SENSE N' STYLE

SEPT 2026



DUA MIAMI

YOUR FAVORITE STAYCATION ALL YEAR ROUND!

THE GOLDEN SEASON

40 TOP FOUNDERS

EXPLORE THE FOUNDERS SHAPING TODAY'S BUSINESS WORLD

INSIDER'S BUSINESS LOOK: A BEHIND-THE-SCENES JOURNEY

THE FOUNDER'S CIRCLE

Alexia Nepola

FROM THE SPOTLIGHT OF REAL HOUSEWIVES OF MIAMI TO BUILDING HER OWN LEGACY

SENSE N' STYLE

Team

Editor-in-chief - Vine Aduara Oghenekparobo

Marketing Executives	**Jael Kallamu** **Naomi Ibikunle** **Vinar Olire**
Staff Writers	**Michelle Njeri Ngarama** **Joyce Magaji**
Creative Director	**Vine Aduara**
Contributing Personas	**Jarad Gibson** **Zen Yezri**

Magazine' Feature Editorial Cover Page

Gato Rivera | gatoriverop
Nicole Marie | marienicole19
Spenser | suhh_spense
Ilona MUA | il.visage

CONTACT US

LinkedIn: Sense N' Style Magazine
Instagram: @sense_n_style_magazine
Email: info@sensenstyle.org

www.sensenstyle.org

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www.sensenstyle.com
(+1) 857 210 4787 | (591) 70905542
info@sensenstyle.org

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Sense N' Style Magazine has established itself as a vibrant and influential voice in the fashion industry, consistently showcasing diverse styles, emerging trends, and inspiring stories from around the globe.

Founded by Vine Aduara, who also serves as the Editor-in-Chief, and supported by a dedicated team including staff writers; Michelle Ngarama, Effie Odhiambo, the magazine has quickly become a go-to source for fashion enthusiasts and industry professionals alike.

From its inception, Sense N' Style has aimed to empower and inspire by sharing success stories of individuals within the fashion industry. Each edition is carefully structured to present a wide array of content, ranging from style inspirations to deep dives into the journeys of fashion entrepreneurs.

The magazine's mission is to provide a platform for models, designers, and young entrepreneurs, guiding them on how to navigate their paths to success with positivity and resilience.

The magazine has worked with a multitude of talented individuals across its various editions. The sixth edition, for instance, featured Kelly Chase from the Netflix show "Love Is Blind" on the cover, focusing on fashion icons, style inspiration, and entrepreneurial journeys. Other editions have spotlighted influential figures such as Quaina Watson, a top broker in Atlanta, emphasizing her remarkable journey to success.

Sense N' Style Magazine doesn't just limit itself to fashion; it delves into related industries as well.

For example, our fourth edition incorporated content on luxurious hotels, blending fashion with lifestyle and travel, and offering readers a holistic view of the stylish life. This edition highlighted how different models, entrepreneurs, and designers from various countries, especially within the Latin industry, maneuver through the fashion world in their unique contexts.

The magazine's digital and print versions ensure that fashion news, latest styles, and inspiring stories are accessible to a wide audience.

By featuring a mix of exclusive interviews, creative photoshoots, and practical advice, Sense N' Style continues to redefine how fashion content is consumed and appreciated.

In conclusion, Sense N' Style Magazine stands out not only for its fashion-forward content but also for its commitment to highlighting the personal stories and professional journeys of those within the industry. It is a testament to the power of fashion as a means of self-expression and cultural storytelling, making it an indispensable read for anyone passionate about style and innovation.

"Our Magazine shares fashion news, latest styles, inspiring founders' stories and current trends to our readers".













from the EDITOR



> **"I remember what it felt like releasing our first edition, six years later and it still feels magical…."**

SENSE N' STYLE MAGAZINE
ISSUE NO: 16

Our magazine is dedicated to showcasing the unique journeys of business owners & creatives in the various industries. We highlight incredible stories, creative endeavors, and collaborations with businesses from various fields to bring a rich and diverse perspective to our readers. Over the years, we've consistently delivered inspiring content, and especially for our 16th edition, we made no exceptions.

For our cover story, we spotlight the incredible journey of Alexia Nepola from the famous Real Housewives of Miami, as she opens up about staying authentic regardless of being in the spotlight. We also explore the journeys of inspiring business owners who open up about the stories behind their products and services, revealing powerful depth beyond the surface. As a special highlight, our 16th edition features different industries from interior designers, aesthetics, beauty, jewelries, skincare, wellness, and more, we ensure each story is well aligned for our readers to understand the brand better as we acknowledge the founders and the hard work that goes into building their brands. With even more inspiring stories and insights from founders stories and beyond, this edition is filled with compelling content that celebrates the best of business, creativity, and empowerment. We hope you enjoy this exciting read!

Vine Aduara

FOUNDER| EDITOR IN CHIEF
Sense N' Style Magazine

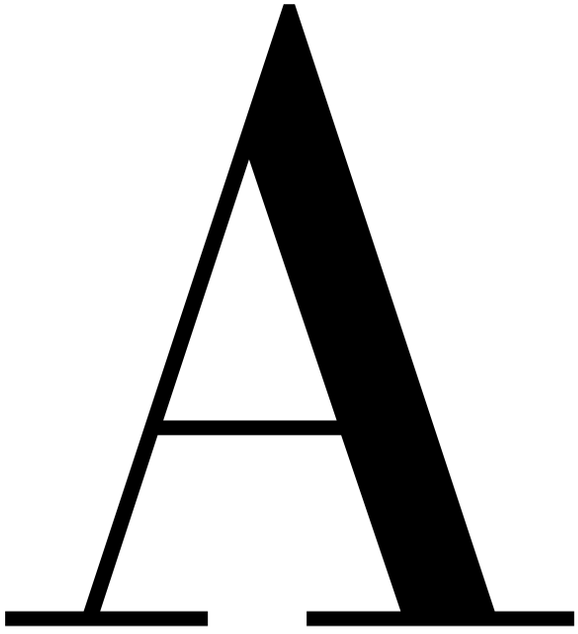
About Our Founder

Vine Aduara, holding a degree in Criminal Law, is not only a legal professional but also the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Sense N' Style Magazine, a fashion and lifestyle media brand created to give entrepreneurs, creatives, and rising voices a platform to be seen, heard, and celebrated.

With a background in Criminal Law and a passion for fashion, media, and entrepreneurship, Vine launched Sense N' Style in 2020 after recognizing a gap in the fashion industry, not just for exposure, but for meaningful connections and opportunities. What started as a vision has grown into a growing print and digital magazine, community, and platform connecting brands, founders, creatives, and influential personalities.




TIJON



Kindly tell us a little about yourself as well as Tijon.

I am originally from the Dominican Republic and have more than 20 years of experience in hospitality, tourism, marketing and advertising. I have always been passionate about creating memorable experiences and making people feel welcome. My husband and I owns Tijon Miami and Tijon Punta Cana. Tijon is a unique fragrance laboratory where guests become perfumers for the day. They explore different fragrance notes, blend their favorite oils, and create a signature perfume that represents their personality and story. What makes Tijon so special is that guests leave with much more than a bottle of perfume, they take home a beautiful memory they created themselves. We offer experiences for individuals, couples, families, birthdays, weddings, corporate events, and private celebrations.

How has the Miami experience been so far?

The Miami experience has been incredibly rewarding. Miami is vibrant, multicultural, creative, and full of people who appreciate unique and personalized experiences, so Tijon feels very much at home here. Building the business has also been a journey of learning, adapting, and creating awareness around a concept that is still new to many people. Once guests walk through our doors and create their own fragrance, they immediately understand what makes Tijon so special. Seeing their excitement when they smell their final perfume, and watching them connect that fragrance to a celebration, a loved one, or a special moment, is one of the most fulfilling parts of what we do.

dditionally, we have been fortunate to collaborate with wonderful hotels, companies, community organizations, and local partners. Miami has challenged me as an entrepreneur, but it has also inspired me to keep growing, creating, and sharing the art of perfumery with more people.

For someone discovering Tijon for the first time, how would you describe the experience?

I would describe it as a journey through fragrance, creativity, and emotion. From the moment you enter, you are invited to slow down, explore beautiful aromas, and learn how different fragrance notes work together. With guidance from our team, you become the perfumer. You smell and select the notes that speak to you, experiment with different combinations, and create a signature fragrance that is completely personal. One of the most unique parts of the Tijon experience is our skin test. Because a fragrance can smell different on each person, we apply your creation to your skin to see how it interacts with your individual body chemistry. This allows you to make final adjustments and ensures that the finished perfume is truly unique and created especially for you. At the end, you name your fragrance, bottle it, and take it home as a lasting memory. It is much more than making perfume, it is an interactive and joyful experience that allows you to express your personality and connect with others.

How long do Tijon fragrances typically last?

It is all depending on the skin, Tijon fragrances typically last between six and eight hours on the skin, although the exact longevity depends on the fragrance notes, concentration, skin type, climate, and body chemistry. Deeper notes such as woods, amber, musk, and vanilla generally last longer than lighter citrus or fresh notes.

What gave you the confidence to make that leap?

My confidence came from more than 20 years of experience in hospitality, tourism, and marketing. Throughout my career, I learned how to understand customers, build relationships, create memorable experiences, and recognize opportunities. However, making the leap into entrepreneurship was still frightening. I do believe confidence means, trusting your experience, believing in your vision, and moving forward even when you do not have every answer.
One of my biggest motivations is my autistic son. I wanted to create something meaningful that he could enjoy, participate in, and eventually have the opportunity to work in. Building Tijon is not only about creating a successful business; it is also about creating a place where he can feel comfortable, valued, and proud of the work he does. My larger dream is to create more opportunities for individuals with autism through fragrance education, job training, and meaningful employment. When I discovered Tijon, I immediately saw its potential. It brought together everything I love: hospitality, creativity, fragrance, and human connection. I knew it was something special that Miami had not experienced before. The journey is not always easy, but my family, my purpose, and the joy I see in our guests continue to give me the courage to move forward. Every time someone creates a fragrance that is uniquely theirs, I am reminded that taking the leap was worth it.



Ana Mota

Founder of Tijon Miami

FOR ME, TIJON IS MUCH MORE THAN A PERFUMERY. IT IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CREATE MEMORIES, EXPRESS THEMSELVES, AND LEAVE WITH A FRAGRANCE THAT TELLS THEIR OWN STORY.

-Ana Mota
Founder of Tijon Miami

What is the Tijon class experience like?

Although Miami Tijon, and Sam from Tijon Key West, have their own personalities, the heart of the Tijon experience remains the same. We follow consistent standards for staff training, fragrance education, product quality, class structure, skin testing, and personalized service. Our teams guide guests through every step, from understanding fragrance notes and creating their formulas to testing the perfume on their skin, naming it, and bottling the final creation. Just as importantly, we share the same commitment to making every guest feel welcomed, supported, and proud of what they create. Sam and I also communicate regularly. We exchange ideas, share what is working at each location, discuss opportunities, and explore new things we can develop together. That constant communication helps us maintain consistency while continuing to improve and grow the Tijon experience. At the same time, each location reflects the character of its destination. Key West has its relaxed island spirit, while Miami brings a vibrant, multicultural energy. The atmosphere may feel locally inspired, but the quality, creativity, warmth, and personalized attention guests associate with Tijon remain consistent in both locations.

What makes the experience of creating your own signature fragrance so special?

What makes creating your own signature fragrance so special is the emotional connection. Fragrance has a powerful ability to bring back memories, remind us of people we love, transport us to meaningful places, and express feelings that can be difficult to describe with words. During the Tijon experience, guests are not simply choosing ingredients, they are selecting aromas that connect with their personality, memories, and story. Every decision becomes personal, from the notes they blend to the name they give their finished perfume.

At the end, they leave with more than a beautiful fragrance. They take home an emotion, a memory, and a part of themselves captured inside a bottle. Each time they wear it, they can reconnect with that special experience. That emotional connection is what makes a signature fragrance truly unique.

How do you give each location its own identity while staying true to the Tijon brand?

We stay true to the Tijon brand by maintaining the same core experience at every location: quality fragrances, expert guidance, creativity, skin testing, personalized service, and the opportunity for each guest to create something meaningful. At the same time, we allow each location to reflect the culture, energy, and personality of its destination. Key West embraces a relaxed island spirit, while Miami is vibrant, multicultural, artistic, and sophisticated.

At Tijon Miami, we created an exclusive collection inspired by four iconic areas of the city: Calle Ocho, Ocean Drive, Coral Way, and Coconut Grove. Even the packaging celebrates local culture, featuring artwork created by Dominican artist Ramses Mejía.

Looking ahead, what excites you most about the future of Tijon, and what advice would you give to someone thinking about taking a leap into entrepreneurship?

What excites me most about the future of Tijon is the opportunity to introduce the art of fragrance creation to more people.



