

DESERT OASIS

TUCSON'S NEW M SALON PROVIDES A BEAUTIFUL SETTING FOR CLIENTS AND STAFF.



Above: M Salon owners, Randy Greenberg, left, and Michael Danielson. Opposite page: The retail area, top; Michael with a client, below.

Good things come to those who dream—and plan. After moving to the desert of Tucson in 2000 from the chilly shores of Lake Superior, Michael Danielson has been planning the opening of his new salon. He wanted a beautiful setting where he could offer exceptional services for his clients and a great working environment for his staff. Instead of rushing right in, he got to know the market in his new city by working in different salons, and he and his partner, Randy Greenberg, searched for three years until they found the perfect location for the business. Now, after an extensive renovation, Michael and Randy have opened the doors to Tucson's newest upscale salon, M Salon. *Maly's Magazine* caught up with the busy duo to learn what challenges they've faced and why they believe building a team will work best for them.

How did you get started in the salon industry?

MICHAEL: I started doing hair 25 years ago. I was always interested in hair even as a child so it was a natural decision for me. I grew up in Minnesota and started out working in a commission salon inside a department store and then owned a salon. After 17 years, I moved to Tucson for a relationship. It's a larger city and a bigger market. I wanted to open a salon here but I needed to see what the business climate was like first. So I worked in two salons as a contractor, doing some pro bono hair and putting myself out there to build a clientele. I worked hard in the beginning and by the second year had gathered a good momentum.

Tell us about your new salon. When does it open?

MICHAEL: Tomorrow! It's been about three years since we've been ready to take the plunge to move forward. We spent two to three years looking for the right location. We found an older salon established 20 years ago that needed a complete makeover. It's located in the foothills and we felt this location was key and more suited for my clients. We gutted our home three years ago so we were comfortable with what had to be done in the salon. It is spacious and open. We added brick to half the space and it looks like a New York City loft. The colors have the warm feel of a sunset and give a great energy. On a recent trip, we saw many European salons with minimal, streamlined stations. We liked that look so for furnishings, we chose the new Mosaic line from Collins and placed full-length mirrors along one wall. Free-flowing panels divide the room and we stained the cement floor a beautiful walnut color.

Do you have any advice for other salon owners who may be considering a renovation?

RANDY: Stick to your vision and consider hiring an interior designer. We hired Juliann Berens of JB Interiors and once she was on board she relieved so much stress. She knew so much about lighting, using space properly and the local and city codes. The decisions you make during a renovation can become costly mistakes and she made sure that didn't happen. She also helped us with green and ergonomic planning.



MICHAEL: A lot of people open salons who haven't planned the space very well. In doing this salon, I wanted it to be very functional, fluid and easy to work in. I wanted to eliminate every frustration from the front desk to the dispensary in the back and to optimize the space without infringing on the comforts of the client. At times it was nerve-wracking because not only did we want it to be functional, we also wanted clients and employees to come in and say, "This is beautiful."

RANDY: You also have to have a business plan and you need money for marketing. So many people don't budget for that. We've done some print ads in anticipation of the opening.

What services and products will you offer?

MICHAEL: We are a full service salon with 10 hair stations, three manicure stations and a skincare room. We offer all hair services including extensions, manicures, pedicures, facials, microdermabrasion, LED light therapy, lash extensions and full makeup. We are a Redken salon—since I first used Color Fusion in 1997, I haven't needed to look at another color line. We will also carry PureOlogy.

Who are your clients?

MICHAEL: I have the full-range in ages from three years old to as high as you can go. Today's older women tend to be more modern with their look and with improved products, I can give them whatever style they want. As long as the hair is maintained and the condition is good, we can do just about anything to anybody. I have ladies in the salon and people see them from the back and say, "That girl you

were with . . ." and the woman is 75! I also have families, professional women and students—Tucson is a college town.

I understand you will be a commission salon. Why?

MICHAEL: I don't want to be a landlord. Also, with a contractor situation you have a hard time with continuity and building a strong team. When you have a staff and people are employed, you set the guidelines and they choose to work there. For instance, we are going to have a dress code and look professional. We are also going to attend educational classes and events to stay stimulated and passionate. In the end, don't we all want to be invited to the fun party;

to be part of the group that's successful? That's why I know this approach will work.

How has Maly's been a factor in your success?

RANDY: We knew the equipment we wanted and we shopped around. Maly's had the best price, and Richard Winkleman, Maly's Equipment Pro, worked with us closely. Maly's delivered fast and met my expectations. They have been good and my Maly's Sales Consultant Debra Short has been helpful.



What has been your biggest challenge in opening the salon?

RANDY: Finding the right location was the most challenging because we felt to be successful, we had to be in the right spot.

MICHAEL: Getting the confidence to go forward was tough. The biggest hurdle was in my own mind. My partner is a great organizer and I am creative and in the hairdressing field so the two of us make a great team.

RANDY: We would rather try and fail than fail to try.

MICHAEL: I have every confidence that this is my time and I am doing the right thing. This town has just reached the one million mark in population. They're all getting their services somewhere. How can you fail when open a business in a beautiful setting, offer great services and provide a fun place to work for your team?