

February 27, 2014

Mr. James Young
SR. Manager-Code Compliance
P.O. Box 1409
Key West, FL 33041

Dear Mr. Young,

I am writing to you to complain about a business in Key West. I obtained your name from a newspaper article appearing in the *Key News*, dated July 6, 2013. The article referred to Vine-Vera store downtown Key West and the problems going on.

The week of February 17, 2014, the wife and I visited your great town. When we were walking down Duval Street, my wife was taken into store of Vine Vera at 408 Duval Street, by their representative "Joshua". I stood outside for a long period of time while my wife was being waited on. As I was standing there, one of the other reps (in a white shirt) made a very derogatory statement that offended me.

I went into the store to get my wife out, but it was too late as she was signing the credit card statement. I did ask Joshua, what the return policy was, he said, " 100% return of unopened items."

After that we walked down the street to have lunch, at which time my wife noticed something bothering me. After probing I explained to her what had happened. She was irate and went back to the store to return the merchandise. When she got there, Joshua told her 'No Refunds'.

The bottom of our receipt says, "No Returns or Exchanges WITHIN 14 days. I will be going after my refund on day 15. (Copy attached).

In my research I contacted your Business License Office, which they provided me information, but the Business name doesn't jive with Vine Vera. I found no listing for this business on State of Florida Secretary of State website for Corporate/LLC searches. I question even if they are licensed to do business in your city or state. Again they are located at 408 Duval St., Key West FL 33040.

I have attempted to call the phone numbers provided, with no response yet.

I am not asking you to get my money back, I am alerting you to a business in your town that is not representing the best interest of Key West. They are aggressive, deceptive, believe they are working both sides of the street. They do not know their own policies are make them up as they go along, they are promising anything to get the order. They are unethical.

In addition, they do not have their company name on receipt, phone number is corporate office which isn't very responsive either. I will be discussing the matter with my credit card company.

What you can do is maybe provide me the true business name, contact information to pursue my refund, and close this place down so other visitors to your city don't get hurt by these people. If you are not the correct person I need to contact, let me know who is.

For reference I am enclosing a enlarged copy of my sales receipt, and copy of article from Key West News of July 6, 2013. From article it appears this company has moved down the street

This was our second trip to Key West, and the only thing that ruined it was passing by the Vine Vera store at 408 Duval Street.

Thank you very much

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard C. Black".

Richard & Marigold Black
5806 Delor St.
ST. Louis, MO 63109
(314) 660-7587
Email: rb2372848bc@gmail.com

Cc: Copy (enlarged)- Sales receipt
Newspaper article- KeyNews – July 6, 2013
Copy- email to/from Key West City License Bureau

new location

new location

408 duval st
Florida 33040
1-877-554-1777

Invoice #: 2257

Date: Monday, 17 February 2014 4:48 PM

Product	Quantity	Price
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eye serum ID-2	1	\$296.00
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*Discount: -\$71.00
\$225.00

eye serum ID-2	1	\$296.00
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*Discount: -\$296.00
\$0.00

refining peeling ID-8	1	\$146.00
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*Discount: -\$146.00
\$0.00

Total Discount - 69.51% \$513.00

Subtotal:	\$225.00
Tax:	\$16.88
Total:	\$241.88

Payment Method(s):

Credit Card

Auth.net - MasterCard

\$241.88

Swipe - XXXX-1690

00502B

Transaction# 5939766075

Your sales representative:
Josh

Thank you for shopping with us! Come back again
with this receipt to enjoy special promotions for
returning customers!

No Refunds Exchanges will in 14 days

Tourist claims gouging

Saturday, July 6, 2013

Store already paid one fine

BY ADAM LINHARDT Citizen Staff

alinhardt@keysnews.com

A Duval Street store recently cited for breaking city code laws is already back under code enforcement review after a tourist complained she was ripped off.

City of Key West Code Enforcement fined Vine Vera, 102 Duval St., \$500 on June 26 along with a \$4,500 suspended fine with the stipulation that the store would be forced to pay that larger amount if they violated again within 24 months, said Code Compliance Manager Jim Young.

Four days later, tourist Cathy Ann Kromm, Baltimore, Md., filed a police report accusing three store employees overcharged her \$547 for facial creams, according to a code enforcement report.

Officers described the incident as a civil matter and no criminal charges have been filed.

Kromm declined to comment when reached by phone in Maryland.