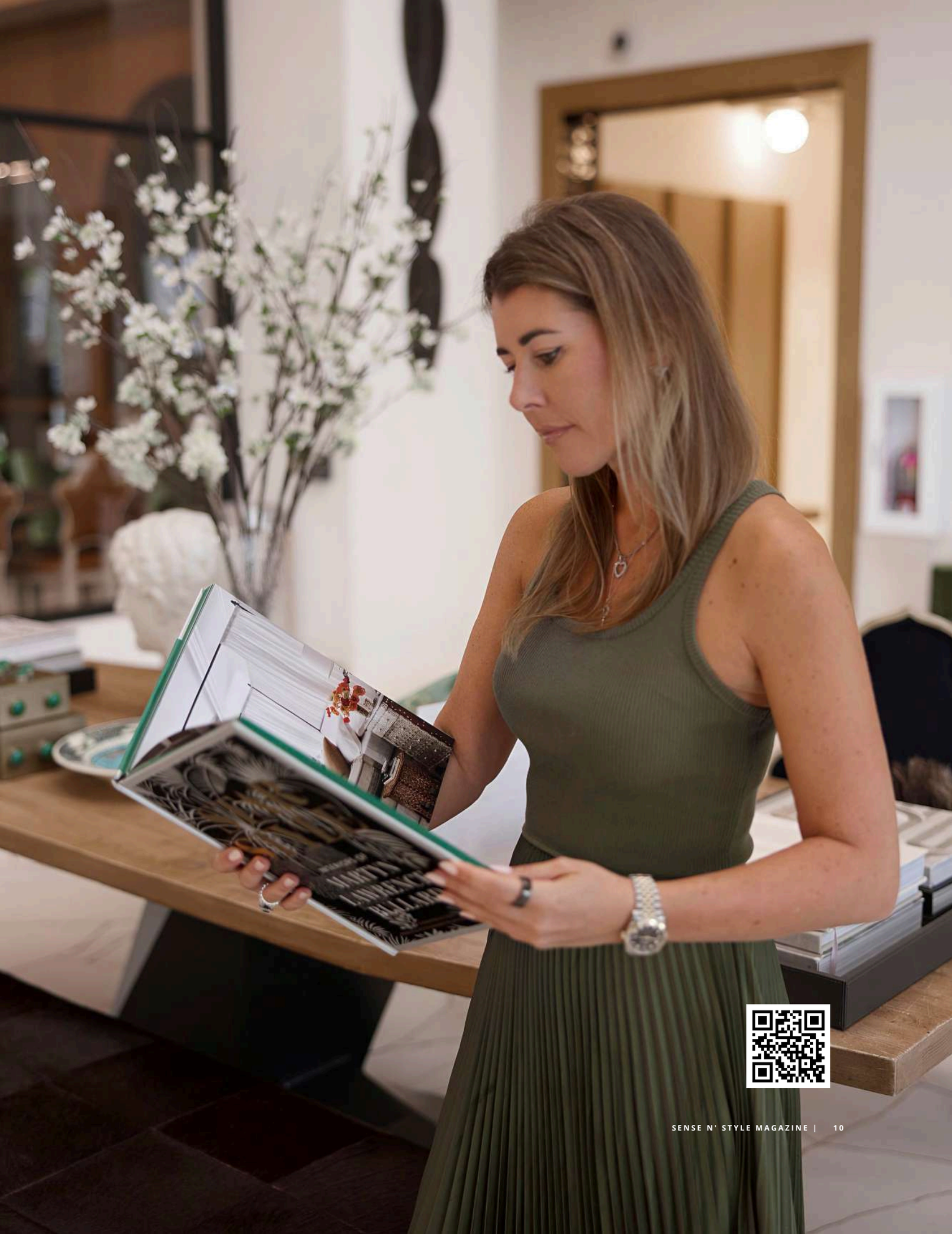
I see tremendous potential to grow through new locations, hotel and corporate partnerships, private events, education, and destination-inspired fragrance collections. My vision also goes beyond growing the business. I want Tijon to become a place where creativity, inclusion, and purpose come together, where people feel welcomed, valued, and able to contribute. For anyone considering entrepreneurship, my advice is to understand your "why." There will be difficult days, unexpected challenges, and moments when you question yourself. A strong purpose will give you the courage to continue.

How can people book a class or purchase a fragrance from Tijon?

People can easily book a class or purchase a fragrance through our website at tijon.com From there, they can select the Miami or Key West location, explore the available experiences, and reserve their preferred date and time online. Guests are also welcome to call the location directly, contact us through social media, or visit one of our boutiques. Our signature Tijon fragrances can be purchased online or directly from our boutiques. Guests can also visit us to explore the collection, find their favorite scent, or create a completely personalized fragrance in our laboratory.

Any final thoughts you would like to share with our readers?

I would like readers to remember that fragrance is much more than something we wear, it is a connection to our memories, emotions, identity, and the people and places we love. At Tijon, our goal is to give every guest the freedom to express their story through scent and leave with something that could never belong to anyone else. We invite you to slow down, explore your creativity, and experience the joy of making something truly personal. I also hope my journey encourages others to believe in their ideas and take meaningful risks. You do not need to have every answer before beginning. Start with a clear purpose, remain open to learning, and continue moving forward even when the path feels uncertain.
For me, Tijon is not only about creating beautiful fragrances. It is about creating memories, bringing people together, and building a business with heart, inclusion, and purpose. We look forward to welcoming you and helping you capture your own story in a bottle.



TRE INTERIORS

Exclusive Interview With Alina Labusova

I'm Alina Labusova, founder and principal designer of TRE Interiors. If I had to describe myself in one sentence, I'd probably say that I've always been surrounded by beauty. Beauty has always been a natural part of my life. Fashion, travel, architecture, art... all of that shaped the way I see the world. I don't even think about it anymore. It's just who I am. Being surrounded by so much creativity also taught me to trust my own eye. I've never really enjoyed following what everyone else was doing or repeating something simply because it was popular. I was always more interested in finding something new, seeing it in my own way, and often noticing it before it became a trend.

That same approach is at the heart of TRE Interiors. I create homes that are beautiful, of course, but they also have to feel personal. I don't believe in repeating the same look from one project to another. Every client comes with a different personality, lifestyle, and story, and I want the home to reflect that. TRE Interiors brought together everything that had been part of my life for years, but the way it actually began was not something I planned.

EVERY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS BEGINS WITH A STORY. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START TRE INTERIORS, AND WHAT HAS THE JOURNEY BEEN LIKE BUILDING YOUR OWN INTERIOR DESIGN STUDIO?

Looking back, it feels like every part of my life was quietly leading me here, even though I didn't realize it at the time. I started my career as a professional stylist. I loved helping people feel confident and express themselves, and I truly enjoyed that work. But at the same time, there was another part of my life that was growing alongside it. My husband has been in real estate development and construction for many years. Beginning around 2011, we bought properties, renovated them, and sold them. I naturally became responsible for the design. I wasn't an interior designer then. I wasn't thinking about building a business. I was simply making design decisions based on what felt right to me. Something interesting started happening. Almost every time someone came to see one of our homes, they asked the same question: "Who designed this?" Sometimes the house itself wasn't exactly what they were looking for, but they wanted to meet the designer because they loved the way the space looked and felt. That happened again and again.

At some point, my husband looked at me and said, "Have you ever thought about doing this professionally?" Honestly, I hadn't. It had never crossed my mind that this could become my career. I wasn't searching for interior design. In many ways, it found me. Looking back now, it feels like the most natural thing that could have happened. Everything I had done before, my love for beauty, my background in fashion, and years of renovating homes all came together in one profession. That's how TRE Interiors was born. Starting the studio was exciting, but also humbling. Like any new business, it didn't happen overnight. Every project taught me something new, every client challenged me in a different way, and little by little the business grew through trust and referrals. I think what helped me most was that I never saw it as simply decorating beautiful homes. For me, it has always been about understanding how people actually live. A home should be beautiful, but it also has to make everyday life easier, calmer, and more enjoyable. That philosophy has stayed with me from the very beginning.

Today, TRE Interiors has grown into a full-service design studio, but in many ways my approach hasn't changed. Every project still begins with listening. Before I think about layouts, materials, or finishes, I want to understand the people who will live there. Because in the end, that's what makes a house feel like home. I actually spend much more time listening than people expect. Most clients think our first meetings will be about colors, furniture, or floor plans. But that's rarely where we start. I want to understand who they are first.

I ask a lot of questions that don't seem to have much to do with design. How do they spend their mornings? Do they cook every day or order dinner? Do they entertain often? Where does the family naturally gather? What helps them relax after a long day? Sometimes those conversations tell me far more than looking at hundreds of inspiration photos. I also pay attention to the things people don't always say directly. The way they describe their daily routines, the way they react to certain ideas, even the little moments that make them smile. Those details often become the foundation of the design. I never want someone to walk into their home and think, "This looks like a TRE Interiors project." I'd much rather they walk in and feel, "This feels like us." To me, that's the greatest compliment a designer can receive. Of course, every project reflects my aesthetic and my standards, but it should never feel like my personality has taken over someone else's home. My role is to bring out the best version of my client's lifestyle, not my own. Today, people often tell me that their home feels beautiful, but more importantly, it feels like them. That's exactly what I hope to create. Because in the end, great design isn't just about how a home looks. It's about how it makes you feel every single day.





As an entrepreneur in the interior design industry, what has been one of the biggest lessons you've learned about growing a successful business and earning your clients' trust?

I think one of the biggest lessons I've learned is that clients don't remember your drawings. They remember the experience they had working with you. I've always had very high expectations when it comes to service. I've been fortunate to experience an incredible level of customer care throughout my life, and that naturally became my own standard. I notice the small details. I notice when people follow through on what they promise. And I believe my clients deserve that same level of care. For years, I kept searching for the right partners. I've worked on many renovation and construction projects with different contractors, cabinet companies, and installers. I was always looking for people who cared about the finished result as much as I did. Some were wonderful. Others weren't. What frustrated me most wasn't when mistakes happened. Mistakes happen in every business. It was when I knew exactly how something should be done, but I couldn't control the final result because it depended on someone else's standards. Eventually, I came to a very simple conclusion. If I truly wanted to deliver the level of quality and service I promised my clients, I needed to take responsibility for much more than just the design. That's how TRE Millwork was born. It wasn't because I wanted another business. It was because I wanted greater control over the quality, engineering, manufacturing, and installation, so that the finished home would actually look the way it had been envisioned from the very beginning. Today, I think that's one of the biggest reasons clients trust us. They know we're not simply handing them beautiful drawings and hoping everything works out.

In a world where trends come and go so quickly, how do you continue to evolve as a designer while staying true to your own vision?

To be honest, I don't think about trends very much. Of course I notice them, just like everyone else, but I've never started a project by asking myself what's popular right now. I think my inspiration comes from something much more personal. I'm naturally curious. Even when I travel with my family, I catch myself studying beautiful spaces. Hotels, restaurants, museums, old buildings... I notice the details, but even more than that, I notice how a place makes me feel. I often ask myself, "Why does this space feel so inviting? Why do I want to stay here?" The answer is almost never one beautiful piece of furniture or one expensive finish. It's the way everything works together. When I look back now, it's actually funny because I never planned any of it. At the time, every chapter of my life felt completely separate. But now I can see how they all came together. When I worked in fashion, I wasn't thinking about interior design. I was simply surrounded by beautiful things every day. You start noticing proportions. You become very sensitive to color. Honestly, color has always come naturally to me. Even today, when we're choosing finishes for a project, I usually know almost immediately what works and what doesn't. It's difficult to explain. I just feel it. Then I owned a beauty salon, and later a restaurant. Back then I thought I was just running businesses. Now I realize I was actually learning something much more valuable. Both businesses were about people. You can have the most beautiful salon or the most beautiful restaurant, but if people don't feel comfortable, they won't come back. That stayed with me. I think designing a home is exactly the same. People remember how a space makes them feel much more than they remember the furniture. Along the way, I also had a chance to work in public relations, and one thing I took away from that experience was learning to look at the bigger picture.

You often talk about the importance of execution. Why was it so important for you to create your own millwork division instead of relying on outside contractors?

I don't think I ever woke up one day and said, "I'm going to build a millwork division." It happened because I kept running into the same problem. You can create a beautiful design and spend weeks thinking through every detail, but once the project leaves your hands, so much depends on other people. One cabinet is installed a little differently than you envisioned, one detail gets simplified, one finish isn't exactly right... and suddenly the final result isn't what you imagined anymore. After a while, I realized I couldn't keep saying, "Well, that's just how contractors work." If my name was going to be on the project, I wanted to know that the quality matched the vision from start to finish. I've never been someone who's comfortable saying, "It can't be done." If there's a challenge, my first thought is always, "Let's figure it out." Having our own millwork division gives us the freedom to solve problems creatively instead of compromising, and I think that's one of the reasons our clients trust us. That's really how the millwork division at TRE Interiors came to life. Today, it's a huge part of how we work. Behind every project is an incredible team of engineers, project managers, craftsmen, and installers. Everyone is involved from the very beginning, everyone communicates, and everyone is working toward the same result. That's one of the biggest advantages of having everything under one roof.

ART & DESIGN



When they choose TRE Interiors, they're choosing one team that's fully invested in the outcome!

From the very first conversation to the final installation. To me, that's what trust really means.

Our production facility is located in Oakland Park, allowing us to work closely with clients throughout Boca Raton, Palm Beach, and the Miami area. I'm really proud of what we've built there. We've invested in advanced equipment, we're always improving our processes, and we work with premium materials sourced from both the United States and Europe. Those things may not always be visible once a project is finished, but they make an enormous difference in the quality of the final result. What makes me especially proud is how quickly this part of our business has grown. We've never really relied on advertising. Almost every new project comes through a previous client or a recommendation. To me, that's the greatest compliment because it tells me people trust us enough to share our name with someone they care about.

