

designing a salon

from the ground up

Salon Evo • 6515 Commerce Rd. • West Bloomfield, MI 48324

When Michigan hairdressers Michelle Fair and Brandon Phillips decided to strike out on their own and start a business as co-owners of a West Bloomfield salon, they both thought their combined 37+ years of working in the industry was ample experience to prepare them for the task of designing and opening a brand new salon.

“We were so naïve,” Fair remembers. “We thought we could decorate fairly inexpensively picking up things here and there. But [Phillips] and I quickly learned there were so many things we hadn’t thought about.”

While Fair and Phillips originally thought they could “do it all themselves,” a chance encounter with The Pavilion design team at the Farmington Hills, MI Design Center changed everything – for the better.

“We heard about The Pavilion’s big one-day clearance event so [Phillips] went to check it out. A friend had mentioned we might want to contact Leslie McGwire for design help, but I didn’t think we could afford interior design services.”

The Pavilion’s Vice President of Sales, McGwire is a member of ASID-Allied (American Society of Interior Designers), has 25 years design experience and has won eight Salon of the Year awards in her career. While at The Pavilion’s Showroom Sale in November 2010, Phillips ended up meeting with McGwire and the die was cast.

“She met with me that day,” he recalls. “We discussed our vision for the salon and [McGwire] was able to make it happen.”

Aside from pointing Phillips and Fair in the right direction with furniture and equipment purchases, they both agree it was McGwire’s ability to listen to their ideas, understand that they had two very different tastes and, yet, still be able to bring the design elements of the salon together to match their personalities perfectly.

“[Phillips] likes more contemporary styles,” Fair points out, “and I lean towards more European or Victorian décor. [McGwire] brought it all together – from the style stations to the modern mirrors with more warm, ornate frames. It all ties together.”

The name Salon Evo is short for evolution, Phillips points out. “And that’s what this, is an evolution of our careers, along with the process of evolving into salon owners.”

Both Phillips and Fair had been working together as stylists for a large salon in the area. Fair had been managing salons for nearly 20 years and says she always dreamed of owning her own salon. “I thought it would be great to be the one making the decisions for myself.”

Add to that a nice-looking retail space that sat vacant on a busy street corner in West Bloomfield that both Phillips and Fair had remarked to each other would make a great location for a salon and things just started to fall into place for the pair.



Salon Evo co-owners Michelle Fair (above) and Brandon Phillips (below).



Customer seating at Salon Evo.



“It was almost a fluke how everything worked out,” Fair says. “But once the process got going we met a lot of great people that wanted to see us succeed in this. McGwire was one of them. She took us under her wing.”

McGwire and The Pavilion design team helped Salon Evo owners choose a color scheme, furniture and equipment, plan the layout and flow of the space, as well as secure financing. Phillips and Fair agree they were both in a bit of sticker shock throughout the process, but “we quickly learned areas we wanted to try to scrimp and save on were not smart,” Fair says. “McGwire helped us understand what areas were worth investing in and made us feel confident we were making the right decision.”

The result is a professional-looking, functional salon space that incorporates deep browns with soft muted blues. The guest seating area includes dark brown leather chairs mixed with chairs in a blue and brown zebra pattern, set off by an

area rug of brown and a swirling blue pattern throughout.

The front desk is also a dark brown offset by a beautiful chandelier that incorporates all the colors found throughout the salon. The shade is a deep brown with colored “tear-drops” in blue, yellow and amber. Heavy drapes in a dark brown accented with blue hang on the wall directly behind the front desk, as well as separate the main salon from the shampoo area.

The style stations feature a dark brown cabinet, brown chairs with chrome accents and beautiful oversized mirrors with an ornate patterned frame. Here it is most apparent where Phillips’ contemporary style – in the form of the sleek cabinets – meshes with Fairs’ preference for Victorian design elements as seen in the framed mirrors.

A true labor of love, Fair says she and Phillips expected the whole process to take no more than four weeks. Five months later and they were putting the finishing touches on the salon in March, opening later that same month.

“My advice to anyone starting this process,” she says, “is plan to spend three times more money and expect it to take three times as long.

“But in the end, it’s all worth it,” she adds. “Once it’s done you’ll realize you worked your whole life building up to this point. I look around and I can see myself growing and improving my skills in this space.” ▲

WRITTEN BY ANGELA ANDRIOLA

The Pavilion design team Joanna Tzilos (left) and Leslie McGwire (right) with Salon Evo co-owner Michelle Fair.



For design consulting services, please contact The Pavilion at 877.550.4407.

Ultracare®
...the ONLY Disinfectant you need!



for Today's Stylist



for Today's Esthetician / Nail Technician



Ideal for Pedicure Spas



will not damage any surface – Perfect for Tanning Beds!



Kills 132 organisms, including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and MRSA. Inexpensive to use; dilutes 2 oz. per gallon.

Ultracare is recommended for one-step cleaning and disinfecting pedicure spas, manicure stations, countertops, tanning beds, and all salon implements and surfaces.

ULTRONICS®

www.ultronicsusa.com

Available at: **THE INDUSTRY SOURCE**
800.362.6245 • theindustrysource.com