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# Celebrating its 30th anniversary, Sticker Planet plans to stick around decades more

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It's not uncommon for parents to come into Sticker Planet with their kids and tell siblings Hilary Kraft and Richard Kraft that they used to visit the store as kids themselves.

While it might seem like the sticker shop in the Original Farmers Market would mainly attract kids, the Krafts (is there a more fitting last name?) get enthusiastic visitors of all ages, who often exclaim with delight at the curated selection of thousands of stickers, magnets and more.

"Last Sunday this woman in her 50s came in and said, 'Oh my gosh, it's been so long since I've been in here,'" Hilary recalled. "Another woman came in and when I asked if she'd been to our store before she said, 'Are you kidding? I was here just last Sunday.' Other people come in with their kids and tell



HILARY KRAFT

Sticker Planet opened in the Original Farmers Market in 1992 when salesman Bernie Kraft and artist Selma Kraft put their talents together to open a sticker store.

me that they used to be kids when they were in our store and now they bring their children.”

In its 30 years, Sticker Planet has had one defining motto: If it sticks, we’ll sell it. Magnets, bandages, temporary tattoos and, of course, stickers line the walls of the beloved 300-square-foot shop where the Krafts sell more items than they can count. Hilary and Richard were both stumped when estimating how many products they sell, shrugging and landing on a ballpark number of 5,000.

“I always say stickers make me feel like an instant artist, because you can take the art that other people have designed and think about how you can use it creatively,” Hilary said. “People do collage or make greeting cards. For people who are amateur artists, it elevates them and makes them feel that they can do something better than they thought they could.”

Sticker Planet first opened in 1991 when Richard and Hilary’s parents, salesman Bernie and artist Selma, put their talents together to open a sticker store in Santa Monica. The Krafts’ second location, the store that exists today in the Original Farmers Market, opened in 1992. Not long after its conception, Richard and Hilary began helping their parents with the store, finding the same passion for stickers in their genes.

Now three decades after the Farmers Market gem opened, Richard and Hilary are running the store full-time, plus the website that has accelerated in activity through the pandemic. Bernie passed away in 2003, but Selma still helps out with the store, making themed goodie bags and giving sticker-decorating tutorials.

“It’s really amazing to have a business that brings happiness and joy to people,” Richard said. “It’s funny — you can be sitting there working in the store on any given day and you’re likely to hear three, four or five times people walk in and say, ‘Oh my God, this is my favorite store!’ and exclamations of joy and disbelief. It’s really fun.”

Some customers tell the Krafts that Sticker Planet is their first stop when they land in L.A., making a pilgrimage to the store’s comforting and bright interior. Others are regular customers whom the Krafts know by name. One dedicated customer even sent the

Krafts a handwritten card voicing her relief that the store survived the pandemic.

"I feel like if we can survive that and people still want us around, I'm sure we'll still be here another 30 years," Hilary said with a smile.

Celebrating Sticker Planet's 30-year anniversary, the Krafts think the next 30 years will bring the growth of the store's online presence. Even with the success of the small store, the Krafts have no plans to expand.

Regardless of how much time passes, Hilary said she hope the essence of the store will stay the same. The heart of the store has been consistent since it opened, Richard said, comparing it to the everlasting nature of the Farmers Market.

"Maybe that's why we're so successful in that location," he said. "It's a place you step into and you feel like you're going back in time. You feel like it's a bit of an old world experience, and I think we're a good fit for that. Our product is something that feels classic and comforting, even though we're in in these more modern times."

As a high school teacher, Richard uses stickers as prizes during daily quizzes and watches his students get even more excited about them than younger kids might. When he asks them why they love stickers so much, they reflect on the nostalgia they feel, thinking back to when they got stickers as kids.

"I think adults of all ages enjoy it as much as the kids because it brings them nostalgic pleasure and a really simple joy," Hilary said. "When she was checking out, a woman said, 'I can't believe how much stickers make me smile.'"

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