That's how I know we're moving in the right direction. Some designers feel most at home selecting fabrics or styling a room. I genuinely enjoy spending time in our production facility. I like talking with our engineers, walking through projects, looking at details, and solving challenges together. That's where so many good ideas come from. I'm a little obsessive when it comes to details. I always have been. Sometimes I'll walk through the production floor and notice something that most people would probably never see. But to me, those little things matter. When hundreds of small details are done right, that's what creates a beautiful result. One of my favorite moments is when a client visits our production facility for the first time. You can actually see the moment they realize how much engineering, craftsmanship, and precision go into every single piece. It completely changes the way they look at custom millwork. I still get excited every time I walk through the production facility. Seeing an idea become a drawing, then a cabinet, and eventually part of someone's home is something I don't think I'll ever get tired of. What probably makes me happiest isn't just seeing a finished kitchen. It's walking through the production floor and seeing so many talented people, each doing their part to create something really special. I feel incredibly lucky to work alongside them. I feel like we're just getting started, and that's probably the most exciting part for me. I want to keep growing this side of TRE Interiors, continue investing in new technology, keep pushing ourselves, and build something even more special together. At the end of the day, beautiful design is important, but I believe beautiful execution deserves just as much attention. One without the other simply isn't enough. And when clients come back years later or recommend us to their friends and families, that's when I feel we've truly done our job well.



Has design changed the way you see the world?

Absolutely. Although sometimes I think it happened the other way around. People often assume that because I'm a designer, I spend my life noticing beautiful interiors. The truth is, I notice people first. I pay attention to how they move through a space, where they naturally gather, what makes them feel comfortable, and what they remember long after they've left. I've always believed that the feeling a space creates matters far more than any individual piece of furniture. Looking back, I don't think design taught me to see the world this way. I think seeing the world this way is what led me to design in the first place. And I feel incredibly fortunate that I get to help people create homes that become part of their own stories.

For someone who is considering working with TRE Interiors for the first time, what can they expect from your design process?

I don't think people choose an interior designer simply because they like someone's portfolio. There are many talented designers. I think they choose someone they trust. Your home is one of the most personal places in your life. It's where your family grows, where memories are made, and where ordinary days become the ones you'll remember years later. Being invited into that part of someone's life is something I never take for granted. That's why our first conversation is rarely about colors or furniture. It's about people. I want to understand how they live, what matters to them, and how they want their home to feel. The design always comes after that. People often ask me what my favorite project has been. The truth is, it hasn't happened yet. Every home teaches me something new. Every client gives me a different perspective. Every finished project makes me excited about creating the next one. I hope I never lose that curiosity.



Restore your confidence with Vain by Nature

Founded by Krystal Garcia

KRYSTAL GARCIA

Exclusive Interview With Founder of Vain By Nature

Kindly tell us a little about yourself and Vain By Nature.

My name is Krystal Garcia. I'm a registered nurse and an aesthetic nurse. I also consider myself an educator and trainer now. I founded Vain By Nature this year after deciding to branch out on my own. I've been in the aesthetics industry for about ten years. I truly started from the bottom. Before I became a nurse, I worked as a receptionist, assisted in the back office, managed social media, and learned every aspect of the practice. Then I became a laser technician before moving into Botox and fillers. I really worked my way up through every role before reaching where I am today. Alongside aesthetics, I still work part time in the hospital because I have such a deep passion for medicine that I don't think I'll ever leave it completely. So I divide my time between hospital nursing and full time aesthetics. One thing that really sets me apart is my background in art. Before nursing school, I actually wanted to attend art school. That artistic perspective completely changed the way I approach aesthetics. I see faces differently, and I believe that helps me create more balanced and natural results. When I train nurses, I can usually tell who naturally understands facial artistry because not everyone sees proportions and balance the same way. You can teach techniques, but you cannot always teach someone to see what an artist sees. Having that artistic foundation has truly helped me excel in this field. Over the years, I have continued investing in advanced education because I always want to provide safe, effective, and beautiful results for my patients. Looking back, I don't think I was ready to own my own business when I first became an aesthetic nurse. I believe this point in my career is exactly when it was meant to happen. Everything has aligned naturally. Even meeting you and being invited for this interview feels like perfect timing because I've spent a long time thinking about building my own brand. I kept telling myself to wait, but this year I finally decided it was time. Then your message came through, and I honestly felt like it confirmed I was exactly where I was supposed to be.

You've been in the aesthetics industry for over ten years, and you've worked your way from the front desk to becoming a business owner. What would you say this journey has taught you about building a successful career?

Starting at the front desk and working my way up to becoming an injector and now a business owner taught me that there are no shortcuts to building a meaningful and successful career. Working at the front desk taught me the importance of patient care, communication, and understanding the day to day operations that keep a practice running successfully. As I progressed into nursing, I was able to apply everything I had learned while continuing to grow my clinical knowledge. I was always asking questions about the products, the treatments, and how everything worked. Later, as a registered nurse, I was finally able to put all of that knowledge into practice. As I continued my education and eventually opened my own practice, I realized that success isn't simply about mastering injections. It's about earning trust, being consistent, and never stopping your pursuit of excellence. Some of my patients have been with me since I was simply performing laser treatments. They trusted me with their skin then, and today they trust me with Botox, fillers, and facial balancing. Seeing that journey continue with them means everything to me.

You often say that you were born to make people feel beautiful. What inspired you to create Vain By Nature, and what does that mission mean to you today?

I've always believed that confidence changes the way people carry themselves. Being able to play a role in someone's confidence is one of the most rewarding parts of what I do. Back in college, my personal motto was, "When you look good, you feel good, you do good." To me, that means when you feel your best, everything else in your life improves. Think about those mornings when you're rushing around, you haven't brushed your hair, you're stressed, and you don't feel put together. Your whole day feels off. But when you wake up slowly, have your coffee, brush your teeth, get ready, and feel good about yourself, your entire mindset changes. That's exactly how I want my patients to feel when they leave my treatment room. I want them to feel beautiful, confident, and ready to take on whatever comes next, whether that's work, family, or simply living their everyday lives. My goal has always been to help people embrace the beauty they already have rather than trying to become someone else.

Let's talk about how your personal experiences have influenced your business today. You mentioned that you once had a bad experience with fillers yourself, and that it inspired you to perfect your technique. How has that experience shaped the way you care for your patients today?

I know what it feels like to walk out of an appointment feeling disappointed instead of confident. I remember spending a lot of money on fillers and leaving the appointment wondering what had actually been done. That experience stayed with me, and it pushed me to become completely obsessed with learning anatomy, improving my techniques, and understanding every product that I use. I spent years investing in continuing education, learning from some of the best injectors in the industry, and refining everything I had learned because I never wanted another person to feel the way I felt after that appointment.

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>
> *-Krystal Garcia*
> *Founder of Vain by Nature*





Now, every treatment starts with listening. Before I recommend anything, I always ask my patients to tell me about themselves and what they hope to achieve. I want to understand their lifestyle, their goals, and what bothers them about their appearance. For example, I have police officers who prefer a very natural look, while dancers may want something a little more dramatic. Every patient is different, so every treatment should be different. When I was the patient, I felt like everyone was treated exactly the same. We all walked out looking alike. That has never been my goal. My goal is to help people feel beautiful in the skin they were born with. I simply want to enhance their natural features, not change who they are.





Education has become a huge part of your career, especially mentoring other nurses. Why do you believe it's so important to support and teach other injectors instead of viewing them as competition?

I truly believe there's enough room in this industry for everyone to succeed. When I was learning, I understood how valuable it was to have mentors who were willing to teach me and share their knowledge. Those people made a huge difference in my career, and now I want to be that person for someone else. To me, mentorship isn't about creating competition. It's about raising the overall standard of our industry. One day, I may need the very nurses I'm teaching today. None of us can do everything alone. The more educated injectors we have, the safer our industry becomes, the better our patient outcomes become, and the stronger our profession becomes. If everyone keeps knowledge to themselves, then eventually that knowledge disappears. I want to leave behind something bigger than just my own business. I want to see other nurses succeed, avoid mistakes that could cost them time or money, and build careers they're proud of because I know how difficult it was when I first started.

So many of your clients initially come to you for lip fillers, which I know you mentioned is one of your most popular services, but they eventually discover your full facial balancing approach. How do you help people achieve natural looking results while still enhancing their confidence?

It always starts with understanding what brings someone into my treatment chair. Even if a patient comes in asking specifically for lip fillers, I always look at the face as a whole. The first thing I ask is, "What is bothering you?" because what they notice about themselves may not be what I notice.

Once I understand their concerns, I make my recommendations while respecting the features they already love about themselves. My goal is always to enhance those features rather than change them. Sometimes people ask me what I think they should do, but before I answer, I always want to hear their perspective first. Many times, lips aren't actually the missing piece. Sometimes it's the cheeks, the chin, the jawline, or even skin quality. Everything works together to create facial harmony. So while patients may come in asking for lip fillers, we often end up discussing overall facial balance instead. My philosophy has always been simple, “Enhance, never overcorrect”. I also remind my patients that they can always come back. This isn't about trying to achieve everything in one appointment. We can build beautiful results gradually over time. I want people to leave looking refreshed, well rested, and confident. I never want someone to immediately say, "Oh, you've had work done." Instead, I want people to wonder what changed because they simply look healthier, happier, and more confident.

Looking ahead, what is your vision for Vain By Nature? And what would you like people to remember most about their experience as one of your clients?

My vision is to continue building a brand that's known not only for exceptional results but also for integrity, safety, genuine patient care, and trust. I want Vain By Nature to be a place where people immediately feel comfortable when they walk through the door. I want every patient to feel confident that they're receiving the safest treatment, that their investment is worthwhile, and that they can expect consistent, predictable results every time. Consistency is incredibly important to me. That's one of the reasons I share so many before and after photos of my work. I see a lot of people online making entertaining videos, but I always ask myself, "Where's the actual work?" Many new patients tell me they appreciate that my social media focuses on real patient results because the work speaks for itself. That's exactly the reputation I want Vain By Nature to have. I want people to know they'll receive honest recommendations, consistent outcomes, and high quality care every single time they visit. One of my biggest goals is to become a national trainer for some of the aesthetic brands that I use. I'd also love to build a platform specifically for nurses where they can reach out, ask questions, and support one another. I really want to create a community where we can continue learning together. My hope is to help elevate our industry by promoting safety, ethics, and evidence based practice in everything we do.

If people would like to book your services, where can they find you?

In a couple of weeks, patients will be able to visit vainbynature.com. The website will have a "Book Now" button where they'll be able to schedule appointments directly.


WIMS
DRINKING LESS.
FEELING MORE.
Wims!
POCKET-TONIC

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

LAUREN MILLER



WIMS is a consumer packaged goods company, and we make a portable THC drink mixer that allows you to turn any beverage into an edible. The company was founded by my father and I in 2024. Honestly, if someone had told me ten years ago that I'd be running a THC business with my dad, I would have thought they were completely crazy, but here we are. Personally, my background has been somewhat unconventional. I've worked across several industries, from the United Nations to sustainability and environmental technology. Later, I made a career transition through a master's program into user experience design and brand strategy. I've always been fascinated by how things work and why people behave the way they do. That curiosity naturally led me into design because design is ultimately about understanding people, their habits, rituals, and motivations. Learning how to build products around real human behavior became a huge part of my career, and that mindset heavily influenced the creation of WIMS. We started noticing that people's drinking habits were changing, especially after the pandemic.

Consumers were becoming more intentional about what they consumed, and many wanted alternatives to alcohol without giving up the social rituals surrounding it. That's really where WIMS was born.

What inspired the creation of WIMS?

We were inspired to start Wims because we recognized how embedded drinking rituals into our culture - it's how we celebrate, connect, socialize, and unwind - but if you aren't drinking or drinking differently, you can feel disconnected from those experiences. We wanted to create something that allowed people to continue participating in those moments, no matter where they happen, while simply choosing a different kind of beverage experience.

Our product doesn't ask people to change their habits, it complements them. Whether you're at a restaurant, a sporting event, or gathering with friends, you can bring WIMS along and customize your experience without disrupting your lifestyle. Beyond the product itself, we were also very intentional about building a brand. My background in brand strategy taught me that lasting brands stand for something bigger than the product they're selling. That's why we've worked hard to create what we call "WIMS World", a universe around the product that represents a feeling, a lifestyle, and a way of approaching modern social life.

Since WIMS is a father-daughter venture, what role does your father play in the company?

We actually have very complementary skill sets, which is why our partnership works so well. I focus primarily on brand strategy, product development, marketing, and customer experience. My dad leads operations, logistics, and finance. People often ask whether working with family is difficult, but honestly, it's been wonderful. We know each other incredibly well and can communicate almost instinctively. Interestingly, WIMS wasn't our first venture together. Before WIMS, we launched a CBD company from our family farm in Summerfield, NC.

We grew the hemp and built a small processing facility in our barn. That business was an incredible learning experience that helped us really understand the industry and consumer behavior. Today, that same iconic red barn serves as WIMS' warehouse and fulfillment center. So while the farming equipment is gone, the entrepreneurial spirit definitely remains.

WIMS promotes the idea of "Drinking Less. Feeling More." How are consumer attitudes toward alcohol changing?

We're seeing a significant shift. The data consistently shows that younger generations, particularly Gen Z, are drinking less alcohol than previous generations. I don't think alcohol is disappearing, there will always be occasions where people want a great glass of wine or a celebratory cocktail. What's changing is that consumers want more options. People are wearing fitness trackers. They're monitoring sleep quality, recovery scores, and overall wellness. They're becoming much more aware of how alcohol affects their bodies and how they feel the next day. Cost is another factor. Going out and drinking regularly can be expensive, especially for younger consumers. We've also seen interesting trends involving GLP-1 medications. Many customers have told us their desire for alcohol decreased after starting those medications, while THC beverages remained enjoyable and aligned better with their wellness goals. All of these factors are contributing to a broader movement toward mindful consumption.