In the report, though, Kromm said Vine Vera manager Anni Cohen was standing in front of the store and told her about some free samples while two other male employees came out and "escorted" her inside, reports say.

While inside, the men described various facial creams ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,000 while also describing their 80 percent discount and providing her with "free samples," the report states.

"Kromm said everything was confusing," the report states. "Kromm didn't realize the cost would be \$547 for the service they provided and the product she bought. Kromm said she didn't realize until she left the store how much they charged on her credit card."

Officers also noted that employees of a nearby art gallery told them, "People complain all the time about that store and they were not surprised about the incident," the report states.

In an email response to The Citizen, store manager Cohen said the owner told her there was never any complaint from the customer.

"He tried to contact the lady that filed the report to offer her a refund, as well as see what went wrong because she seemed to be happy when she left and she did pay willingly for the products," Cohen wrote. "He says she didn't know what he was talking about. She is from Baltimore and wasn't in Key West."

Attempts to identify and reach the owner independently of Cohen were not successful. The

store's name did not come up on the state's corporations database.

Kromm's complaint drew the interest of Young, who is now scheduling a second code hearing before code enforcement judge, Jeff Overby.

"There's been about four of these facial creme stores pop up on Duval Street overnight and I contacted the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation and I was told if it was just facial creme, it's not considered cosmetology and these business don't need a state (cosmetology) license, is what I was told," Young said. "I spoke to (Kromm) and she is willing to come back to Key West to testify at the code hearing."

Young likened Kromm's complaint to the practices of some T-shirt shop owners and employees in the early 2000s when the city cracked down on the businesses overcharging customers for customized T-shirts.

A city ordinance requires all shop workers to give customers written estimates of how much a custom T-shirt will cost before charging them.

"These type of cases give the city a black eye and hurts honest merchants," Young said. "As soon as we started receiving complaints we took action. I know other merchants told her to contact police."

alinhardt@keysnews.com

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COMPLIMENTARY TREATMENT.

This card entitles you to a complimentary Red Wine Resveratrol Treatment. The Red Wine Resveratrol treatment is packed with protective and nourishing antioxidants, vitamins and other beneficial nutrients for healthy, youthful and glowing skin.

Instantly hydrating, protect against signs of aging such as environmental damage, lines, wrinkles and loss of elasticity.

Name

Appointment date

Time

Specialist

Josina

Invoice # 2257

www.vinevera.com



Search if you're having trouble finding an email

408 Duval Street

Richard Black <rb2372848bc@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 25, 2014 at 4:23 PM

To: cwalker@keywestcity.com

I was trying to find out the Business Name of company at 408 Duval Street in downtown key West. The business sells Vine Vera Cosmetic products.

We were recently there on vacation and wanted to further contact them.

Enjoyed our visit!

I live in St. Louis, MO

If you can help let me know.

Thanks

Richard Black
rb2372848bc@gmail.com

Carolyn Walker <cwalker@keywestcity.com>

Wed, Feb 26, 2014 at 7:00 AM

To: Richard Black <rb2372848bc@gmail.com>

This is the business we show licensed at that location.

Business control 20686 Updated: 02/14/14 by KEYWCAW

Business name & address Mailing address

LIFE IN PARADISE 408 DUVAL ST

408 DUVAL ST KEY WEST FL 33040

KEY WEST FL 33040

License number : 14 00026236

Appl, issue, expir . . . 102213 102213 93014

License status (F4) . . AC ACTIVE

Classification (F4) . . 11C RETAIL/MAILORDER/WHSALE 2,001-5,000 SF

Exemption (F4)

License comments CLOTHING, ACCESSORIES, SOUVINERS

License restrictions . .

OL100U01 THE CITY OF KEY WEST - OL 2/26/14

Business File Maintenance 07:57:46

Type information, press Enter.

Business control number .: 20686 408 DUVAL ST

Location ID 22389 KEY WEST FL 33040

Business status A A=Active, I=Inactive

Business name LIFE IN PARADISE

408 DUVAL ST

Address 2

Zip code (F4), delivery pt .. 33040 KEY WEST FL

Date opened, contractor 2182011 Y=Yes

Federal tax ID number 200948947

Type of ownership (F4) CP CORPORATION

Type of business (F4)

Business, secondary phone/type (F4) . 786 3902007

Email address

786 390-2007

From: Richard Black [mailto:rb2372848bc@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 5:24 PM

To: cwalker@keywestcity.com

Subject: 408 Duval Street

[Quoted text hidden]