

Hillcrest Optical is located at 1261 Hillcrest Rd., in west Mobile. Pictured here from left to right are: Kerry Whatley, Michelle Broadus, Felicia Huff, Aubrey Roberson and Dr. Nuria King.

How does a locally owned eye care clinic, nestled in a strip mall on Hillcrest Road, thrive in an economic recession and against big box and corporate chain competitors? The answer is simple for **Dr. Nuria King** with Hillcrest Optical – provide patients with “the best of both worlds” when it comes to eye care.

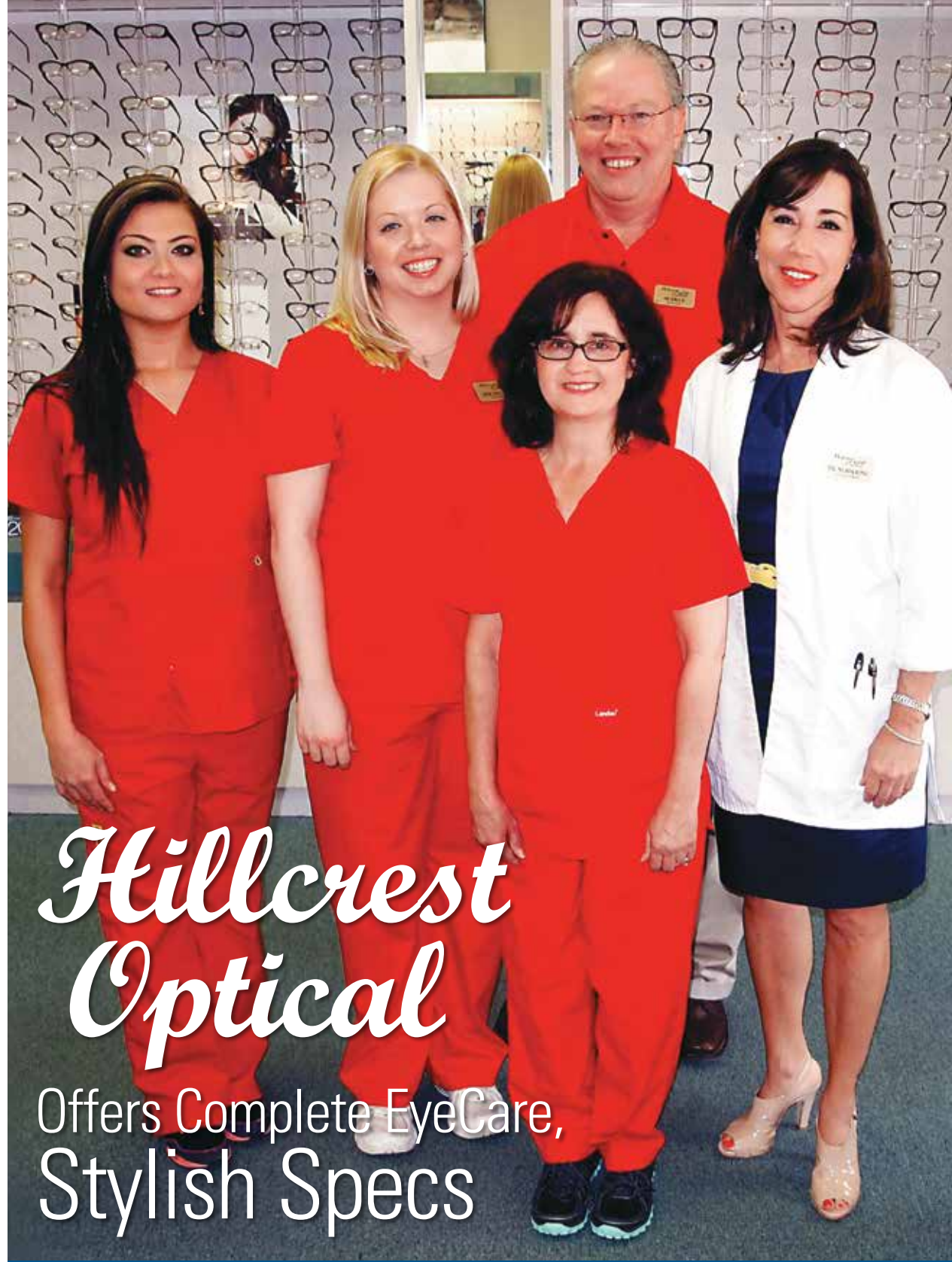
The company’s full-service capabilities combine medicine, the latest diagnostic technology, optical wear and personal attention. King performs eye exams and screenings to check for diseases and declining sight issues, using photographs of patients’ retinas to explain what she is seeing, as well as her recommendations.

Head optician **Aubrey Roberson**, who founded the company in 1998, operates the in-house lab where he creates custom-fitted frames and can make needed adjustments quickly. Other area doctors often refer patients to Roberson rather than sending difficult prescriptions out to other labs, King notes, because of his 29 years of experience and excellent reputation.

For patients, one of the largest draws is the extensive selection of contact lenses and eyewear choices, including safety eyewear, sunglasses, children’s and sports frames. Some of the most popular brands that line the practice’s entry walls are Versace, Tory Burch, Michael Kors and Coach.

Hillcrest Optical has a team of five employees, each trained in a specialty. King, who is bilingual in English and Spanish, received her degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry, giving her the ability to write medical prescriptions.

Both King and Roberson attribute much of the company’s success to expanding vision insurance and customer service that starts with appreciating the business-to-client relationship. Because customer service means something different to every



# Hillcrest Optical

## Offers Complete EyeCare, Stylish Specs

person, the staff at Hillcrest Optical tries to understand each customer’s needs and strives to make them happy, Roberson says.

The customer base includes loyal patients who refer other patients, and even a few who, though they have moved from the area – some as far away as Europe – plan their annual eye exams with Hillcrest Optical while visiting friends and family in Mobile and still send their glasses prescriptions to Roberson.

“Great prices and great help”

set the business apart from the competition, King adds.

King joined the practice in 1999, and bought out Roberson’s previous partner in 2008.

One of the biggest challenges – and opportunities – for the eye industry is the public’s increased use of computers, smartphones and tablets. King expects the trend will continue to grow and recommends the industry’s 20/20 exercise – looking 20 feet away every 20 minutes – and eating plenty of leafy greens.

**SMALL BUSINESS** of the month

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