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How is WIMS preparing for potential regulatory changes within the hemp-derived THC industry?

We actually want this category to be regulated and taxed, not banned. History has shown that prohibition doesn't work. We're strong advocates for measures like age restrictions, child-resistant packaging, third-party testing, and responsible oversight. Those are all important steps in maturing the industry. At the same time, people want this products, which is why we're actively educating and mobilizing our customer base. We encourage consumers to communicate with their elected officials and share how these products positively impact their lives. From a business perspective, we're also diversifying. One area we're particularly excited about is developing an adaptogenic product line that doesn't contain cannabinoids. The same snap-and-squeeze format could be used for products focused on relaxation, sleep, focus, or other functional goals. Consumers love the format itself, and we see tremendous opportunity to expand beyond THC. We're also exploring additional markets, including regulated state-level cannabis markets like California and New York.

What has been the most rewarding part of building WIMS?

Without question, it's hearing from customers. The stories people share and the creative ways they use the product are incredibly rewarding. Seeing someone try WIMS for the first time and immediately understand its value, that "aha" moment, is amazing. What's exciting is that we're not only creating a product; we're creating an entirely new category within a category. The hemp-derived THC beverage market is already growing rapidly, but we're taking it one step further with a portable, wallet-sized format. Being first is exciting, but it also comes with the responsibility of educating consumers and distributors. Fortunately, once people see it, they get it.



Any final thoughts you'd like to share with our readers?

One thing I always like to mention is that I'm not a traditional THC consumer. I don't enjoy smoking, and I've had negative experiences with edibles in the past. If you had told me years ago that I'd be building a THC company, I never would have believed you. What changed my perspective was discovering THC beverages. The experience feels much more approachable because the effects arrive relatively quickly, similar to alcohol, and wear off within a reasonable timeframe. You're not committing to an all-night experience. We also intentionally formulated WIMS with a low-dose approach: 4mg of THC and 4mg of CBD. That balance creates a gentle, approachable experience that's perfect for newcomers or anyone who wants more control over their consumption. For us, it's all about giving people options, helping them stay present, and creating products that fit naturally into the way they already live their lives.

For someone considering reducing alcohol consumption, what makes WIMS appealing?

One of the biggest reasons people turn to WIMS is simple: they don't enjoy hangovers. Personally, I love feeling relaxed and social, but I hate feeling awful the next morning. Our product allows people to experience relaxation and a pleasant buzz without the hangover that's often associated with alcohol. My dad and I are both big users of fitness trackers. He wears a WHOOP band, and I wear a Garmin. What we noticed was that alcohol consistently hurt recovery scores and sleep quality. When using THC instead, those metrics improved significantly. Beyond that, one of the things I love most about low-dose THC is how present it can make you feel.

In a world filled with constant notifications and distractions, there's something really valuable about slowing down and being fully engaged in the moment. We're not trying to send people into outer space. Our goal is a balanced, grounded experience that helps people feel relaxed, present, and connected.

Where can people purchase WIMS?

The easiest place to purchase WIMS is through our website at wims.world. We're also available in select retail locations, and we're actively working to expand our retail footprint into additional outlets, including major beverage retailers.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH ALEXIS SCHULLER

Founder of Her Fifth Carat

Alexis: My name is Alexis, and I'm the founder of Her Fifth Carat. I grew up with cystic fibrosis, so I've always had a different relationship with time. From a young age, I understood that time isn't something any of us are promised, and I think that shaped the way I approach life. I've never been someone who waits for the "perfect" moment. If there's something I want to do, build, or experience, I tend to go for it and figure things out along the way. Her Fifth Carat really grew from that mindset.

I wanted to build a jewelry company that felt different and genuinely put people first. We specialize in custom engagement rings and fine jewelry, primarily using lab-grown diamonds, with each piece made specifically for the person who will wear it. For me, it's about more than creating a beautiful ring. It's about being transparent, educating our clients throughout the process, and making something that represents one of the most meaningful moments in their lives.

Transparency is a major part of Her Fifth Carat's mission. What did you discover about the traditional jewelry buying process that made you feel consumers deserved more transparency?

When I first started researching the jewelry industry and doing a deep dive into how everything worked, I was honestly shocked by how much information wasn't being shared with customers. Many people don't know what they're actually paying for, how diamonds are priced, or why two seemingly identical diamonds or rings can have such different prices. I wanted to build a company where customers could understand every step of the process. We openly explain the design process, diamond selection, pricing, timelines, and everything that goes into creating a piece. Clients also approve each stage, so they remain involved throughout the process.



My goal has never been simply to sell someone a ring. I want them to feel informed and confident in their decision. Buying an engagement ring is an emotional experience, and especially when purchasing jewelry online, transparency can make the entire process feel much more comfortable.

Her Fifth Carat focuses heavily on lab grown diamonds, certified diamonds, and custom pieces. What types of jewelry do you create?

We primarily work with lab-grown diamonds and create custom engagement rings, wedding bands, anniversary rings, eternity bands, tennis jewelry, and other fine everyday pieces. Every custom ring starts from scratch based on the client's vision. They share what they're looking for, along with inspiration and ideas, and we design from there. What makes us different is that we consider more than just aesthetics. We design around the client's lifestyle, personal taste, and how they actually wear their jewelry. We also spend time discussing durability, proportions, and practical details that clients may not know to ask about. For me, a ring has to be beautiful, but it also needs to be durable and something the client genuinely loves wearing every day.

You've spoken about wanting to give clients a true luxury experience while also making fine jewelry more accessible. What does luxury mean to you beyond the price tag?

I definitely think people associate luxury with spending a lot of money, but I think luxury has very little to do with price. To me, luxury is feeling heard. It's having someone answer your questions honestly without trying to upsell you. It's also knowing that your ring was designed specifically for you. Most of what we do is custom, so the client knows that their piece wasn't simply pulled from a display case. It was created around their vision, their lifestyle, and what they actually want. You can receive a beautiful piece at an accessible price and still have a luxury experience through communication, craftsmanship, and customer care. We really pride ourselves on taking care of the client from the beginning of the process all the way through receiving the ring and even afterward. I want people to know that they can always reach out to us if they need something. As we continue scaling, one of my biggest priorities is making sure customer service remains at the forefront of everything we do.



You recently reached an exciting milestone with Her Fifth Carat and expanded into a larger space. What are you currently most excited about?

This past year has been a whirlwind. We've gone from it being just me to having a growing sales team and expanding our operations. We recently moved into a 2,000-square-foot office and warehouse, which has been really exciting. Right now, we're focused on expanding our signature collection while keeping custom jewelry at the heart of what we do. Eventually, I'd love to find a balance between the two. We can continue creating completely custom pieces, while also offering a collection on our website for clients who want something beautiful without going through the full custom process.

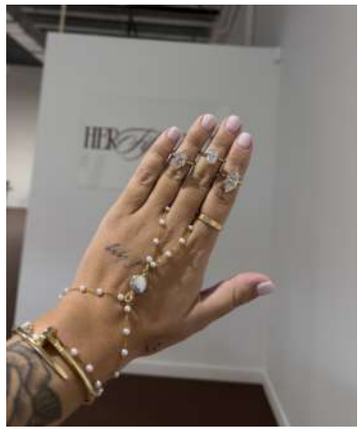


You Can Recieve A

Beautiful piece at an Accessible Price

By Alexis Schuller

The pieces we add are usually designs that have performed well for us or ones that I personally love. Sometimes I'll create a ring for myself, and if I find that it's beautiful, comfortable, and durable enough for everyday wear, it may eventually make its way unto the website. We also share a lot on social media, so if I start wearing something new and people immediately ask when they can buy it, that's usually a good sign we have something special.



Every birthday, milestone, and new chapter feels like something I once prayed for. Building Her Fifth Carat has never been only about jewelry. Of course, I want to create beautiful pieces, but it's also about making the most of the time I've been given. I want to build a brand and a name that can outlive me. There's something incredibly meaningful about helping people create their dream rings, pieces they may wear for the rest of their lives.

Your personal story is also incredibly inspiring. How has that experience shaped the way you approach life, entrepreneurship, and the risk you're willing to take?

Growing up with cystic fibrosis completely changed my perspective on life. I was born with it, but I wasn't diagnosed until I was nine. At the time, doctors told my parents that I might not make it past 25. I'm now 28. As a little girl, I used to pray for wrinkles. It probably sounds strange, but to me, wrinkles meant getting older. They meant more birthdays and the chance to have a future. When you're told as a child that your life expectancy may be short, you develop a completely different relationship with time. That perspective has shaped the way I live and build my business. I don't wait for the perfect moment because I've never assumed there would always be more time. It's made me more willing to take risks, work incredibly hard, and go after opportunities even when they feel scary or intimidating. It has also made me incredibly grateful.

When you think about the future of Her Fifth Carat, what do you hope the brand becomes?

Obviously, I want the company to continue growing, and I'd love for Her Fifth Carat to eventually become a $100 million company. But more than anything, I want it to remain a brand that people trust. I want people to think of Her Fifth Carat as the company that changed how they felt about buying jewelry online. I want them to be able to say, They were honest with me, they educated me, and they genuinely cared.One of my favorite parts of what we do is when clients send me pictures from their proposals and share their love stories with me.

We really pride ourselves on taking care of the client from the beginning of the process all the way through receiving the ring and even afterward.



It's such an honor that people feel comfortable enough to let me be part of those moments. Of course, I'm proud that we create beautiful rings, but it's even more meaningful when people remember the experience they had with us. A lot of our clients come through referrals, and when someone reaches out because someone they know had worked with us, they're usually talking about how great their experience was. That means so much to me.

For someone reading this article who is ready to begin their jewelry journey with Her Fifth Carat, how can they get started?

People can learn more about Her Fifth Carat and begin the custom design process directly through our website, www.herfifthcarat.com. We also have a signature collection and ready-to-ship pieces available for those who prefer to choose from existing designs. On Instagram and TikTok, we share educational content and behind-the-scenes videos so people can get a feel for our work and learn more about the process before reaching out. For custom pieces, the process typically takes about six to eight weeks, allowing time for the design process, diamond selection, production, and final quality check. Once the piece is complete, we share a final video with the client for approval before it ships. We want every client to feel involved, informed, and excited throughout the entire process.

Lastly, if there is one message you would want people to take away from your story, what would it be?

I want people to take away from my story that life is too short to wait for the perfect time. Whether it's starting a business, chasing a dream, changing your career, or doing something you've been putting off, the perfect time may never come. Time isn't promised. I hope Her Fifth Carat reminds people to celebrate the moments that matter and never take time for granted. Do what sets your soul on fire.


Darya Cohn

IN AESTHETICS, I OFFER EVERYTHING FROM REGULAR FACIALS TO ADVANCED TREATMENTS SUCH AS HYDRODERMABRASION AND DERMAPLANING, WITH A STRONG FOCUS ON SENSITIVE SKIN.

Kindly tell us a little about yourself.

My name is Darya Cohn. I'm a licensed Esthetician and permanent makeup artist, and I also have a bachelor's degree in transportation engineering. I spent time in the corporate world, but I knew it wasn't something I wanted to do long term. After staying home for a while, I considered going back to corporate, but I realized I hadn't liked it for a reason. I had always been interested in facials, skincare, and massage, and I had been doing facial massages on myself for years. One day, I was watching YouTube and came across an Esthetician in California who had her own business. I remember thinking that I could do that. That's really how my journey into aesthetics began. My journey into permanent makeup started unexpectedly. While taking my son to karate, I met a woman who was a permanent makeup artist and had won several awards, including a world championship. I didn't think much of it at the time, but years later, I found myself looking for her contact information. That connection eventually led me into permanent makeup.

Kindly tell us more about the services you currently offer in aesthetics and permanent makeup.

In aesthetics, I offer everything from regular facials to advanced treatments such as hydrodermabrasion and dermaplaning, with a strong focus on sensitive skin. I use a professional Korean skincare line because I believe the ingredients are clean, gentle, and effective. Korean skincare also offers some unique products, especially SPF. I have rosacea, so many sunscreens can cause my skin to flare up, but Korean SPF has always worked well for me, which is why I really believe in those products. One of my clients' favorites is my lifting massage facial. I start with skincare and then do about a 40-minute lifting massage based on a facial release technique. It's a deep, detailed massage that focuses on the neck, face, and areas that need extra attention. It's not just a light massage; the goal is to really work the muscles and release tension. People leave glowing and happy.

What would you want someone considering brows or lip treatments to know about the process?

First, I want people not to be scared. Come in for a consultation. A consultation doesn't require you to do anything. You can ask questions, map out the brows or lips, choose the pigment, and talk through the entire process. Permanent makeup is also very different from what it used to be. I know some people remember the blue or very dark eyebrows and think of it as having a tattoo permanently placed on their face, but we don't do that anymore. We work very superficially with the needle, more like lightly scratching the skin, so it's not as painful as people might imagine. Some people feel almost nothing. I also use very high-quality pigments because I care about the result and how it looks over time. Although it's called permanent makeup, the pigments I use are actually semi-permanent and generally fade within one to two years, depending on the person, their lifestyle, skin, and how their body processes the pigment. Eventually, the pigment fades, allowing us to start fresh.

I love that it can be adjusted over time. Does that also mean the brows can change as someone's face and beauty preferences change?

