

Niello Co. acquires Turner Volvo, first of several planned moves

Purchased dealership's local roots date back to 1956

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The Niello Co.'s purchase of the Sacramento area's sole Volvo dealership represents the end of one local family's car-selling era and the continued expansion of the third-generation Niello automotive empire.

Sacramento-based Niello Co. said Wednesday that it had acquired Turner Volvo, a Sacramento dealership with roots dating back to 1956 and its founding by family patriarch Gordon Turner.

Financial terms were not disclosed, but Niello Co. President Rick Niello said the transaction includes both the Volvo franchise and the 2-acre property at 2535 Arden Way. He said the purchase sets in motion a series of planned moves that will evolve over the next 18 months and bolster the 93-year-old Niello Co.'s presence in the region's high-end automotive market.

"We're very pleased to add Volvo, and it's the only Volvo store in the region," Niello said. "Volvo has 10 new cars coming out in the next four years, and it's a brand that's very well known."

Niello plans to move the newly acquired Volvo operations to 4609 Madison Ave., next to Interstate 80, where Niello now sells Acura certified preowned vehicles and runs a service and parts operation. He said the Acura operation will move to Niello Acura in Roseville Automall.

Niello said Volvo will settle into its new Madison Avenue location on or about Dec. 17.

Modifications and upgrades of the facilities will be ongoing.

"We think that Volvo serves South Placer and Sacramento very well from that location," Niello said. "There's a tremendous traffic count at Madison and I-80."

Niello said the Turner Volvo facility – a 22,000-square-foot, \$3 million building when it opened in the fall of 2003 – will be converted to an Italian car dealership, starting with Niello’s Maserati and Fiat operations, which are now at 2030 Fulton Ave. They will move to the Arden Way site over the next couple of months.

In the next 18 months or so, Niello said he plans to add Alfa Romeo sales – a first in the Sacramento area – at the Arden Way store. Once that move is complete, Niello said Fiat will move back to the building at 2030 Fulton Ave.

With the addition of the Volvo store, the Niello Co. employs about 700 in the Sacramento region. The Volvo dealership expands Niello’s portfolio to 15 dealerships selling 12 brands, most of them high end, including Jaguar, Porsche, BMW, Maserati, Acura, Audi and Land Rover. All but one of the Niello stores – Niello Infiniti in Corcord – is in the Sacramento area.

Turner Volvo owner/operator Pat Turner, son of the dealership’s late founder, could not be reached for comment.

According to Niello, Turner was looking to get out of the business. He said Gordon Turner became a Sacramento Volvo dealer in 1956, around the time that Rick Niello’s father, Richard, now 92, was starting a Volkswagen dealership in the capital.

According to Sacramento Bee records, Gordon Turner started selling new Volvos at 26th Street and Broadway in 1956. The Volvo store would move around in subsequent years, eventually settling in at 1800 Fulton Ave., before the 2003 move to its current site. The Turner family’s local dealerships in past years also included Nissan and Lincoln-Mercury stores on Fulton Avenue.

The Sacramento Volvo store won various automotive industry accolades over the years. In 1985, Gordon Turner was one of only 47 dealers to receive the “Dealer of Excellence” award from Volvo Cars of North America. He would be a repeat winner in 1986 and 1987. Turner died in 2005 at age 84.

Volvo sold a record 113,267 cars in the United States in 1986, but it lost market share in the 1990s amid the increasing popularity of Japanese competitors.

Volvo was acquired by Ford Motor Co. in 1999, but it changed hands again in 2010 when it was acquired by Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co. of China. The Chinese ownership has poured billions into Volvo as part of an aggressive strategy to grow the brand with new and extensively

upgraded models.

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