

Sun Catchers Tanning Talks Holiday Deals, Vitamin D and Celebrating 30 Years

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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WOOD RIVER - Sun Catchers Tanning is celebrating 30 years, and if you ask owner Robert Jones, tanning is the secret to both his and the business's longevity.

“My old sunbed that I have at home, I go three times a week in it,” Jones said. “I’m 83, and I’ll probably go until the end of life because it keeps you that healthy.”

Jones and his wife never expected to own a tanning salon when they got married 60 years ago. They opened a video store — one of the first in the area — but quickly realized that video was “a wintertime business.” By the time spring came around, people wanted to take trips and spend time outside.

Jones and his wife installed a few tanning beds in the video store, and they were surprised by how popular they were. As the video business faded, they opened a full tanning salon and have stayed busy ever since.

How did Jones and his wife become tanning experts? Jones attributes it to the two years he spent stationed in Germany, where he saw sunbeds and bikinis for the first time. He returned to the U.S. certain that tanning could be a hit in the Midwest.

This interest was renewed when tragedy struck and Jones’s little sister passed away from breast cancer. Jones was stunned. Both his parents had lived to their late 90s, and there was no family history of breast cancer. He dove into research about cancer, alternative medicine and natural remedies, trying to understand, and came up with an answer: vitamin D.

“The sunbed came from Germany where it was developed because a sunbed gives you natural vitamin D in your body,” Jones said. “It was to give people health benefits of natural vitamin D in their body because vitamin D prevents illness and disease. The stronger you are in natural vitamin D, the better off you are as far as catching diseases, catching colds and everything. It helps you to prevent that.”

Even today, Jones said his vitamin D levels are “off the charts” because of the time he spends in sunbeds. In addition to these benefits, he believes that people who use sunbeds are actually less likely to develop sunburns or skin cancers because he says the UV rays are less powerful than the sun’s rays.

“You get basically the same thing from a sunbed as you do from the sun, except in reduced amounts,” he explained. “You get A and B rays from the sun. In springtime, you get about 17.5% burning rays from the sun. B rays burn, A rays tan. In a sunbed, you get virtually the exact same thing except in reduced amounts. The most I can buy in any sunbed lamp is about 7.5% B rays. The rest are A rays, they’re tanning rays. We have beds in here that you virtually get no burning rays.”

According to him, this is better than the sun, which can burn you, or wearing sunblock, which prevents you from getting vitamin D. It’s worth noting that the American

Academy of Dermatology Association says indoor tanning can actually increase your risk of common skin cancers, so people are encouraged to do their own research before they make the decision to tan.

But Sun Catchers Tanning has other products and services, including lotions, spray tanning and red light therapy, which is a treatment to reduce scars, acne and wrinkles with minimal risks. You can find out more about everything offered at Sun Catchers Tanning by calling (618) 254-2786 or stopping by their location at 1103 West Acton Avenue in Wood River.

As they celebrate the business's anniversary with holiday deals and specials, Jones and his wife plan to keep Sun Catchers Tanning going strong for another 30 years.

“We’ve made a lot of people happy, a lot of healthy people,” Jones added. “We’re not going to do anything with this location but keep it serving the public.”



Sun Catchers



QUICK
4 MIN. Spray Time

SMART
[AUTOMATED]
GUIDANCE TECHNOLOGY

FAST
Comfort Drying

FLAWLESS
NATURAL
Glow