As people get older, their skin and facial structure change, and the face can begin to sag. When clients come back, we can adjust the shape and lift the ends of the brows to create a more lifted appearance. Beauty trends change, too. There was a time when everyone wanted very graphic brows, but today, people are looking for a much more natural look. Because the pigment fades, we have the opportunity to adjust the shape over time based on what someone wants and how their face has changed. Younger women also used to be afraid of permanent makeup because they thought it would look artificial. Today, the techniques are much more natural. And honestly, it can save you so much time. You spend less time worrying about your makeup and more time focusing on your career, your family, or whatever else is important to you.

Looking back at your first year of running your business, what have you learned about building a beauty business and creating an experience that keeps clients coming back?

The first year is hard. I honestly didn't expect it to be as difficult as it was. From the outside, it looks easy, you buy the equipment, get a few things, and you're ready to go. But there are so many details involved, from billing, taxes, licensing, and paperwork to being available for your clients and answering their questions. When you become a business owner, your time becomes your business. You also have to learn how to balance your personal life. Sometimes you have to shut off your phone and give yourself some time because you simply can't handle everything all the time. People talk about work-life balance, but I'm not sure it really exists, especially when you're also a mom. I think you just learn to choose what's most important in each moment. You can't give everything the same amount of attention every day. That has been one of the biggest lessons for me.

What do you think makes your approach to beauty different?

For me, it always comes back to the client. Whether someone is coming in for a facial, lifting massage, brows, or lips, I want them to leave feeling good about themselves. I don't want people to feel like they have to completely change who they are. I want to enhance what they already have and help them feel more confident. That's why I care so much about the details. I use high-quality products, take my time, and make sure every client understands the process. Especially with permanent makeup, people should never feel embarrassed to ask questions. There are no silly questions when something is going on your face.



WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE WHO IS THINKING ABOUT GETTING INTO THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY OR STARTING THEIR OWN BUSINESS?

Be prepared to learn. Being good at the service itself is only one part of running a business. You also have to learn how to manage the business, communicate with clients, handle paperwork, manage your time, and take care of yourself. Don't be afraid to ask questions. When I started, there were so many things I didn't know, and I learned as I went. You also have to understand that everything doesn't happen immediately. Building a business takes time, so be patient with yourself, keep learning, and continue improving.

IF SOMEONE WANTS TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOU, WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO REACH YOU?

They can click the link on my Instagram, or they can go directly to my website, www.urflair.com, where they can book very easily. They can also reach me by phone or email. I always answer my messages. I always say I'm available 24/7, which probably goes back to what I said about learning how to balance your life

FINALLY, DO YOU HAVE ANY LAST WORDS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH OUR READERS?

For me, beauty isn't just about how someone looks when they leave. It's really about how they feel. If a client comes in and leaves smiling, feeling more confident and good about themselves, then I know I've done something meaningful. That's really what makes me love what I do.



Redefining Beauty, The Skincare Products You Need

KINDLY TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR JOURNEY WITH CHRISTINA SKINCARE USA.

My name is Asaf. I'm 51 years old, and I've been working in the professional skincare industry for about 30 years. While the beauty industry encompasses many different areas, my focus has always been skincare, particularly professional skincare. I met Christina, the founder of the brand, about 20 years ago in Europe, and we immediately connected. We worked together for several years, helping introduce Christina Skincare to Aestheticians throughout Europe. At the time, Christina was already well known across the continent, from Russia to Spain. It was an incredible experience, and eventually, we decided to open a branch in the United States around 2011. About seven years ago, I decided to come to the United States and take over the operation myself. Since then, we've experienced tremendous growth. Our community of Aestheticians continues to expand, and in many areas, we've seen significant year-over-year growth.

For us, it has never been simply about selling skincare products. It's about building a professional community where Aestheticians can learn from one another, exchange ideas, discuss results, and understand how to use Christina products correctly. That remains one of our biggest priorities.

CHRISTINA SKINCARE HAS A STRONG UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT SKIN TYPES AND CONCERNS. CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT?

Christina focuses deeply on the skin itself. When you truly focus on the condition of the skin, you have to ask the right questions and understand what is happening with each individual client. This is especially important in the United States because we have such a diverse population, with people from Asia, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and many other parts of the world. Everyone can have different skin needs and concerns. Christina is an international brand, and for more than 50 years, the company has worked with different skin types and concerns around the world. From Black and Asian skin to white and Latin skin, we have experience working with a wide range of needs. Our goal is to take that knowledge and share it with Aestheticians, beauty professionals, spa owners, and med spas so they can better understand the skin and provide personalized care.

CHRISTINA FOCUSES DEEPLY ON THE SKIN ITSELF.

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CAN YOU TELL US MORE ON HOW CHRISTINA STARTED THE COMPANY?

Christina was an Aesthetician herself in the 1970s, and she understood that the products available at the time weren't always giving professionals what they truly needed. She had what many people would have considered a bold idea: to open a factory and create products specifically for Aestheticians. That vision eventually became what Christina Skincare is today. What is most important about Christina is that she didn't build the company simply because of money. She built it because she genuinely loved what she was doing. Having worked as an Aesthetician herself, she understood the professional side of the industry and the challenges that Aestheticians face. For example, many professional skincare companies require new Aestheticians or spas to place large minimum orders. Christina doesn't believe in that approach. She sees an Aesthetician as a partner. Her philosophy is that if you want to build a long-term relationship and create a strong professional community, you have to treat people with dignity and respect. That philosophy has remained at the heart of the company for more than 50 years.







CHRISTINA SKINCARE USA

WHY IS EDUCATING AESTHETICIANS AND SKINCARE PROFESSIONALS SO IMPORTANT?

Education is one of the most important things we do because it comes directly from our philosophy about the skin. We have around 10 professional skincare lines, each designed to address specific concerns, including anti-aging, pigmentation, acne, and oily skin. Even when it comes to acne, we don't simply look at whether someone has oily skin. We look at the actual condition of the skin and determine what it needs. When someone finishes aesthetic school and receives their license, that doesn't always mean they have all the practical knowledge required to work confidently with real clients. We meet many new Aestheticians with one or two years of experience who are still looking for additional education. That's why our training goes beyond skincare products. We help professionals understand treatments, skin concerns, and how to build a successful business. We want Aestheticians to feel confident not only in what they're doing professionally, but also in how they're growing their businesses.

YOU RECENTLY OPENED A NEW HEADQUARTERS AND TRAINING FACILITY IN FORT LAUDERDALE. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO CREATE THAT SPACE?

This is one of the most exciting developments happening with Christina right now, not only in the United States but globally. Every year, Christina brings distributors from around the world together, and we wanted to create an even stronger international community. That's where the idea for the Christina House came from. The goal is to create Christina Houses around the world where clients and professionals can have a consistent Christina experience wherever they go.

For example, if a client normally receives a Christina treatment from her local Aesthetician and then travels to Paris, she can visit a Christina House there and receive a treatment using products her skin is already familiar with. It's also a place for our professional community. If an Aesthetician is traveling and visits another city, they can come into a Christina House, connect with other professionals, learn, and even receive a complimentary treatment as part of the community experience. Today, there are approximately 25 Christina Houses around the world, including locations in Paris, Monaco, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Moscow, and other major cities.

CHRISTINA SKINCARE IS ALSO KNOWN FOR RESEARCH, HIGH-QUALITY INGREDIENTS, AND VISIBLE RESULTS. WHAT GOES INTO CREATING A PRODUCT THAT YOU CAN CONFIDENTLY STAND BEHIND?

From the initial idea to putting a product on the market, it can take between two and a half to three years. One of the reasons it takes so long is because Christina is extremely focused on results. She is a perfectionist, and until she is confident that a product will deliver the results expected, she will not put it on the market. During that time, the team develops the formula, tests it, evaluates its performance, and considers how it works across different skin types. Because Christina has such extensive international experience, there is a strong focus on creating products that can address the needs of diverse skin types and concerns. The formulas are tested and evaluated, and the company works with experienced manufacturers and laboratories while using high-quality ingredients. So, when we say we stand behind a product, it's because extensive research, testing, and evaluation have taken place before we make that statement.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY MAKES CHRISTINA SKINCARE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PROFESSIONAL SKINCARE BRANDS?

The biggest difference is our community. We want everyone within our professional community to receive the same level of attention, support, and information. Some companies focus heavily on large chains or bigger accounts, and smaller Aestheticians can sometimes feel overlooked. We don't believe in that. We want to support the individual Aesthetician, the small spa, the med spa, and the larger businesses equally. We also place a strong emphasis on hands-on training. After a demonstration, our Aestheticians actually perform the treatment themselves. They experience it firsthand, learn how to use the products properly, and understand the treatment from a practical perspective. There is a big difference between theory and practice, and that hands-on approach is something Aestheticians really appreciate about Christina.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE PEOPLE WHO MAY NOT BE FAMILIAR WITH CHRISTINA SKINCARE TO KNOW ABOUT THE BRAND?

I would simply say that Christina is a major international brand with more than 50 years of experience, and we're excited to introduce more people to the Christina way. One of the interesting things about having a location in Miami is that so many people travel here from around the world. Sometimes people walk into the Christina House and say, "I know Christina. I use it in Europe." It's amazing to see just how international the brand really is. For us, it's not just about products. It's about education, results, relationships, and creating a professional community that can connect and grow around the world.



AS CHRISTINA SKINCARE CONTINUES TO GROW ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE BRAND AND THE PROFESSIONAL SKINCARE COMMUNITY?

Our vision is to continue growing the community and making Christina more accessible to professionals across the United States. We currently attend almost 10 beauty shows every year across the country. These events give us the opportunity to meet new Aestheticians, introduce them to Christina, and build meaningful relationships. One of my biggest goals is to open more Christina Houses throughout the United States. My goal for the next year is to open at least two or three more locations.

Long term, I would love to have a Christina House in every major city and area where professionals can come, experience the products and treatments, receive training, and truly experience the Christina way. We are also planning to open a second location in Philadelphia very soon. For Aestheticians who aren't able to travel to a Christina House, we offer Zoom training and classes, including sessions focused on specific concerns such as pigmentation and acne. We want education and access to be available regardless of where a professional is located.



Creating Luxurious Private Residences

Ruby Ramirez

I founded Studio Ramirez as an independent practice, allowing me to continue creating luxury private residences while simultaneously building a commercial portfolio with a long-term focus on hospitality, restaurants, and hotels.



Tell us a little about yourself and the journey behind Studio Ramirez.

My name is Ruby, and I'm the Founder and Creative Director of Studio Ramirez, an interior architecture and design firm based in Miami, Florida. I was born in the Philippines and moved to the United States when I was four years old. Growing up, I traveled back and forth across different parts of the country before eventually settling in Miami when I was seven. Miami became home, and it's where I grew up, attended university, and ultimately began my career in interior architecture. I studied Interior Architecture at Florida International University. It was an interesting period because the profession itself was still fighting to be recognized as its own discipline. Interior architecture had always existed, but it wasn't always viewed with the same level of professional recognition as architecture. Looking back now, it's incredibly rewarding to see how far the industry has come. Today, FIU has one of the strongest interior architecture programs in the country, and it's wonderful to know that I was able to witness and be part of that evolution. After graduating, I joined a London-based design firm where I worked for six years. During the 2008 financial crisis, the company closed its Miami and New York offices and offered relocation opportunities to employees who wanted to continue with the firm. I accepted the opportunity and moved to London. Relocating to another country wasn't easy. It meant adapting to a completely different culture while also learning to design on an international scale.

When I came back, I partnered with a former colleague to launch a design firm in 2011. It was a partnership that made perfect sense for both of us. She was beginning a new chapter with her growing family, while I was returning home with fresh international experience and a desire to build something meaningful. We successfully grew the business together for nearly a decade. Like many people, the COVID-19 pandemic became a period of deep reflection. We both realized our personal goals had evolved. She wanted to dedicate more time to her family after years of balancing motherhood and entrepreneurship, while I found myself increasingly drawn toward expanding my creative work into hospitality design. Around that time, we had been presented with an incredible opportunity to design the Virgin Hotel. Although the project ultimately didn't move forward due to circumstances surrounding the pandemic, it profoundly influenced me. Hospitality design demanded an entirely different level of creativity and storytelling. It brought together every skill I had developed throughout my years in London and during my partnership. That experience made one thing very clear: this was the direction I wanted to pursue. As a result, I founded Studio Ramirez as an independent practice, allowing me to continue creating luxury private residences while simultaneously building a commercial portfolio with a long-term focus on hospitality, restaurants, and hotels. Looking back, every stage of my career from Miami to London and back again has contributed to where Studio Ramirez stands today. Each chapter has shaped not only my design philosophy but also the kind of experience I strive to create for every client who entrusts us with their vision.

You've spent nearly three decades in the design industry, working on projects around the world. Looking back, what is one of the biggest lessons that has shaped you as both a designer and a business owner?

One of the most valuable lessons I've learned is how to truly listen. Most people assume listening simply means hearing what someone is saying, but for me, it goes much deeper than that. As designers, we're creating spaces that people will live in, work in, celebrate in, and create memories in. Whether it's a private residence, a commercial building, or eventually a hotel, every space is designed for people. If you don't genuinely understand the people you're designing for, it's impossible to create something meaningful. Listening isn't just about words. It's about observing body language, reading emotions, recognizing hesitation, and understanding what clients may not even know how to express. Many of our clients have never worked with an interior architect before. During presentations, they may not immediately tell you whether they love or dislike something, but you can often sense it through subtle reactions, a pause, a smile, a deep breath, or even a slight shift in posture. Those moments are incredibly important because they often communicate more than words ever could. I also believe my years of international travel strengthened that skill. I worked in countries where I didn't speak the language, so I had to learn how to communicate beyond words. I became more observant, more patient, and more aware of how people express themselves in different ways. That ability to listen with your whole body has become one of the greatest tools in my career.

