



## Company History

In 1953, Koh Ping set up a small workshop where he ground custom-made lenses that opticians ordered for prescription eyeglasses. The true blue cottage industry supported a young family of six and later moved to the back of the family's residential shophouse on Lorong 19 in Geylang, in a little room behind the kitchen. Soon, second son Peter came on board, together with John Tan (now manager of The Lens Men Compass Point, and 30-year team member), and Koh Ping delivered the orders produced by the workshop, sometimes with granddaughter Desiree in tow in the backseat of his Datsun.

In 1979, Peter opened New Leung Optical two streets over in Lorong 23, a small storefront where he served as the only optician and doubled as lens fitter, with a workshop still grinding out lenses in the back. As he began building recognition and a small, loyal customer base in the East Coast neighbourhoods of Singapore, he opened the Koh family's very first retail outlet in the then-new Parkway Parade shopping centre in 1983.

Peter's approach to customer care and friendly service, an extension of his down-to-earth and warm personality, attracted many new customers to The Lens Men who immediately felt at home enough to bring their friends and family, too (many of these customers are still loyal to The Lens Men almost 25 years later!). The Lens Men soon expanded to two shop spaces and became a recognizable name both in the East Coast and beyond – many customers travel from Tuas or Ponggol to see their favourite optometrists and opticians.

In the late 1990s, Peter and wife Ade, The Lens Men's idea maven, felt that Singaporeans everywhere were wearing the same spectacles and sunglasses as everyone else - everyone jumped on the same designer bandwagon at the same time, and it was hard to tell one person from the next on the street. They brainstormed about how they could help The Lens Men customers stand out from the crowd by wearing unique frames they could call their own, reflecting their individual personalities. To help Singaporeans get with the in crowd, they went out... visiting trade fairs in some of the world's top fashion capitals such as Milan, Paris and Tokyo. They came home with collections that Singapore had never quite seen before – fashionably shaped eyewear in all sorts of bright and attractive colours and motifs that were popular in Europe, but not yet in Asia. One customer at a time, they introduced eyewear a la mode and soon, everyone saw how much more stylish, hipper and fresher they looked with these eye-popping designs. And best of all, they were just one of a handful of people around town sporting these vogue frames.

Around the same time that Peter's son Dion began training to be an optometrist, Peter opened The Eye Site in 1998, a vibrant boutique showcasing the hippest styles that he was bringing in from Europe and Japan. To get closer to where many of his customers live, Peter also opened the first The Lens Men branch in Compass Point in 2004, bringing the same well-known service and collections to the north, northwest and northeast suburbs. In 2005, The Lens Men's first downtown location opened on Orchard Road in Centrepont, with yet another industry first – a rustic-themed optical retail outlet that exuded a cosy Zen charm and featured the crème de la crème of Peter's most exciting collections.

Now that you know The Lens Men's very cool story from its humble beginnings to what's now everybody's favourite eyewear retail store – after all, a little piece of us does follow our customers wherever they go – we look forward to enjoying the next 25 years with you, beginning with our silver anniversary celebrations next year.