

INVISION®

WINNER

**ALTERNATE
VIEW**

+9

**HONORABLE
MENTIONS**

WHO HAVE ALSO SET
THEIR SIGHTS ON AN
ALTERNATE FUTURE...



A CLEARER VIEW

**INVISION'S 2026 AMERICA'S
FINEST OPTICAL RETAILERS**
ARE PROVING INDEPENDENT
OPTOMETRY ISN'T DYING.
IN FACT, THEY HAVE AN
ENTIRELY DIFFERENT WAY OF
SEEING THINGS.

THE VIEW AHEAD

INDEPENDENT OPTICAL IS TRANSFORMING — BECOMING MORE EXPERIENTIAL, MORE EXPRESSIVE, AND MORE HUMAN. INVISON'S 2026 AMERICA'S FINEST OPTICAL RETAILERS SHOW US WHAT THE FUTURE LOOKS LIKE WHEN EVERY DETAIL IS REIMAGINED.

BY INVISON STAFF

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, independent optical is undergoing a quiet but unmistakable transformation. Our 2026/27 America's Finest honorees reveal a movement that stretches from coastal Maine to the plains of Iowa, from boutique startups to multigenerational institutions: eyecare is no longer content to be clinical, transactional, or routine. It's becoming experiential. Intentional. Hospitality-driven. And, increasingly, a reflection of how people want to live, feel, and express themselves.

All of the businesses highlighted share a common pulse. They are rejecting the old model of "come in, get an exam, pick a frame," and replacing it with curated styling, gallery-inspired retail, and environments designed to feel like lounges, studios, or lifestyle spaces. They're elevating service with bourbon menus, concierge handoffs, community pop-ups, and personalized touches that turn a visit into a *memory*. They're integrating technology seamlessly — not as a humblebrag, but as an invisible backbone that supports deeper care. And they're building connection, not just clientele, by rooting themselves in the culture, creativity, and character of their communities.

Taken together, these America's Finest signal a national shift: independent optical is redefining itself as a place where wellness, style, and self-expression converge.

And then there is this year's winner — **Alternate View** — the clearest, boldest, most fully realized expression of that shift. In Carmel, IN, Mollie Tavel Kaback has created a concierge-style destination that doesn't just participate in this movement; it crystallizes it. Alternate View does not offer incremental improvement on an outdated model. It is the next chapter — a recalibration of expectations and a glimpse of where independent eyecare is headed.

**AMERICA'S
FINEST
OPTICAL
RETAILERS
2026**

JUDGES' BIOS

DAVE BARTON,
CO-FOUNDER & CEO,
OPTIFY, SAN DIEGO, CA



Dave Barton is the founder and CEO of Optify, where he's blending two decades

of eyewear expertise with sharp digital tools to help independent ECPs sell more glasses — online and in-store. His journey started on the product side, shaping frames at Oliver Peoples and launching the luxury brand David Kind. Over time, he saw a gap and Optify is his answer — a tech-forward platform, now the largest in its category, that's powering online eyewear browsing and shopping for over 1,000 independent practices. Email him at dave@optifyonline.com.

JENN DENHAM,
CHIEF GROWTH OFFICER,
ALOHA, MCKINNEY, TX



With more than 20 years in marketing and growth strategy, Jenn Denham has worked with businesses ranging from local retailers and healthcare practices to franchisees and tech startups. Her data-driven approach to sustainable growth is paired with a passion for leveraging relationships to uncover new opportunities. As Chief Growth Officer at Aloha, she leads efforts to revolutionize healthcare through AI innovation. Email her at jenn.denham@getaloha.com.

DAVID DURALDE,
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER,
OGI EYEWEAR,
MINNEAPOLIS, MN



Inspired by good design and the pursuit of it, David has been a creative in the eyewear community for a while. His career started in 1985 at Ia.Eyeworks after completing his B.A. at UCLA. He went on to design collections for Signature Eyewear, Kenmark, Safilo USA, and currently as the Chief Creative Officer at OGI Eyewear — a division of The Optical Foundry. His breadth of experience has given David a unique point of view that has been expressed in his designs, which have graced over 65 million faces for more than 50 brands. Email him at david.duralde@ogieyewear.com.

JAN ENNIS,
PRESIDENT/CEO, ENNCO
DISPLAY SYSTEMS,
REDMOND, WA



Jan Ennis is currently the President/CEO of Ennco Display Systems. He has worked in every facet of the optical industry since 1975 after graduating from the University of Richmond. His experience spans sales and product development in the wood, plastics, optics and software industries. During Jan's career in optics, he founded L&L Optical, Venedic, Inc., Vision Warehouse LLC and Ennco Display, and acquired Magic Design in 2012. Email him at janennis@ennco.com.

