

# CORONADO ISLAND'S SOLO LAUNDRY GETS MAKEOVER



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Under new ownership, Coronado Island's lone vended laundry - Laundry Lounge Coronado - recently reopened for business following extensive renovations. The 1,200-square-foot, high-speed laundry delivers multiple services from its small footprint, including pickup and delivery of commercial and residential laundry. Business is strong and the island community is grateful.

"We weren't planning on opening a laundry," said Nick Merrill, who recently moved with his wife, Liz, to Coronado Island. The couple relocated from Seattle, where they had established their first business, Sweat Equity gym. Their intent was to open a second gym.

But the space that became available for lease housed an existing, rundown laundry. "We were going to gut it and use the entire area for the gym," said Nick Merrill, "but then we realized it was the only vended laundry on the island."

Dilapidated, more than half of the laundry's washers and dryers were inoperable. That's when the Merrills rolled up their sleeves and elicited the help of Continental Girbau West (CG West), a full-service laundry equipment distributor in Santa Fe Springs, Calif. In the end, they gutted and split the leased space - dedicating one side to Laundry Lounge Coronado; the other to Sweat Equity.

Coronado Island, located a few miles off the San Diego coast, is home to some 24,000 residents, a U.S. Naval base, and scores of vacationers from around the globe. "The whole island was behind us and really wanted a new laundry," said Merrill. "The community is super grateful."

Serving people from all walks of life, Laundry Lounge Coronado offers a mix of services and equipment designed to cater to businesses, residents and tourists alike. CG West worked to help the Merrills properly design and equip the store for efficiency and maximized profit. It features Continental freestanding ExpressWash® Washers in 20-, 40- and 60-pound capacities; ExpressDry® Dryers in 30- and 45-pound capacity dual-pocket stacks; and a pair of 75-pound capacity single-pocket dryers. The washers are freestanding so they are installed very closely together and don't require bolt-down to a reinforced concrete foundation. Tight installation clearances boost basket capacity per square foot, along with customer turnover.

Additionally, a Card Concepts Inc.

FasCard system simplifies store management and allows customers to pay using debit and credit.

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- Nick Merrill, Owner  
Laundry Lounge Coronado

## Successful in its Infancy

Laundry Lounge Coronado - four months after opening - already generates an average five turns per day. Full service wash/dry/fold makes up 40 percent of total revenue; self-service comes in at 60 percent.

"Our 60s are our most popular washers because they handle bulky comforters, blankets and sheets," said Merrill. "We chose the ExpressWash washers for their efficiency and longevity. CG West did a great job designing the laundry and we definitely made the right decision on the equipment mix."



Nick and Liz Merrill came to Coronado Island to open a second gym. They ended up opening a laundry and gym.



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Left: The store features Continental ExpressDry® Dryers and a Card Concepts Inc. FasCard payment and management system. Customers say they are surprised loads are dry in 20 minutes. Right: Laundry Lounge Coronado's ExpressWash® high-extract washers contribute to more moisture removal and lower dry times.

## High-Speed ExpressWash Washers

A major benefit of the high-speed equipment, according to Merrill, is that customers can wash, dry and fold laundry in less than an hour. This is a result of washer extract speeds reaching beyond the typical 75-200 G-force. The laundry's ExpressWash Washers attain

up to 400 G-force extract speeds, resulting in more moisture removal and shorter dry times, according to Tod Sorensen, CG West vice president. "The higher extract speeds can cut resulting dry time in half," he said. "This not only benefits the customer because they get in and out of the laundry more quickly, it benefits the store owner."

Merrill agrees. "Our customers can't believe they can dry their clothes in 20 minutes," he said. And, because laundry dries faster, according to Sorensen, dryers operate less often – cutting natural gas consumption and decreasing dryer wear. This is reflected in the laundry's low utility bill. "Our utilities costs consume 15 percent of total revenue," said Merrill. That's 10 percentage points less than the national average reported by the Coin Laundry Association.

Moreover, thanks to the side-by-side orientation of Sweat Equity and Laundry Lounge Coronado, customers sometimes load up a washer before they head next door to catch an exercise class.

## Customer-Focused Service

"Our focus is on service," said Merrill of the fully attended laundry. "We have a lot of elderly customers and we help them out wherever possible loading and unloading their cars."

When attendants are not busy with self-service customers, they utilize idle machines to process wash/dry/fold. "It started with people dropping off clothes, but business quickly picked up," said Merrill. "Now we pick up and deliver for residential and commercial accounts, including a local hotel." The delivery vehicle? An electric golf cart.

## FasCard Payment System

At the end of most days, Merrill appreciates recapping the laundry's revenue and machine usage via his FasCard payment and management system. Highly flexible, FasCard also allows Merrill to create and monitor employee work schedules, including clocking in and out, as well as establishing multi-level vend pricing via the ExpressWash Washers' ProfitPlus® Control. This enhanced control allows Merrill to upgrade cycles and charge more for hot water and less for cold, for example. It offers Hot, Warm and Cold cycles, plus customer options for adding an "extra" Wash, Rinse, Spin or SUPERWASH. Anytime an "extra" is selected, the cycle vends for an additional 25 cents-\$1.

"Everyone says it's the nicest laundry they've ever been to," said Merrill. "Being the only laundry on the island sets you apart."

To learn more about Laundry Lounge Coronado, visit [laundryloungecoronado.com](http://laundryloungecoronado.com) or call 619-537-9914. To discover more about Continental laundry products, visit [cglaundry.com](http://cglaundry.com) or call 800-256-1073.



Laundry Lounge Coronado came as a result of a dire community need. It's the only vended laundry on Coronado Island, which is located a few miles off the coast of San Diego.