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John Hauffe, left, and Peter Miazga, co-owners of Mac Outpost, celebrate their grand reopening at the newly renovated store on Wharncliffe Road. The business that began about 15 years ago is the only solely Mac outlet in the city and region.

Store stresses Mac to the core

BY NORMAN DE BONO

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Peter Miazga bolts from his seat to get a closer look at the collection of vintage Macintosh technology lining the walls of executive offices at his MacOutpost store.

"We've been gathering these for years. We had some stuff in the basement and we wanted to do something with it," he boasts of the old Mac Classics, MacBook and even an old Newton — ancestors of today's hand-held technology.

Just about the only thing that makes him and co-owner John Hauffe more excited than vintage technology is the new direction the Wharncliffe Road store is moving in, starting today, as it officially launches its grand re-opening.

"Our focus is razor sharp, it is just on Apple," said Miazga.

"We are very excited about appealing to the broadest section of Apple consumers as possible. We want them to know they can get everything they need from us."

The business that began about 15 years ago, since 2001 at its present site, has been named an Apple Specialist and is the only solely Mac store in the city and region.

The new look for the store starts on the outside with a refreshed paint scheme and new signage and inside offers new, expanded showroom space and large LCD screens showing electronic posters and one screen offers a loop of Apple founder Steve Jobs talking about Mac technology.

That technology has pushed Mac into the mainstream as a commercial product, thanks largely to the iPod that has drawn different consumers to

its different products.

Seventy per cent of MacOutpost's business is now consumer while 30 per cent is business focused.

"It's not that the business side has dropped off, it hasn't, but the consumer market has grown so much," said Hauffe. "There are still a lot of small-to medium-sized businesses out there."

Larry Hill, a partner in the firm, sells largely to business and agrees like mainstream consumers businesses are often inquiring about Macs.

"I have two or three people everyday converting from Windows to Mac. The switch over is very strong," he said. "Once we get you, we keep you."

The marketing push led by the popularity of the iPod and which now includes the iPhone and iTouch, appear to

MacOutpost

What: Grand re-opening of Mac Outpost

When: Today until 7:30 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: 152 Wharncliffe Rd. S.

Web: macoutpost.com

Contact: 519-645-7622

be dragging the iMac along with them.

"We have had people buying iPods, then buying the iMac as an accessory," added Miazga.

Sales have grown in the business about 50 per cent in the last 18 months to two years and this year in the midst of a economic downturn, "we are steady," adds Hauffe.

Norman De Bono is a Free Press business reporter.