An Exclusive Interview with Ruby Ramirez

As a business owner, I believe it's equally important. Although the firm carries my name, Studio Ramirez has always been built on collaboration. I feel a tremendous responsibility toward the people who work alongside me every day. My goal isn't simply to lead a team, it's to help each person grow professionally.

Your work has taken you from Miami to London and across countries including India, Singapore, and Russia. How have those experiences influenced the way you approach design today?

Working internationally completely transformed the way I think about design. One of the biggest lessons I learned was that every country has its own strengths. Sometimes, when we design projects here in the United States, we naturally look toward Europe because of its incredible manufacturing capabilities and advanced technology. For many high-end custom projects, Europe is often considered the benchmark. But working abroad taught me that technology isn't always the greatest asset. Sometimes, the greatest resource is craftsmanship. I remember working on a project in India that required intricate carved stone detailing. In many places, that kind of work would have relied heavily on advanced machinery. Instead, we worked alongside artisans whose families had been hand-carving stone for generations. We printed my drawings at full scale directly onto the stone, and they carved every detail entirely by hand.

Watching that process unfold completely changed my perspective. What they created wasn't simply beautiful, it carried generations of knowledge, history, and craftsmanship that no machine could ever replicate. Experiences like that taught me to embrace local culture instead of trying to replace it. Today, whenever possible, we look to incorporate local artisans, artists, sculptors, weavers, and craftspeople into our projects. Their work adds authenticity and creates spaces that feel layered, personal, and deeply connected to the place they're built. That's something I carry into every project. Rather than asking, "What can we import?" I often ask, "What already exists here that tells a richer story?" Very often, the answer is right in front of us.

You've often spoken about creating spaces that tell a story instead of repeating the same design twice. Why is it so important that every project feels unique?

To me, that's the true definition of luxury. Luxury isn't simply about expensive materials or beautiful finishes. Real luxury is having something that belongs entirely to you, something that couldn't exist anywhere else. As designers and creators, I believe we have a responsibility to give our clients spaces that genuinely reflect who they are. Today's clients are looking for more than beautiful interiors. They want spaces that feel personal, meaningful, and unlike anything they've seen before. I also think we're living in a time where so much information and inspiration is readily available. People are constantly exposed to the same images online, and because of that, they increasingly want something that feels authentic rather than copied.

We see that shift every day. Clients become more involved in the creative process. They want to curate artwork with us, select meaningful pieces, and make thoughtful decisions that tell their own story. Even in our commercial projects, clients often challenge us by saying, "Design this office lobby, but don't make it feel like an office lobby." Those kinds of requests excite us because they push our creativity further. Within our studio, we actually have a saying: if there aren't one or two moments during a project where we're slightly nervous about trying something new, then we probably haven't pushed the design far enough. Those moments can be uncomfortable, but they're often where the best ideas emerge. Every project should challenge us creatively because that's how truly original work is created.

Many of your clients continue to return to Studio Ramirez or refer others because of the relationships you've built over the years. What role do trust and integrity play in your firm's success?

When clients hire us, they're placing an enormous amount of confidence in our team. They're trusting us with their homes, their businesses, their investments, and in many ways, their dreams. That's something I never take lightly. Creating spaces that are truly unique requires clients to step outside of their comfort zones at times.

There are moments when we'll encourage them to explore ideas they may never have considered on their own. Those conversations are only possible because we've built a foundation of trust. One project that always comes to mind involved a private residential client who told me at the very beginning of the design process that this would be the third custom home she had built. Then she said something that genuinely broke my heart. She told me that she had never loved any of the homes she'd built before, not even liked them. Building a custom home is such a significant emotional, financial, and personal investment, so hearing that really stayed with me. I looked at both her and her husband and promised them that we were going to build the home they had always dreamed of. I also warned them that we would probably ask a million questions throughout the process. And we certainly did. Sometimes clients don't immediately understand why we spend so much time discussing what may seem like small details. They might wonder why we're carefully reviewing the layout of a closet or asking detailed questions about how they fold clothing, organize belongings, or move through certain spaces. But every one of those conversations matters. Everyone lives differently. Everyone has unique routines, habits, preferences, and little quirks that deserve to be reflected in the spaces they inhabit.







"ROW 01 allows us to fully focus on hospitality and commercial projects, which is where a great deal of my creative passion lies. At the same time, Studio Ramirez will always continue because I could never completely step away from private residential work. It is a completely different design process, but one that I truly love. Having both companies allows me to work in both worlds, and that balance has been incredibly rewarding."

Studio Ramirez

By Ruby Ramirez

Asking those questions allows us to design a home that genuinely fits the people living in it rather than simply creating something beautiful. Today, we're only a short time away from completing that project, and that same client recently told me how grateful she was that we had listened so carefully throughout the process. She laughed and admitted that yes, we had been a little annoying at times. But she also said she finally understood why. Those countless conversations became the reason the home feels so deeply personal to them. That project has also led to additional collaborations with the same clients, which I believe speaks volumes about the importance of trust. When clients know you're genuinely invested in creating something meaningful for them, those relationships naturally continue long after a project is complete.

You've worked across luxury residences, commercial developments, and now hospitality. What excites you most about the future of design, and where do you see Studio Ramirez in the years ahead?

I think what excites me most about the future of design is that people have become much more aware of the spaces they occupy. Whether it's a hotel, a home, a restaurant, or an office lobby, I think people pay much closer attention to how those spaces make them feel. Honestly, I believe that's a direct result of COVID. We all spent so much time in our homes that people became incredibly aware of their surroundings. They had time to notice how a space affected their mood, their comfort, and their overall experience. Because of that, our clients ask for something very different today than they did years ago. They don't simply want a beautiful space anymore. They want a space that feels like something.

Whether that feeling is comfort, excitement, warmth, or calm, people want an emotional connection to the environments they spend time in. That has made our work even more interesting because it's no longer enough to simply create something aesthetically beautiful. Every material matters. Every color matters. Every piece of artwork matters. Every fabric, every finish, and every piece of furniture contributes to the feeling of the space. As designers, we're now creating experiences, not just interiors. I think that's a wonderful evolution for our profession. As far as Studio Ramirez is concerned, one of the most exciting developments over the past few years has been launching another company dedicated specifically to commercial work. I partnered with someone whose professional background is very similar to mine, and together we created a company called ROW 01. Through ROW 01, we're focusing on hospitality, restaurants, retail, and larger commercial developments. My business partner, Vianny Sanguily has worked with many of the most respected developers in Miami, as well as internationally recognized designers, so combining our experience has been incredibly exciting. Hospitality has always been where my creative passion naturally lives. That's where I feel the most energized. Studio Ramirez will always continue because I don't think I could ever walk away from residential design. It's a completely different design brief and a different relationship with the client, and I genuinely love it. But having both companies allows me to pursue both passions simultaneously. That's probably what excites me most about where we're headed.

Where can readers connect with your team?

I think the best place to start is our website, www.studioramirez.com. There you'll find information about Studio Ramirez, and you'll also find links to our commercial work through ROW 01. Our social media also gives people a better understanding of who we are as a team. We intentionally share more than just finished projects. We like showing the process, the people behind the work, and what studio life is really like. As interior architects and designers, we work incredibly hard, but we also believe in enjoying the process. We laugh together, support one another, and try to make every project a rewarding experience for both our team and our clients.

Alison Tohlen

Founder of The Skin Trend Aesthetics



The Skin Trend Aesthetics

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Tell us a little about yourself and The Skin Trend.

My name is Alison Tohlen. I am 42 years old and I have been an esthetician since 2003. It's the only career I've ever pursued, and thankfully, it has been very fulfilling and rewarding. It has really shaped who I am as a person. The Skin Trend was born after many years of working in other people's businesses and learning as much as I could. I'm truly thankful for those experiences because the skincare companies I worked with for more than 20 years, along with my clients, helped me create The Skin Trend. From the beginning, it was extremely successful, and I'm very grateful for that.

What first inspired you to become an Aesthetician, and how did your journey begin?

Honestly, I've loved beauty since I was about two years old. I was always in my mom's beauty cabinet, playing with makeup. I was just fascinated by beauty. Even growing up, I was always doing my friends' hair and makeup. In middle school and high school, I had a little business where I would do makeup for banquets, weddings, and proms. I even started curling my own hair when I was five. I just always knew beauty was going to be part of my life in some way. Then, when I was a freshman in high school, I developed really bad cystic acne. I was doing everything right. My mom had started me on a skincare routine very early, and she was taking me to the dermatologist, but nothing was working. For about a year, I watched myself become a recluse. I had always been very social and confident, and suddenly I just wanted to hide.

Eventually, I went on Accutane, and it cleared my skin. Looking back, I'm almost thankful that experience happened to me, even though it was very traumatizing at the time. It created a lot of empathy in me for people who don't look the way society thinks they should look. It made me realize how quickly we can judge someone based on their appearance. It really humbled me and gave me a passion for helping other people. When I was 18, I was working for a skincare company called Origins. One of my customers came in, and I was giving her an express mini facial. She asked me if I had ever thought about becoming an Aesthetician. I had actually never heard of the profession before. I started researching it, and everything just clicked. It felt like my destiny. Within about three months, I was in school, and I've been working in aesthetics ever since.

Your experience with acne had a major impact on you. How does that experience influence the way you work with clients today?

It has had a huge impact on me. I have moms bring their daughters to me who are going through exactly what I went through at that age, and I can see how much it hurts the parents too. I always tell them, "I know it's really hard to see right now, but their skin will clear up." But I also tell them that this can become an important lesson in how they look at other people. That's what it did for me. It was a very humbling experience, and it shaped who I became. I think sometimes when something comes easily to us, we don't realize how valuable it is. Going through that experience taught me empathy and made me much more understanding of what other people may be dealing with.

What does a typical skincare plan with you look like? Is it something clients need to maintain continuously?

Yes. Skincare should be consistent. It shouldn't just be something you do when there's a problem. When someone comes to me through a referral, I explain exactly what they can expect. I don't expect them to buy every product I recommend immediately. We can work with what they already have and slowly build their routine. If we're correcting something, I generally want to see them at least every six weeks. I also have a skincare system where I recommend microneedling every four months, with custom facials and other treatments in between. Microneedling can stimulate collagen production for months, so if we plan it correctly, we can keep that process going while also refining the skin. In between, I may do custom facials, light peels, dermaplaning, or other treatments depending on what the client needs. Then, during the fall and winter, I like to do a deeper peel when the weather is more appropriate for it. Because we're in Texas and the heat is intense, I'm very careful about treatments like peels and lasers during the summer. The goal is to create a consistent plan instead of having clients buy everything at once.

Your approach to skincare goes beyond simply treating the skin. What services do you offer, and what makes your approach different from a traditional skincare clinic or med spa?

I think traditional skincare clinics and med spas often follow protocols created by the companies that manufacture their machines or skincare products. But after being in this industry for so many years, I've learned that those companies are often run by people with marketing or business backgrounds. They aren't necessarily Aestheticians who are studying skincare every day. So I'll look at their protocols and take what I think is useful, but when I bring in a new skincare product or machine, I test it on myself first. Then I create my own protocols based on what I've learned and what I already offer. Everything is much more customized and curated. I'm not just following a standard treatment menu.



You've built a very loyal client base, and you've spoken about valuing genuine relationships over simply seeing as many clients as possible. Why is that so important to you?

I believe in quality over quantity. This industry can be physically and emotionally draining, especially if you're an empath like me. That's something I had to learn in my 20s and 30s. I started asking myself, "Is this person a good match for me?" I know I'm going to pour a lot into my clients, but I also have to ask if they're going to build me up too. Are they going to take my recommendations seriously? Are they going to follow the plan I curated for them? Are they willing to invest in the products and treatments needed to get the best results? I would much rather have four to six really good, committed clients who trust my expertise and come back consistently than have 10 random clients who come once and never return. I'm very relational, and I pour a lot into people. So it can be disappointing when you invest in someone and never see them again. I'm not a spa. I'm a result oriented, custom Aesthetician. I put my clients on a plan. I call it "skincare forecasting." It's not for everyone because it requires an investment and a lot of trust. But when a client trusts me and lets me handle their skincare journey, we get much better results.





"Honestly, it's really beautiful to be a woman. I feel very blessed to be where I am, and I want to use what I've learned to help other women. I've always felt that I have a lot of wisdom to share, and I think part of my purpose is to help people, encourage them, and remind them of what they're capable of. I want women to know that they don't have to settle. They can build something meaningful, they can know their worth, and they can create a life and career that truly reflects who they are."

THE Skin Trend AESTHETICS

Was this skincare forecasting system something you intentionally developed as a business strategy?

It really developed naturally. At my previous job, I started thinking that clients should have a regular schedule for treatments. Instead of waiting until someone says, "I think I need microneedling," I would tell them, "You're going to get microneedling every four months, and I'll keep track of it for you." Once I started saying it confidently and making it part of their normal routine, it became much easier. Over the past three years, I've seen it dramatically change some of my clients' skin. I have clients who started seeing me when they were in graduate school, and now they're approaching their 40s. Their skin looks better now than it did years ago. And I do all of this for myself too. Everything I recommend to my clients, I've tried myself.

That's actually one of the things that makes your approach so interesting. You test treatments and products on yourself before recommending them. Why is that important to you?

