

• IRISH AMERICA •

The Oldest Irish Import Shop On The West Coast Will Remain Open As The Baton Is Passed To The Next Generation!

THE ENTHUSIASM IN HIS VOICE is apparent as Tommy Mac shows his plans for the new storefront of the 54 year old Irish Import Shop on Vine Street in Hollywood. He is the proud, third owner of the well-known store that has become a landmark for the Irish in Los Angeles. "I remember walking into the store and meeting Jonesy and Anne, the original owners, when I first arrived from New York back in 1984. I am honored to continue that tradition all these years later."

Tommy, AKA Thom Mac-Namara, is well known in the Irish community of Los Angeles. Over the years Tommy has been the Executive Director of the Celtic Arts Center and he has been given a Certificate of Commendation from the Los Angeles City Council for his efforts. He was the Producers Guild International Committee's representative to Ireland and has been the bass drummer for the Los Angeles Police Emerald Society's for over a decade, not to mention he produced the annual Celtic Concert Series and the Ford Amphitheater for 10 years. Taking over the Irish Import Shop seems like a good fit for him.

Although he is proud of his heritage, he is the only member of his family who was not



New owner Tommy Mac with Anne Colburn, who owned the Irish Import Shop in Hollywood for the last 15 years.

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actually born in Ireland. "I was 'The Yank,' born on Flag Day in the Bronx, New York, and my parents told me all the American Flags our neighbors flew from their windows, every June 14th, was to honor me as 'The Yank.' My Mom was from Ballina in County Mayo, my Dad was from Lisdoonvarna, County Clare and my sister and brothers were born in Dublin before they all emigrated to the US."

Tommy grew up in a very Irish neighborhood in the Kingsbridge section of the Northwest Bronx and worked at Pat Mitchell's Irish Food Store when he was in high school. So he is no stranger to the business.

Anne Colburn, who ran the shop for the past 15 years, passed the baton to Tommy on October 1st and will be retiring back to Dublin in November.

"I have great admiration for Anne and I am very thankful

for her continued support as I take the reins of this celebrated shop. It is my hope that I can continue her fine reputation for creating a little bit of Ireland in the madness of Hollywood," Tommy told *The Irish Herald*.

Look for some changes in the coming months as Tommy brings his own touch to the shop. He plans to expand the grocery section and is even hinting at bringing some music and art into the store.

He is also taking advantage of social marketing, so look for the store on Yelp, follow the Facebook page and watch for a new and improved website. As always, it will be a great place to get Christmas presents and will remain the St Patrick's headquarters for Los Angeles. Oh, and don't forget to stop by to see the new storefront that will be up very soon. Tommy says: "It will be a homage to the classic Irish storefront."



IRISH IMPORT SHOP

742 N. VINE STREET, HOLLYWOOD, CA 90038
(One block north of Melrose) Info and inquiries: (323) 467-6714



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