

Andy del Rio Vargo Physical Therapy

By Martha Michael

Every town has one. That medical professional who is so well-known you only have to say his first name. He treats everyone you know and is esteemed by all.

In this case it's Andy at Vargo Physical Therapy.

Whatever your insurance, whoever your primary care doctor is, you're probably only a few degrees from Andrew del Rio, MPT.

Located near Chi Chi's and Telly's on Sierra Highway in Canyon Country, Vargo has been a fixture since the turn of this century. Always swarming with patients, they've had to knock down walls – more than once – to increase the facility's size.



According to the Vargo website, “The original Vargo PT location, the Canyon Country clinic, opened its doors in 2000, has expanded twice and was completely renovated in 2011. It was here the company first implemented its unique approach to physical therapy – a combination of cutting edge technology within a truly community-centered focus including highly-trained therapists who make the time to care for each and every patient all in an open and friendly environment.”

Continuing with that mission are Vargo owners Andy del Rio and Jeff Vargo. The practice now has nine offices. In Canyon Country there are two therapists – Rosemary Conner and Andy – six aides and office manager Sarah Solis.

Vargo has a steady stream of repeat business, just one aspect that underscores how important the practice is in the community. They treat children as young as 6 years old, and del Rio says his oldest patient was 100.

“It’s not a sterile environment and everybody communicates about what they’re doing together,” del Rio says. “And they get better when they come.”

The team’s approach is hands-on. “We use our skill to keep your joints moving properly. “It’s crucial to recovery,” del Rio says, and “getting you back to what you love to do.”

If a patient needs treatment for an ACL, it may take six months. But if it’s something like a sprained ankle, he says, they have turned people around as quickly as a week.

At left, Andy works with Gail Bloom of Acton, who has been to Vargo for treatment off and on since the practice opened.

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“I’ll keep you here until you can return to your sport,” he says. “There’s no time frame on your therapy. You’re here until you’re done. I’m not going to kick you out of here just because I need a table.”



With a number of Biodex machines and isokinetic strengthening and testing apparatuses, Vargo’s therapists can measure muscle and tendon functionality. Clinicians at Vargo are educated and certified to “foster healthier connective tissue and long term healing of muscles and tendons,” Vargo says on its site.

The biggest challenge is treating someone with long-term problems, del Rio says. “Chronic pain cases are tough, ones that involve nerve damage, because of the unpredictability of the case,” he says.

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Voice of a Vargo Volunteer

by Erica Wolitarsky

As a 17-year-old girl fresh out of my junior year of high school, I found it nearly impossible to find my first job. No one really wanted to hire a minor with little-to-no previous experience and, quite frankly, I was tired of filling out one application after the other. That’s when my mom suggested working somewhere as a volunteer.

The reason I wanted to volunteer at Vargo was because that’s where my brothers went for their sports injuries in years past, and physical therapy was something that really fascinated me. So, I mustered up a bit of courage and walked in the clinic hoping someone would give me a chance. I asked Vargo’s clinical director Andrew del Rio (or Andy, as people like to call him) if they needed a volunteer. I was so nervous I don’t remember much, but he did warn me about the towel folding (there was a lot!). I was ecstatic when I got a call that weekend asking me to come in on Monday. On my first day, I followed the workers around like a lost puppy, simply observing everything around me. Slowly I learned how to give ultrasounds, how to prepare an ice pack properly, and yes ... how to fold the towels!

I loved the mix of people that came through the doors, from Canyon student athletes to kind senior citizens. My favorite part was sitting down with patients and asking them about their recovery, because I heard some pretty interesting stories from my time there, to say the least. I think PTs have an incredible job, because when people are recovering from injuries it’s often a long and tedious journey. I witnessed the impact that it made for the Vargo team to walk with patients through their exercises and ask them how they’re doing, making the healing process so much better overall.

The positive atmosphere is what stood out to me the most. Andy was always encouraging and his humor lightened the mood, and I think the whole team definitely reflected that energy. I wasn’t at Vargo for very long – just two or three days a week for that summer, but I am so thankful to have gotten a glimpse into the life of a PT. The experience has helped me have compassion for other people, which is something I’ve carried with me to my current job and will continue to carry to whatever’s next.



Dr. Albert Samadi consults with Andy del Rio.

Vargo treats a lot of the local Hollywood entertainment people, particularly stunt men and women. But another couple of groups they see are firefighters and police force personnel.

A resident of Fair Oaks Ranch, del Rio is connected to the community, supporting local athletic teams, such as the Canyon High School football team. But del Rio's extra attention has turned toward home lately, as father to a 4-year-old girl and a baby boy born this month.

Perhaps all the well-wishing the popular physical therapist gets from his patients is their way to offer him a sort of "pass" to take some time off. If he ever takes them up on it, they know it's not for long because of his strong connection to his patients.

That and the fact that Andy del Rio is that guy ... the one everyone in town knows they can count on. And those that don't know him yet probably will at some point.