I do everything I tell my clients to do. I don't recommend something I haven't personally used. I don't really struggle with acne anymore. My main concerns are more about hyperpigmentation and maintaining my skin as I get older. I do my own microneedling, facials, and peels, and I test products before I recommend them. If something is specifically for acne, even though I don't have acne myself, I'll have someone test it for at least three months before I recommend it to a client. I want to know that what I'm recommending actually works.

You have clients who have been with you for many years. What do you think has helped you build those lasting relationships?

I think it comes down to authentic relationships. Some of these people have literally grown up with me. I started my second job in aesthetics in Dallas in 2005, and I still have some clients from that job. We've been through so much together. We've experienced marriages, divorces, heartbreak, babies, graduations, everything. With the clients I'm really close to, it becomes almost like a friendship. They tell me everything, and they trust me. Over the years, my technique and knowledge have grown tremendously, and I've become a much better Aesthetician. But I didn't always have that level of expertise. The relationship came first. The friendship, the authenticity, and the feeling that we both belong in this world, that's what has kept those relationships strong.

You often talk about knowing your worth and setting healthy boundaries. Why has that become such an important part of running your business?

I think you learn that as you grow. Between 2012 and 2020, I worked for two different people, and I remember having this gut reaction whenever someone wanted me to do something that didn't feel right for me or my clients. Sometimes it was about being asked to do a treatment that didn't make sense for my clients simply because it was cheaper or underpriced. Eventually, I learned to trust myself and speak up. Once I had more than 10 years of experience and the proof that what I was doing was working, I had more confidence to say, "This isn't for me," while still being respectful. I've carried that into my business today. If I feel that someone and I aren't a good fit, I'm okay with having that conversation. I think that's important. Not every client is your client.

Looking back at your journey, what are some of the biggest lessons you would share with women who want to build a successful business?

I would say work on yourself first. I've spent a lot of time working on myself personally and trying to become a more aware person. I believe that eventually becomes part of your professional life. You need a strong sense of self and confidence before starting a business because it's very easy to be influenced. Once you start building a brand, everyone will want a piece of you. People will want you to carry their products, partner with them, or do things their way. You have to be confident enough to ask, "Is this for me, or is this not for me?" I have been approached with business opportunities and it did not feel right. I have learned to grow that intuition and gut feeling. You have to know who you are, what your brand represents, and what you want long term. For me, this is about legacy. It's not just about the short term. No one is going to care about your business as much as you do. No one is going to be as loyal to it as you are. So you have to be selective about who you let into your brand and your circle.

What are your plans for the future, and what kind of impact do you hope to make on your clients and the beauty industry?

My vision includes ecommerce. I'm currently building a website that will have an online store. I love retail, and I love recommending products. I'm constantly trying new things, skincare, makeup, perfume, body treatments, hair products, everything. I love how beauty products can make someone feel more confident. I also want to continue working in the treatment room, but I want to keep my studio small, curated, and elevated. I don't want to reach the masses when it comes to one on one services. I would also love to train other Aestheticians and create an environment where they can learn, grow, and feel supported. I didn't always have that, so I want to create it for others. Eventually, I would love to create a group or platform to help other Aestheticians and women in the beauty industry. I'm also very passionate about supporting marginalized women. When I become more profitable, I want to give a percentage of what I make to organizations supporting women who have experienced trafficking, abuse, or other difficult situations. I truly believe the world would not be the same without women. Women are often underrecognized, and I want to use my platform to help change that. I was very blessed to have a supportive family and a father who built my confidence. Not everyone has that, and I want to be able to give other women some of that support through my platform.



WILLOW
HILL SOAP COMPANY

ABOUT THE FOUNDER!

In 2016, my mom, who was a retired principal, started making products on a small scale. Ben and I took over in 2018, and that's when Willow Hill really began to grow. Neither of us came from the beauty or personal care industry. My degree is in secondary education, while Ben's is in manufacturing engineering. Those backgrounds have complemented each other really well. I love the research, formulation, branding, and customer side, while Ben naturally understands how to scale the business and manufacturing processes without sacrificing quality.

Where did the name Willow Hill come from?

The name comes from a huge willow tree that was situated on our family's property. It was a gathering place where our family spent a lot of time together. The tree has since fallen, but the name represents what we want our company to feel like: rooted in family, community, and something meaningful.

Willow Hill started in your basement and has grown into a much larger business. When did you realize it could become something bigger?

Opening our first storefront was probably that moment. Ben and I spent months renovating the building, and on Saturday, March 14th, 2020, there was a huge line wrapped around the building waiting for us to open. Our community showed up and supported us in an incredible way.

Two days later, on March 16th, we closed the storefront because of COVID. Almost immediately, though, our online sales exploded. We had spent the fall of 2019 traveling to shows and meeting customers all over the country. When everything shut down, those customers found us online and helped sustain our business. Another pivotal decision came after our busy fall season in 2019. We reinvested the money we had made by purchasing bottles, raw ingredients, packaging, and supplies for the upcoming year.



When COVID hit and suppliers were shutting down, we already had much of what we needed to keep producing. That experience reinforced something that Ben and I still really believe today: growth isn't just about how much you sell. It's about what you do with the money after you make it.

You didn't come from a formulation or science background. What was the learning process like when you developed your first products?

A tremendous amount of reading and research, testing, failing, changing things, and trying again. I've always wanted to understand the why behind a product. I didn't want to just use a recipe. I wanted to know why an ingredient was there, what purpose it served, how it interacted with another ingredient, and how to create something that was both safe and effective. Some formulations take months to get right, and others take years. The learning never stops. The more you know about formulation, the more you realize there is to know. Today, we test and track different batches, keep track of lot numbers, retain samples, and work hard to maintain consistency. I think not coming from the industry gave me a certain curiosity. I wasn't afraid to ask why things had to be done a certain way.

How do you approach the ingredients that go into your products?

One of our core beliefs is that ingredients should be chosen with intention. "Natural" is used a lot in our industry, but natural doesn't automatically mean safe, and synthetic doesn't automatically mean bad. So we ask: What does this ingredient do? Why are we using it? Is it necessary? Is it appropriate for the product? There are a lot of ingredients in other formulations that don't even need to be there. They don't serve a purpose. We've also intentionally chosen not to formulate with certain ingredients. All of our products are paraben-free, phthalate-free, and SLS-free. Transparency matters a lot to us. We want our customers to be able to read an ingredient list and ask those questions. Ultimately, we want to make products that feel good and that we feel good about putting in our own homes.



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WILLOW HILL SOAP COMPANY

With Alison McDowell

Willow Hill has grown into much more than soap. What products can customers find today?

Despite the name, Willow Hill is really a body care and home fragrance company. We make artisan hand wash, body wash, whipped sugar scrubs, candles, body butters, skincare, laundry detergent, and more. Many of our customer favorites started because we were trying to solve a problem. Some products were originally developed to address specific needs, while others were products that I personally tested for an extended period before we launched them. One of my favorite parts of developing products is that we don't often begin with, "What can we sell?" It's more, "Here's our problem. Can we make a product to solve it?"

What is your process when developing a new product?

Our laundry detergent is a great example of how we approach developing any new product. Sometimes it comes together really quickly, and sometimes it can take months or even years before it's fully ready. I'm pretty relentless with a formula. I'll change one ingredient or one percentage and test it. I live with it for a little while, and then I'll change it again. Sometimes a very small adjustment can completely change the way a product performs. We're doing that right now with a body spray that we're developing. We're testing how it wears, seeing how the fragrance develops, and how long it lasts. I don't want to just release something because we're excited about the idea. I want to be able to be proud that we're putting the Willow Hill name on it. Good product development requires patience. Whether it's laundry detergent, skincare, body care, or whatever we're developing, we're willing to take the extra time before we ask our customers to buy it.

How would you describe the fragrances of your products?

Our fragrances are typically nature-inspired, and all of them are listed on our website with detailed descriptions.

Where can people shop Willow Hill, and what do you hope customers experience when they use your products?

Customers can shop with us at our Canton and Hendersonville, North Carolina, store locations. They can also shop with us online, through our wholesale partners, and at select markets and events around the country. Regardless of where someone discovers Willow Hill, we want the experience to feel personal. We're still a family-owned company, and our products are still made by real people. Ultimately, I hope that Willow Hill creates a small moment of enjoyment in someone's day. Maybe it's a fragrance they love whenever they walk into their home or a shower product they really look forward to using. Even though these are everyday products, they're part of people's lives, and we feel like they deserve to be made well.

Is there anything else you would like readers to know about Willow Hill?

One of the things I'm most proud of is that the growth hasn't changed what we believe our company is supposed to be about. Western North Carolina isn't simply where our company is located; it's home for us. When Hurricane Helene devastated communities in our area, we created a benefit candle in partnership with a local radio station and gave 100% of the proceeds back to the community. We raised more than $23,000, which was incredible. That reminded us that business is more than just the product itself.

At Willow Hill, Ben and I really want to protect that. We want to build a successful company and make excellent products, but we also want to be known as a company that takes care of its people, creates good jobs, supports our communities, and stays grounded in what Willow Hill was founded on. We have a much bigger vision for Willow Hill than we did when we were just working in our basement, but we never want to forget where we started.

> All of our products are paraben-free, phthalate-free, and SLS-free. Ultimately, we want to make products that feel good and that we feel good about putting in our own homes....

Creating A Luxury Experience An Exclusive Interview

Lusso Spa

REEDIE GARRETT

Kindly tell us a little about yourself and Lusso Spa.

I became a mom as a teenager, so I have essentially been doing everything on my own since my daughter was born. A lot of the decisions I have made in life and business have been about being able to provide for my daughter while still being present for her. I'm originally from Dallas, Texas, but I moved to Florida to be closer to my mom. Before moving, I was getting beauty services and had always struggled with eczema, so I became interested in aesthetics and skincare. When I moved to Florida, I was bartending, but I wanted to do something more. I found an aesthetics school and started learning about facials and skincare. Then I discovered lash extensions. I was already getting my lashes done in Dallas, but nobody was really offering them where I was in Florida, so I decided to learn. That was really the beginning. Before Lusso Spa, I had a business called Queenie Reedie where I focused mainly on lashes. After COVID, I started working completely for myself and eventually created Lusso Spa. Lusso means luxury in Italian, and that really represents what I wanted the business to be. I wanted to create a luxury experience where women could come in, feel comfortable, feel beautiful and leave feeling good in their own skin. In 2021, I lost my mom, and the business took on a much deeper meaning for me. It became a passion project and something I could pour myself into. I really wanted Lusso Spa to become a place where women could come in, feel safe, feel happy and just have an hour to themselves.

What first drew you to beauty, and what made you decide to become an Esthetician?

Honestly, I didn't even know what an Esthetician was at first. I was already getting beauty services myself, and because I had eczema for so many years, I really wanted to understand skincare. My parents are doctors, and almost everyone in my family is in medicine. I thought I would probably go into nursing, but I was always really interested in dermatology and learning about my skin. Someone eventually asked me, "Why don't you become an Esthetician? That's what you're always interested in." I didn't even know what that meant at the time. When I moved to Florida, I found an aesthetics school right here in Merritt Island, where Lusso Spa is located now. It's actually funny because my school is still right up the road. I really loved facials and skincare, but lashes became a huge part of my journey because there were very few people doing them in the area. I learned how to do them, became really good at it, and word of mouth took off.

You started with lashes and eventually built Lusso Spa into a luxury beauty experience. What inspired you to create something that felt different from what was already available?

I really wanted to focus on the experience. There are a lot of people who offer lash extensions, but I wanted mine to feel natural and luxurious. I heat the water I use to wash my clients' lashes so they don't have to jump when cold water touches them. I have weighted blankets, a really comfortable bed and sometimes warm neck wraps. We have drinks, snacks and even little things in the bathroom like tampons, perfume and hair ties. I wanted to give my clients the most comfortable experience possible. At one point, I was in a unit in Titusville, and although I was providing a luxury service inside, the environment outside didn't match. It was right on a busy highway, it was loud and there were things happening outside that didn't feel peaceful. I remember thinking, you shouldn't be paying for a luxury experience and then walk outside into something completely different. So when I found my current location, I knew I wanted something calm and quiet. The building was brand new, and I was the first person in my space. I was able to build it from the ground up and choose where I wanted everything, including the electrical outlets. That was really special to me.

How have your personal and professional experiences shaped the way you approach your business and care for your clients?

I think losing my mom in 2021 really changed my perspective on everything. As a young mom, I always understood what it felt like to be responsible for someone else. I wanted to create a space where women could also feel taken care of. When you work in this industry, you hear everything. Clients come in and tell you about their lives, their families and everything they're going through. You never really know what someone is dealing with. This might be the one hour they have to themselves. So I want them to be able to come in, breathe, relax and feel safe and heard. Losing my mom made me much more compassionate and understanding. Before, it could have been more like, "Okay, get this client in and get the next one." Now I really want to know people. Of course, you're going to leave looking beautiful, but I also want you to feel calm, safe and relaxed.

> I WANTED TO CREATE A LUXURY EXPERIENCE WHERE WOMEN COULD COME IN, FEEL COMFORTABLE, FEEL BEAUTIFUL AND LEAVE FEELING GOOD IN THEIR OWN SKIN.



Lusso is an Italian word that represents luxury and that feeling of being luxurious. I love that because I want Lusso to be an hour where you can feel beautiful, comfortable and at peace. The Italian connection is also personal because my family has Sicilian roots. After I created Lusso Spa, one of my cousins reached out and told me that our great-grandfather had actually come from Sicily to Texas and started a beauty business there. I had no idea. My cousin found the history through Ancestry, and we even found the old letterhead. The business was called Elite Barber and Beauty Supply in Beaumont, Texas. It dates back to around the 1960s. I thought that was so crazy because I had created a beauty business without even knowing that my family had been involved in beauty generations before me. It really feels like a full-circle moment. I feel like I'm carrying on a family legacy without even realizing it.

