

Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD)

Debilitating and

continuing health problems, the legacies of an accident while he was working in Hong Kong in 1997, have forced 58-year-old Tony Getty to reluctantly close his Rosewood Gallery, which has specialised in high-quality furniture pieces, lighting and giftware.

But he

and his wife Pauline, who live in Brigg, on the South Bank of the River Humber, do not intend to retire. They plan to help other people who suffer from the extremely rare condition - known as Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) or Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD) - which gives constant pain and which resulted from Tony's heavy fall on a concrete path when he tripped over a small metal stud while working on a new airport development as senior sales and marketing manager for a construction company.

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Before final closure

But before the doors shut

for the final time - in the very near future - on the popular Hallgate outlet, Tony will sell off his entire stock, in both the gallery and his warehouse at Brigg - which has been sourced mainly from Asian countries - at knock-down prices to benefit his Cottingham customers who have supported him since he opened the business seven years ago. "I would much rather my customers benefit from the reduced prices. I am not going to give stock away, but many items will be offered with a 50 per cent reduction. I'd rather have it that way than having to sell them on, lock, stock and barrel, to the trade", he said.

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Superb Writing Desk

For example, a solid

walnut writing desk, normally Â£1,400, will be sold for about Â£700. The large range of additional furniture, Tiffany lights and giftware will also be heavily discounted. Some deliveries came in before Tony could cancel the orders and they will be included in the sale. All items bought by The Rosewood Gallery, a member of the Forest Management Committee, are sourced from sustainable products and from small co-operatives. "We don't deal with large co-operatives. We deal with the small, family-based co-operatives that we know will receive the money that we actually give to them for their products", said Tony, who added that many customers are now also friends. "They appreciate the work we have done in sourcing our products. We try to help everybody - and that's why I want our customers to benefit from the reductions. But we are not going to give the stuff away. We want to get back what it has cost us, at least. I would like to keep a lot of the pieces, but my house is not big enough. They are one-off pieces. really good pieces. but they will be going to really nice homes in Cottingham".

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Pain-riddled after
accident

After his accident, pain-riddled Tony was tested for various conditions, including arthritis. A knee replacement was considered, and it even got to the stage when one consultant said: "I just do not know what is wrong with you. I'm not going to give you a knee replacement now because you don't need that. I am going to give you a walking stick and that is all I can do for you." But Tony was determined to find out what was wrong, and he finally went to a specialist in pain management. Within five minutes, he diagnosed RSD, or CRPS. Unfortunately, because my problem had been left for so long there was very little likelihood of it going into remission. no cure. the pain is with you. Recalling his fall - and the consequences of it - Tony said: "I damaged some nerves in my nervous system in the leg. But, the people who treated me did not know that. My leg was packed in ice, which aggravated the nerves."

Pain Signals to the Brain

These nerves send what are called pain signals to the brain. Unless you can shut those signals down, your brain keeps telling your body that you are in constant pain. After time, it moves site and goes to different parts of your body. Mine has moved from my leg to my shoulders and into my elbows. I am in constant pain. every second of every day, he said. The condition affects Tony's mood. He takes lots of morphine, patches and tablets, and regularly visits a pain management specialist at Castle Hill Hospital, pain therapists and counsellors, when he meets others who have been diagnosed with RSD, which not only affects the people who have it, but also their family and friends.

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Black Hole

You can fall into a big black hole unless there are people around to help you or, like me, you can find people to help. At Castle Hill Tony found Dr Brian Culbert. Without him and his team, I don't know what I'd have done. They have been so supportive in identifying my condition and helping me and other people with it. Tony said that he is quite happy to share his experience with his customers. While I have been in Cottingham, a couple of people have asked what is wrong with me and I've told them that I have a chronic pain syndrome. Some have said that they suffer from something similar, but their GPs are not aware of the condition. I have been able to give them support and help to get treatment which they did not know was available.

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Helping Others

Now Tony - and his wife Pauline - plan to continue to help other sufferers who probably do not know what their condition is. I will tell them to go to their GP and demand to see a pain specialist, help is out there. Tony is closing down his Rosewood Gallery business because he cannot carry on working. He is starting a new treatment. hypobaric treatment in an oxygen chamber - in the near future. When the treatment starts, it will be continuous, every day ... and - on top of regular visits to the hospital for other treatments - logistically, he cannot run a business at the same time. And because of drugs - most sufferers tend to control RSD with hard drugs - he is not allowed to drive at times. My treatment is long-term, and I doubt very much if I will ever return to business. I know that I can control my condition but I do not know if, in the future, I am going

to be able to continue doing that. I am going to focus on - and it's a mission for Pauline and I and some other people - making people aware that they don't have to sit and suffer in silence because they have got chronic pain. There are organisations out there to help them, said Tony, who added that RSD has affected his and his family's whole aspect of life.

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Lost Careers

It's like having the rug pulled from under your feet. Ten years ago I was happily working away - successfully - in Hong Kong. By now I would probably have been working in Beijing sourcing work for the Olympic Games. Pauline had a successful career in property management and this injury tore the heart out of our lives. I had to quit my job because of my medical condition - it was not practicable for me to go out on a construction site on crutches, particularly with the amount of hard drugs I was taking - and we had to return to the UK, where we had kept our house. So Tony and Pauline lost their careers and had to find another income. We decided to bring some of this beautiful furniture over from Asia and try and make a go of it. But my condition has deteriorated I have not been able to put as much into the business work-wise as I should have been able to. I've not been able to market the business properly and deal with people. Most people now will know that my shop has been closed for up to three days a week. That's because of my health and you can't operate a business like that. It's not fair on me, my wife or my customers. Once Tony has retired and undergoing non-stop treatments, he will report on his progress with regular updates in the Cottingham Times. Available on Mobile: 07710 443078, The Rosewood Gallery: 841818, and e-mail: tony@shanghairosewood.co.uk, Tony would welcome discussion - and will give advice - on the condition. Other useful information sources are: www.rsd-crps.co.uk and www.rsdaltert.co.uk.

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Thankyou

Pain Clinic and
Hyperbaric Treatment Update 26.11.07

I would like to thank everyone for reading my article and the people that have come to see me since its publication.

My treatment is ongoing, but I have been asked to point out that the first point of contact for anybody with pain, is their own GP. You must be referred to Castle Hill Pain Clinic or the Hyperbaric Treatment after referral after seeing your GP.

Pauline and myself and everyone at the Rosewood Gallery would like to wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

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