

Ardmore's New Beauty Co-op: MY SALON Suite

By Caroline O'Halloran | August 8, 2019



Good to see the lights on again at the old Jay Michael's building in Suburban Square. It's only been, what, nine years?

Gutted and totally redone, the two-story space is still a salon and spa. Actually, it's a couple dozen mini-salons and spas.

It's the second Philly-area location for My Salon Suite, a national franchisor that's turning the traditional salon model on its head. Instead of a large salon that employs a bunch of commission-based stylists, My Salon Suite turns individual stylists into business owners.

Each rents a fully-equipped mini-salon, which they can personalize with wallcoverings, lighting and such.

With single suites beginning at around \$300 weekly, busy beauty professionals can make six figures, the company claims.

"This isn't for someone straight out of beauty school," says Villanova mom Jenn Navarro, who, along with her husband Andrew, opened the Ardmore location July 8, a few weeks after launching one in Broomall.

Navarro says her suite tenants are all established stylists, massage therapists and estheticians who quit working for larger salons so they can work for themselves.

People like Kaila Loren (below), who left Ardmore's Salon 31 because she wanted to run a vegan and cruelty-free salon. "I get to express myself here," Loren says. "I wanted to get away from the chemical side of things."



Or Joseph Ferrer, an award-winning stylist who's resurrecting his former Wayne salon, Opal Designs, in Ardmore. "This is my rebirth," Ferrer says. "This place supplied me with a gift."

The co-op concept is catching on because clients tend to be loyal to their stylists, not their salons. Your favorite stylist leaves; you follow.

Each suite owner has 24/7 access to the building, so they can take clients off-hours if need be.

With all but a few of the 24 suites leased, Ardmore is off and running. Most owners style hair; others offer massage, body contouring, waxing, facials, lash tinting, brow microshading and microblading.

In the seven years since its founding, 150 My Salon Suite franchises have opened in 28 states.

Seems beauty co-ops are a thing. A similar concept – Image Studios 360 – is headed to Rosemont and then Berwyn in the fall.