

In 'n' Out Matches Its Market

By Jim and Elaine Norland



The In 'n' Out logo is prominently displayed in several places on site, including above the Laundromat.



The colorful site is a feast for the eyes - even without customers.



An even better view.

waiting for parents to finish their car and laundry.

The entire complex is well attuned to the needs of area residents near its Northwest Highway location. Some 300,000 people live within a ten-mile radius of the wash. The area is undergoing a revitalization, and Dallas officials have welcomed the quality of buildings, equipment and services installed by owner Nick Rizo.

Safety, security, comfort, and convenience are combined in the complex, which had its grand opening on May 21.

Car owners can choose from the Belanger Vector touch-free automatic wash or any combination of services in the 15 wand self-serve bays outfitted with Dilling-Harris equipment. Detail service has more recently been added so that customers who take pride in their rides can get their cars not only clean, but also detailed and polished to showroom perfection.

All signage and recorded messages throughout the wash are in Spanish (first) and English. The bilingual responses to customer selections let them know what features or services they have selected. An attendant who walks through the wash complex during all open hours can also help customers make their choices. Additional employees are on hand in the laundry facility to assist customers there.

While Nick Rizo doesn't spend a lot of time personally at the wash now, he was heavily involved before and during the grand opening. Rizo's other business interests include a restaurant and nightclub. Most recently, he has been cultivating fleet business for the car wash after initially focusing on retail customers.

The grand opening helped area residents realize just how family friendly the new businesses are. A Latino radio station did a live remote broadcast from the site. Clowns inflated balloons for the children and magicians performed tricks. Catered food service provided snacks for everyone, and

Match your offerings and services to your market. That business principle is widely preached but not always practiced as thoroughly as it is at In 'n' Out Car Wash in Dallas, TX, where owner Nick Rizo has invested heavily in services tailored to his neighborhood.

Situated in a largely Latino community, this new wash opened in May of this year with an impressive array of 15 self-service wand bays, one automatic wash, and 32 vacuums. A self-serve laundry with 200 top-grade machines is also on the four-acre site. An arcade gives children plenty of choices to entertain themselves with video games while

a Mariachi band played favorite tunes. Cheerleaders for the Dallas Burn, a Major League Soccer team, added to the festivities.

“You need to make it fun for everyone to be there,” says Rizo. “Everybody loved what we did at our grand opening. We also have an arcade for the kids there so they can play games while their parents wash their cars or clothes. We have something for everyone.”

He also provides free popcorn from a machine that customers can operate whenever they wish. Children are perhaps the biggest popcorn munchers, Rizo reports.

To make sure that grand opening guests could experience the services he offered, Rizo made everything free on his grand opening weekend. Drivers could wash their cars in either the automatic or the self-serve bays at no charge, and vacuums and all the machines in the laundry were free also.

“That put him on the map very quickly,” says Ralph Nasca. Nasca is vice president of Pro-Tech Service Co., Lewisville, TX, which put the project together for Rizo. “People really knew what he had there.”

Rizo makes everything in the wash free for the first hour of operation on weekdays. “That really loads the place up,” reports Nasca, “and those who have come in often remain after that opening hour to continue using the wash.”

Following the grand opening, Rizo offered an introductory low price on the Belanger Vector automatic wash, but will soon go up to his regular price schedule. “His goal is to get people to try it, and I believe — as he does — that once you try it you’ll be back,” Nasca comments.

Rizo has high praise for Nasca and his company. “Ralph does a great job,” he says. “I’m very pleased with the guy. He and his people are awesome. They trained my people and did everything we needed.”

The family focus is evident throughout Rizo’s car wash and laundry compound. Plasma TVs are available throughout the laundry facility, and viewing options include



Street exposure serves as an invitation. Note the wrought-iron fence.



The site seen from a different angle shows another “leg” of the self-service facilities.

checking on the progress of vehicles in the car wash.

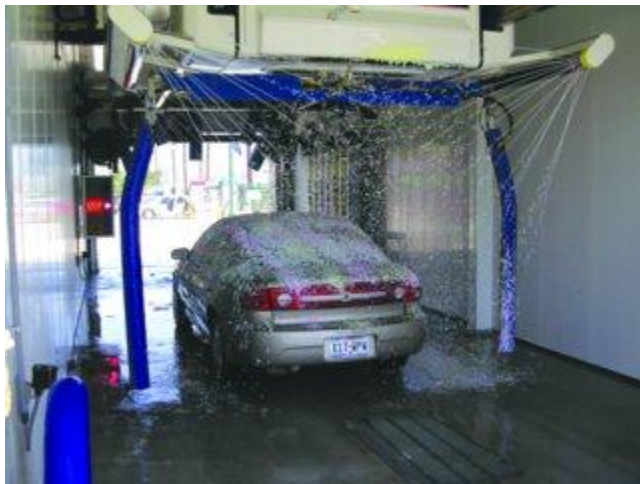
Both for that purpose and for security purposes, Rizo has 52 cameras mounted throughout his cleaning complex. Because of the way those cameras and viewing options are set up, family members can know in what bay the car is being washed and go out to visit.

For those who want to catch up on e-mail or browse the Internet, Rizo provides free wireless access in the laundry area. Latino music is also piped throughout the complex, at a level that's easy to listen to but not intrusive.

The entire four acres is enclosed with wrought-iron fencing. Five ornate hand-made gates allow entrance and egress, and they're opened at 6 a.m. by a security guard. A guard is present in the complex during operating hours, and he closes those gates at 11 p.m.



The touch-free in-bay automatic in action.



The foam application ensures that "colorful" extends to inside the bay.

"The gates are really something to see," says Nasca. "They're decorated with palm trees and birds and coconuts in the trees. It's hard to believe that someone had the patience and the talent to do that so beautifully with a torch." Nasca also admires Rizo's commitment to the project by making such an investment.

His commitment to a beautiful facility is evident elsewhere, in landscaping that features palm trees, canopies over the vacuum areas, and covered parking around the laundry so that customers there are protected from rain or other weather factors. The 32 vacuums in the car-cleaning area include eight combination units that offer shampoo or fragrance options in addition to regular vacuuming.

Customers can pay for any car wash services with either currency or coins, and the automatic wash also accepts credit card payment. The self-serve bays accept cash only, reflecting community payment preferences. There is little competition for car washing nearby, just one eight-bay self-serve wash within a mile, and three self-serve laundries within a three-mile radius.

Nick Rizo's \$6 million investment is providing a beautiful, easy-to-use center for

cleaning (and now detailing) cars and washing family clothing. He continues to add services and features for the benefit of everyone in his market area, and customers are responding with whole-family enthusiasm.