



A & C Games

By YP Contributor

The Convenience Store Years

Gar Wan Toy and his brother Chang are living the dream, having turned a tiny convenience store that sold video games on the side into a 3,000 square foot retro video

game museum where everything is for sale. And yes, that includes everything from Sega Master Systems and Nintendo Power Gloves to ColecoVision games.

“My brother started A&C Variety as a convenience store 16 years ago,” says co-owner, Gar, “and I was helping him out. We were trying a lot of different things like selling trading cards and sports jerseys but were brainstorming what else we could do.”

The brothers decided on retro video games from retro consoles like the original Nintendo Entertainment System or N64 because it was one thing they were both truly passionate about and nobody else in Toronto was doing it at the time.

"In the beginning, we were just a convenience store with games."

- Gar Wan Toy, co-owner



Gamers Just Wanna Have Fun

“The business revolves around having fun,” says Gar, “and I’m all about that. I like talking about retro games, reminiscing about them. I like how people use their creativity towards creating something like a video game that everyone can experience.”

So over the first few years, the typical smokes, pop and chips inventory was slowly phased out, replaced with used video games that fans and collectors would bring in. Toronto gamers heard that there was this crazy convenience store that would take any of your games, no matter if they had them in doubles, or even 20 of the same title, and still give you money for your trade-in. “Eventually the convenience store stuff just got smaller and smaller until it went extinct,” notes Gar.



The Expansion Pack

With video game budgets increasing and respected voice and regular actors getting involved, the audience has also widened, bringing a lot of “closet-gamer” types to the shop. In the case of younger customers, many of them were not even born when the original NES came out in 1984 but with retro gaming’s popularity on YouTube and elsewhere online, the knowledge is easily accessible. And then there are some of the predictable customers who come by sometimes, like DJ Deadmau5 or Kenny Hotz from TV’s Kenny Versus Spenny.

Venturing past the teaming aisles of retro games, consoles, toys and accessories, you will find the gaming arcade, where, for five dollars, you can play a number of different gaming systems hooked up to monitors. The most popular are Super Smash Brothers (every iteration to come out so far), as well as other fighting games like the Street Fighter series, Marvel vs. Capcom, King of Fighters and others. There’s also a section devoted to card-based games like Magic or Pokémon, so as not to leave anyone out. The inventory of 40

to 50 thousand titles includes original Nintendo playing cards and a copy of Super Mario Sunshine for Nintendo GameCube, signed by Shigeru Miyamoto, the inventor of the iconic Nintendo characters like Mario and Donkey Kong.

From die-hard gamers to Call of Duty head shot bros, **A & C Games** does not discriminate. There's literally something for everyone, no matter your preference, generation, or even your console.



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