

Baileys

- a glass half full



Salon owner & academy principal Debbie Bailey with therapist Jo Hatton-Barker

As the New Year picks up pace, Debbie Bailey reflects on the last 12 months, which have seen her fulfill her ambition to start her own business

HELEN STONE REPORTS

After 30 years of industry experience, it was only in late 2010 that Debbie finally got the opportunity to open her own salon.

"I've been in the industry nearly 30 years," she explains. "I've worked in a top London beauty clinic, premier health spa and on Caribbean cruise liners and for the last 18 years I've managed and taught within a large beauty and hairdressing department at a college of further education."

Things changed in 2010 for Debbie however, when she took voluntary redundancy from her job as operations manager at the college. "I never dreamed that would happen to me, but it did, so I had to reassess my life and focus on my strengths and opportunities." Not wanting to go back into further education, Debbie knew she needed to work for herself and the redundancy presented her with the opportunity to open her own salon. "Every cloud has a silver lining," she coolly remarks.

Chasing the dream

Looking at the glass half full, not half empty, Debbie explains, "It was my redundancy that enabled me to invest in my dream of opening my own salon and training academy."

After viewing many premises, Debbie settled on a shop in her hometown of Burntwood. "The shop was ideal," she recalls. "I could see its potential; the large front window is located opposite the shopping precinct, so it gets lots of passers-by, and also benefits from nearby parking."

"I wanted the décor to be elegant and cosy," she continues, "Somewhere clients can feel comfortable and really relax." And so, enlisting the help of friends and family, Debbie set about making internal alterations to the space, before painting, decorating and furnishing her salon.

"The reception and nail studio are at the front of house, which is the first area the client sees," she cites. "Behind this is the waxing room and spray booth, then at the back of the salon is a

room for facials, massage and holistic treatments, which have been designed to be very tranquil and warm with subtle lighting."

A deep purple accent wall adds warmth and luxury to the salon and contrasts the crisp white of the sister walls, which anchor a feel of freshness and calm. Mixing professionally sourced furniture with high street selections for the reception area makes the salon feel stylish and professional with Debbie's own twist. "My budget was very limited," she confesses, "So I'll be looking to add to and invest in the décor later this year."

What is most important to Debbie however, is to offer professional quality treatments at affordable prices; an ethic that her three employees are also eager to maintain.

"The clients are the most important part of the business - they make Baileys the success it is!"

Sharing the beauty work, Debbie has hired another therapist alongside a nail tech and holistic therapist. "I'm very fortunate that I knew most of the staff before I hired them," Debbie enthuses. Jo, my beauty therapist and make-up artist, is my god-daughter, and I went to school with Deborah, my freelance holistic therapist. I didn't know Sally, my nail tech, before I opened the salon," she

continues. "But it now feels as though I've known her for years. Reliable, hard working staff are hard to find; I'm very lucky to have such a great team!"

Between them, Debbie, Jo, Deborah and Sally offer a whole range of treatments, including manicure and pedicure, Shellac and Calgel nails, waxing, lash and brow services, spray tans, body massage, make-up application and facials.

To complete the picture, another part of the salon is an approved VTCT and Guild training centre. "I've extensive experience in training and wanted to offer short professional beauty therapy courses," she explains. "We offer training in waxing, manicure, pedicure, brow design, lash enhancements, lash & brow tinting, make-up and facials, all of which are held in the salon; I wanted the students to experience working in a real salon environment," she continues. "I offer a maximum of six spaces per course as I know from experience that students benefit from training in intimate groups."



Baileys and Champagne

"Since opening the salon, which I named Baileys Beauty Salon, in November 2010, the business has done really well," Debbie enthuses. "There have been a few quiet times, which generally tend to coincide with school half terms, but generally speaking, it has proved to be successful so far. We've already built up a regular, loyal client base, which is fantastic after just one year," she cites. "The clients are the most important part of the business - they make Baileys the success it is!"

Having recently celebrated the salon's first birthday with lots of Champagne, special offers for clients, raffles in the salon and a meal with her staff, Debbie reflects on the highs and lows of the journey so far. "The hardest thing about setting up was finding the right location; I had a vision in my head of what the salon needed to look like and the right location was so important to me - it had to feel right," she recalls. "I also knew it had to be on the ground floor and I wanted a large front window to decorate. The highlight for me is being back in a salon environment and updating all my skills. I have learned so much over the last 12 months and invested in some fabulous training. I really love working with the clients too," she states. "I get a lot of job satisfaction from working with them - I'm not just a beauty therapist, but a counsellor too! It's a great job, and I love it!"

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Nail technician, Sally



Jo Hatton-Barker - Debbie's god-daughter and therapist

