager, respectively, in front of a portrait of *Ol' Blue Eyes*.

employees including four new sales consultants. They can expect to be busy – the manufacturer has announced that it will be unveiling a new product every 90 days for the next eighteen months, a pace that's virtually unprecedented in the industry.

Regardless of how hectic the new product schedule becomes, it's a safe bet that Sean, Christopher, and their team will stay focused on making certain that every customer experience is an outstanding one — from the moment a customer first enters the dealership until it's time to trade in his or her beloved Infiniti for a new one. At Sanford Infiniti, that's their credo.