PAIGE KRAEMER, ABCC,
SALES CONSULTANT -
MINNESOTA, CHERRY
OPTICAL LAB,
GREEN BAY, WI



Paige Kraemer has been in the optical industry for nearly twenty years; she has worked for large retail chains, an independent optical shop, and has been an independent frame rep. She is also a co-founder of 10,000 Frames Midwest Eyewear Show, an independent eyewear show in Minneapolis, MN. Paige is proud to be Cherry Optical Lab's Minnesota Sales Consultant. She loves representing a company that she's had outstanding firsthand experience with, and is excited to offer that same experience to other ECPs across Minnesota. Email her at pkraemer@cherryopticallab.com.

**AMERICA'S
FINEST 2026
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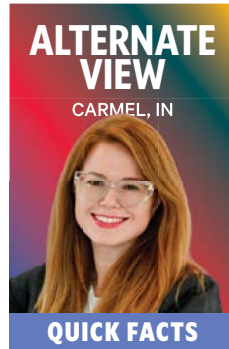
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ZEISS

2026 AMERICA'S FINEST OPTICAL RETAILER WINNER

TAKING A DIFFERENT APPROACH

This Indiana practice transforms the optical into a lifestyle destination, where concierge-level care, curated styling, and advanced eyecare work together to earn its place as America's Finest Optical Retailer for 2026. **BY HEATH BURSLEM**



OWNER: Mollie Tavel Kaback

URL: alternateview.com

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/youralternateview

INSTAGRAM: instagram.com/youralternateview

YEAR FOUNDED: 2024

EMPLOYEES: 4 full-time, 1 part-time

TOP BRANDS: Thera, Oliver Peoples, Ørgreen, I.a.Eyeworks, Horizons, CooperVision, Alcon, InMode, Bruder BOSA, Topcon, Topology

AREA: 2,162 sq. ft.

ARCHITECT AND DESIGN FIRMS: Karina K Designs, Kort Builders

“WOW! This doesn't feel like an eye doctor's office ...” is a reaction Mollie Tavel Kaback says she hears time and again from first-time visitors to Alternate View in Carmel, IN, and it's exactly the one she intended. Opened in 2024, the practice was conceived not simply as another optical, but as a concierge-style destination where hospitality, curated styling, and advanced eyecare exist under one roof. Her successful execution of the concept deeply impressed the judges of INVISION's America's

Finest Optical Retailers contest, who crowned Alternate View our winner for 2026.

Tavel Kaback describes Alternate View as “the latest chapter of innovation” for her family's business, founded by her grandfather, Dr. David Tavel, in Indianapolis in 1940. While Alternate View operates as its own independent brand with a distinct identity and clientele, it benefits from the operational infrastructure, technology and decades of expertise developed by the long-established Dr. Tavel organization. “We often describe Alternate View as ...

reimagining what the future of independent eyecare can look like,” she says.

That philosophy becomes apparent the moment patients arrive. Rather than a traditional medical office, they step into a boutique environment defined by natural wood finishes, modern furnishings, layered lighting, and carefully curated displays. A Client Care Ambassador welcomes them with a complimentary beverage menu featuring craft coffee, specialty drinks, wine, and beer before guiding them through the visit.



Mollie Tavel Kaback (fourth right) conceived Alternate View as a concierge-style destination where hospitality, curated styling, and advanced care co-exist.



OUR JUDGES SAY

DAVID BARTON

Co-founder & CEO, Optify, San Diego, CA

Alternate View has done something a lot of larger operations fail to pull off. The brand consistency here is real. Everything feels like it belongs together, and that makes the store immediately memorable. There's also a fun energy to this place that comes through in every channel. It feels like a store that genuinely enjoys what it does, and that's contagious. Putting their impressive eyewear selection more front-and-center digitally would be a natural next step for a store that has so much to show off.

JENN DENHAM

Chief Growth Officer, Aloha, McKinney, TX

Alternate View is redefining what an eyecare practice can be — blending comprehensive eye exams, designer eyewear styling, dry eye treatment, and facial aesthetics into one sleek, boutique experience that feels more like a luxury wellness destination than a doctor's office. Their stunning lavender interior is an instant mood, and their website and digital presence perfectly mirror that same elevated, self-care-forward vibe!

DAVID DURALDE

Chief Creative Officer, OGI Eyewear, Minneapolis, MN

Alternate View wasn't built to follow the traditional optical playbook; it was built to rewrite it. By thoughtfully integrating concierge care, technology, wellness, and personalized styling, it offers

a compelling blueprint for where independent eyecare and optical retail may be headed next. Few practices have so successfully connected the ideas of self-care, self-expression, and eyecare into a single, cohesive experience, an approach that recognizes eyewear's unique ability to help people not only see better but look and feel their best.

JAN ENNIS

President/CEO, Ennco Display Systems, Redmond, WA

The use of vibrant colors, lighting, window presentation, and unique light fixtures create a very upscale environment for an enhanced buying experience.

PAIGE KRAEMER, ABOC

Sales Consultant — Minnesota, Cherry Optical Lab, Green Bay, WI

Alternate View really blew me away! Their use of colors and brand identity is impeccable; the store is beautiful, and their marketing is on point. I loved reading about the flexibility of the retail floor, which can be fully reconfigured for events, educational programming, nonprofit gatherings, and trunk shows; it reflects a thoughtful approach to building connection beyond traditional eyecare. I also admire the strong emphasis on relationship-building; I have heard about offices offering new residents a coupon or a discount, but a \$100 gift card takes it to the next level. The integration of styling experiences alongside clinical care is another standout! Preselecting frames is underutilized but can really blow a patient away and create an elevated, thoughtful experience. Kudos for this!

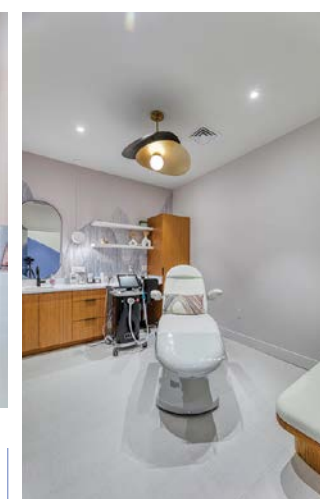


It's an approach that extends throughout the practice. There are no fixed dispensing desks or computer stations; instead, staff move freely through the space with mobile technology, meeting clients wherever they're most comfortable. Even the sophisticated diagnostic equipment and other tech is "integrated rather than showcased," as Tavel Kaback puts it, allowing advanced eyecare, dry eye treatment, bespoke styling and facial aesthetics to coexist naturally within one seamless environment.

The patient journey itself has been carefully re-engineered. Rather than browsing rows of frames, clients are presented with a personalized lineup selected in advance by stylists who consider

everything from facial features and prescription to wardrobe, career, and lifestyle. The goal, Tavel Kaback says, is to "remove decision fatigue" while helping patients build an eyewear wardrobe rather than simply purchase a single pair. "Patients don't feel sold to — they feel understood."

Every comprehensive exam includes an advanced dry eye evaluation — whether patients report symptoms or not — using technology such as the Bruder BOSA, while treatments including IPL and radiofrequency are integrated into routine care, not offered as specialty add-ons. Similarly, facial aesthetics operate not as a separate business, but as a natural extension of eye health. "We didn't add aesthetics to di-



versify ... we added it to complete the patient experience," says Tavel Kaback. To deliver this "coordinated care for the entire face, not just the eyes," the team includes a licensed nurse practitioner and a medical director.

Alternate View intentionally limits choice in favor of curation, pairing premium independent collections like Thema's iGreen, Giorgio Valmassoi, and O-Six lines, alongside I.A. Eyeworks, Örgreen, Woodys, and Bottega Veneta with a single "best" lens option in each category. Horizons Optical's Mimesys custom progressive, which uses VR technology to craft a custom map for each client, has become the practice's signature lens, while Alcon and Cooper-Vision are the go-tos in contact

lenses. To achieve a seamless clinical and styling experience, the practice relies on a fully integrated Topcon Harmony platform and Topology digital try-on fitting system.

Supporting Tavel Kaback is a highly cross-trained team. The traditional distinction between technicians and opticians has been replaced by Client Care Ambassadors and stylists who understand clinical flow, lens technology, facial geometry and retail styling. Rather than a series of handoffs, staff strive for continuity, allowing each patient to feel guided by one cohesive team instead of shuffled between departments.

Located within Carmel City Center, Alternate View regularly

opens its reconfigurable retail floor to nonprofit organizations, professional groups and community events, while partnering with neighboring businesses through initiatives like its Partner Perks program. "We do not simply sponsor events — we create environments for connection."

For Tavel Kaback, every aspect of the business points back to the same idea: eyecare shouldn't feel like an obligation — it should be personal and memorable. "Alternate View is not incremental improvement," she says. "It is a recalibration of expectations and a signal of where independent optical can go next."

FIVE COOL THINGS ABOUT

ALTERNATE VIEW

→ 1. CUSTOM CORNER.

Alternate View is the only U.S. practice to feature Thema's complete European-designed Custom Corner for bespoke eyewear.

→ 2. HOSPITALITY FIRST.

Every stylist holds an Indiana ATC server permit so guests can enjoy complimentary wine, craft beer, or coffee during their visit.

→ 3. NO PAPER TRAIL.

Nearly every step of the patient journey — from exams to styling — is fully digital.

→ 4. PICTURE PERFECT.

The restroom's lighting, sconces, and color scheme were chosen specifically to lend themselves to a flawless selfie.

→ 5. FULLY CURATED.

Patients never browse the frame boards alone. Every styling appointment begins with a personalized frame selection prepared in advance.

FINE STORY

AHEAD OF Alternate View's official opening, Tavel Kaback wanted to introduce the practice before asking anyone to book an appointment. Every resident of Carmel City Center received a handwritten-style invitation and a \$100 gift card — no purchase required. "It was simply our way of saying, 'We're your new neighbors, and we'd love to meet you.'" Today, every new resident still receives the same welcome, and many have become loyal clients who return with friends and family.