Tell us about some of the services Lusso Spa offers.

My main services are lash extensions, lash lifts and customized skincare. My lash extensions are fully customized. I also recently started offering an enhanced lash lift, where I combine a lash lift and tint with a few extensions. It gives you a little more length and fullness while still keeping the look very natural. Lashes are still my primary service because they are what really started my business, but I've also gotten back into skincare. I was really good at facial massage when I was in school, so I wanted to bring that back. Our skincare services are customized based on the client. I take detailed notes about their lifestyle, what they're doing, where they're traveling, their family and even what's stressing them out. All of that helps me customize the treatment and products. We also offer DMK Enzyme Therapy, as well as skincare from brands like Skinbetter and Hydrinity. I also do some body waxing, although facial waxing is more common for my clients. The main services I would say are our lash extensions, lash lifts and the Lusso Signature Facial. We also have independent beauty professionals in the space, including a full-body waxer and a massage therapist, so clients can still come in and have a full spa experience.

Lusso Spa is known for creating a natural and effortless beauty look. What makes your approach to lashes and skincare different?

I'm a huge fan of natural beauty. I really believe in enhancing what you already have. With lashes, I always tell my clients that I want people to ask, 'Are those your real lashes?' rather than, 'Where do you get your lashes done? I look at someone's face shape, eye shape and lid space, and then customize the lashes around them. I also listen to what the client wants while educating them about what will actually work for their features. I don't really do mega-volume lashes. I'm very focused on keeping things natural.



The same goes for skincare. I don't believe in a one-size-fits-all approach. We're right near Cocoa Beach, so a lot of my clients are in the sun, traveling or spending time at the beach. I'm not going to give someone a seven-step skincare routine if I know they're barely going to wear sunscreen. It's about being realistic and creating something that fits the person's actual lifestyle.

Your approach feels very personal and approachable. How important is that connection with your clients?

It's extremely important. I want people to feel comfortable talking to me. I want them to feel safe and welcome. I've changed a lot as a person over the years. I think I used to be much more guarded and reactive, and losing my mom changed my perspective on people and what they may be going through. Losing my mom really changed me. It opened me up to different people and different experiences. Now I feel like I can talk to almost anyone. I like to call myself a chameleon because I can adapt and connect with different people. I think one of my biggest superpowers is being able to see the glass half full. Even in horrible situations, I try to find something good.

You mentioned that energy has played an important role in your journey. How has that influenced your business?

I really believe the energy we carry has to go somewhere. When I'm angry, stressed or overwhelmed, I try to channel that into something productive rather than letting it consume me. When you're angry or stressed, you still have all that energy. You can either let it consume you or channel it into something productive. For example, when I get stressed, I clean. Then my entire house is spotless and I feel better. That's really how Lusso came about. I was going through a horrible time, especially after losing my mom, and I had all this energy and emotion. I decided to channel it into something positive. Your energy is everything.

LUSSO MEANS LUXURY IN ITALIAN, AND THAT REALLY REPRESENTS WHAT I WANTED THE BUSINESS TO BE.

Reedie Garrett

What does this new chapter of Lusso Spa look like for you?

I really enjoy working by myself. I think that's probably the only child in me. I was always the kid who wanted to work alone on group projects. But honestly, I love how personal my business is now. I feel extremely connected to my clients. My clients become friends rather than my friends becoming clients. There was a point when I wanted Lusso to become huge. I had employees and was managing a team, and I knew I could keep growing it. But I also felt like I was losing myself. Just because you can grow something bigger doesn't mean that is what success has to look like for you. For me, success is being fully booked, having genuine relationships with my clients and knowing I'm making a difference in their lives. I already have my daughter and my boyfriend's two daughters, so there are three girls at home. I don't need to manage more people. I'm much more at peace now. I have more work-life balance and more time to focus on myself and my clients. I still want Lusso to grow, but I see growth differently now. I want to do more lash trainings, support other beauty professionals and allow independent providers to rent space here. I also want to grow my virtual skincare clients. I can essentially be someone's skincare coach. We can create a routine together and work on their skin without them ever having to come into the spa. I always say that I might touch your skin once a month, if I'm lucky, but you touch your skin every single day. So learning how to care for your skin at home is really where the transformation happens. For me, success is about impact rather than size.

Where can people book your services?

The easiest way is through lussospa.com. There are also booking links on my social media. I'm appointment-only, but I always have my phone with me. If someone doesn't know what to book or can't find availability, they can text me directly at 321-222-3158. I try to make it as easy as possible. People can reach me through whatever platform they're comfortable with, and I'll get back to them. I don't usually take walk-ins, but if someone texts me ahead of time, even an hour before, I can sometimes make it work. That's one of the benefits of having my own business. I have the flexibility to take care of my daughter while still taking care of my clients.



REINA MITCHOM

Founder of Hon3y Hair

Kindly ell us a little about yourself and Hon3y Hair.

I'm Reina, a Miami-based hairstylist, entrepreneur, and founder of Hon3y Hair and POSE Hair Co. I'm originally from Georgia and a University of Miami graduate. Before stepping into the beauty business full time, I worked in finance. I like to say I didn't completely leave the world of business behind to pursue beauty, but instead brought everything it taught me into this industry. Hair and beauty have always been a natural part of my life. Styling hair has always come easily to me, but I also loved the way it allowed me to create, connect with people, and help them feel beautiful. It's crazy to think that what began as my favorite hobby gradually became a career that brings together so many parts of who I am: God-fearing, creative, disciplined, entrepreneurial, and always in the mood to chat hair. It has made for a life that feels both exciting and deeply fulfilling.

What inspired you to begin your path in entrepreneurship?

I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit, even before I had the language for it. As a child, my first "business" was a little candy machine I carried around to sell mini candy bars literally everywhere I went. By middle school, I was known as "the snack girl" because I kept the best snacks in my gym bag and everyone knew where to find me. I had a whole little system, and it worked pretty well. At the same time starting around the age of 12, I was doing hair for people and I didn't yet realize I was building a business. I simply knew that I loved creating beautiful styles, helping people feel good, and giving them an experience they wanted to return to. By the time I attended the University of Miami undergrad, I was studying business while building my clientele. I could learn a concept in class and then apply it to my own business in real time, literally that same day. After college, I started working in finance, which gave me another layer of discipline and business experience, while Hon3y Hair continued to grow organically alongside my corporate career. The uncertainty we all witnessed after COVID made me think seriously about what I wanted to build long term. I had a promising path in finance, but I was also creating a career in beauty that felt deeply aligned with my gifts, my faith, and gave me the opportunity to build something of my own. Choosing to work on my own beauty businesses full-time ultimately felt like choosing ownership, purpose, and the future I genuinely want to create.

Kindly tell us about some of your signature services and what makes your approach unique.

Sew-ins are my signature service. I've been doing them since O was a teenager in Georgia, so it's a craft I've spent more than a decade refining. Detailed braiding and cornrow designs are another specialty of mine. I'm naturally drawn to the kind of precision work that makes you look at a hairstyle and see art, not just a "style". What sets my approach apart is that I always think about the client's natural hair first. I want every client to leave feeling beautiful, but I'm equally responsible for protecting the health of their hair underneath the style. Extensions and healthy hair do not have to be mutually exclusive, and it's my goal for my clients to enjoy both. That philosophy shapes every decision I make, from the foundation and tension to product selection and maintenance.

Education is also a major part of the experience. I want clients to feel confident caring for their hair between appointments, not only when their extensions are freshly installed. My standard of care stays the same whether I'm serving a longtime client, a bride, an athlete, or a celebrity. The environment, logistics, and pricing may change, but the quality and intention behind the service never do. I was fortunate to grow up being cared for by talented stylists, and they had a huge impact on the beauty professional I am today.

In your opinion, what has been the single biggest factor behind Hon3y Hair's success?

Consistency in service has been the biggest factor. Social media has helped people discover me more recently, but the client experience is what built the business. When people know they can expect excellent work, thoughtful service, and the same level of care every time, they feel comfortable returning and referring others. I have always taken my work very seriously, whether I was selling snacks, doing someone's hair in college or serving a high-profile client. The standard has never depended on who was sitting in my chair. That consistency has also been supported by a willingness to evolve. The world of beauty is always changing, and because I genuinely love the work that I do, I'm naturally curious about what my clients need, what is shifting in the industry, and how I can improve. I never wanted Hon3y Hair to be a business that depended entirely on social media. My skill, reputation, referrals, and client relationships created the foundation and social media has simply amplified it.

How have those values shaped both your reputation and your clients' experience?

No matter the setting, I show up as Reina. Being authentic and genuine allows me to do right by myself and by the people I service. I'm not trying to be the hairstylist for everyone, and I understand every client isn't for me, and I'm comfortable with that. I want to connect with clients who value what I offer and feel equally comfortable being themselves in my chair. Honesty is one of the most important forms of care I give my clients. Sometimes that means explaining that a requested style is not the healthiest choice at that moment. It may mean taking down extensions instead of refreshing them or recommending a different service altogether. Making money from an appointment will never matter more to me than doing what is right for the person who trusted me with their hair. I'm also extremely detail-oriented. I care about the things that may never appear in a finished Instagram reel: the amount of tension on the hair, the condition of the foundation underneath an install, how realistically a style will hold up based on a client's texture, goals, and lifestyle. I'm thinking beyond how the hair looks when the appointment ends. I want clients to trust that I'm considering the health of their hair weeks and months later, and that I'll give them the knowledge to take care of it once they leave.





What advice would you give aspiring entrepreneurs who want to build a beauty brand that actually lasts?

First, don't build your entire business around trends. Trends can introduce people to you and even make you go viral, but there has to be real value underneath the attention, something that makes clients want to stay, return, and make referrals. Master your craft. Be curious about it, study its intricacies, and care deeply about becoming excellent at it. At the same time, learn the numbers behind the business. Communicate professionally, create systems that improve both your life and the client experience, take customer service seriously, and respect your own time. Talent and business acumen are two different skill sets, and a lasting brand requires both. I would also tell people not to be discouraged by starting small. My growth has been organic, and that has been such gift because I've been able to touch nearly every part of the business. I've shampooed, swept hair, removed rollers, managed social media, handled bookkeeping, and studied the financials. When it is time to scale, you can hire people whose strengths complement yours, but having a foundational understanding of each part of the business makes you a much stronger leader. Virality can give you attention. Systems, skill, and reputation are what give you longevity.

What is the vision for Hon3y Hair, and what legacy do you hope to leave in the beauty industry as the brand grows?

I see Hon3y Hair expanding beyond me and my individual chair. I love being a hairstylist and working hands-on with clients, but I'm also thinking about how the knowledge, standard, and experience I've built can live on a larger platform and in more salon spaces than my own. I want to continue working across different markets and settings, from private clients and weddings to sets, brand activations, editorial work, and larger brand opportunities. I'm also focused on growing the extension side of the business through POSE Hair Co. Ultimately, I want Hon3y Hair to represent a standard: exceptional work, healthy hair, integrity, and a client experience rooted genuine tender love and care for hair. The growth has been organic, but far from accidental.The growth of both of my small business reflects years of discipline, sacrifice, and attention to detail. I also want my legacy to help people recognize beauty as the serious industry it is. Hair is one of the first things people notice, and one of my favorite parts of this work is seeing the difference between how a client walks into my chair and how they walk out. Their literal posture can change because so has their confidence. Beauty professionals are not only performing a craft, we are building businesses and creating an immediate impact on how a person views themselves and how the world views them. I want that work, and the people who do it, to be respected accordingly, and given their flowers and opportunities that reflect their impact.

Where can people book your services, and where can they purchase your extensions?

Everything related to Hon3y Hair, including services and booking information, can be found at hon3yhair.com. You can also follow me on Instagram at @hon3y.hair for availability, recent work, and brand updates. Hair Extensions are available through POSE Hair Co. at posehairco.com. We source some of the best raw wavy and curly hair extensions!

Looking ahead, is mentorship something you're considering?

Absolutely. Mentorship is something I'm intentionally developing. I can be a perfectionist, and when I commit to something, I want to build it thoroughly and do it well. I've had the privilege of learning from incredible mentors in hair, business, school, and my village. Because those relationships gave me so much, I want any mentorship program I create to offer that same depth and intention. I don't want it to exist simply as another accomplishment on my résumé; I want people to walk away with knowledge, confidence, and something genuinely useful.





Chelsea Miller

FOUNDER OF GOOD AVE DESIGN STUDIO

So many interior designers primarily source through design centers or trade specific vendors, but my background has allowed me to understand how many different businesses within our industry function. I have a deep understanding of manufacturing, how retail stores operate, and the value they provide to customers. I also understand consumer buying behavior much better because I owned a retail business myself. Having that experience helps me understand what someone embarking on an interior design project is truly looking for, which allows me to serve my clients in a much more thoughtful way.

Tell us a little about yourself and Good Ave Design Studio.

I'm Chelsea Miller, and I've been an interior designer for almost 28 years. Good Ave Design Studio is actually a continuation of another business I owned. My previous company was called Olive & Rose, which was both a retail store and an interior design firm. In 2024, I decided to close the retail store, and it felt like the right time to rebrand. I wanted to move away from the specific look and feel associated with the retail business and focus more on the luxury side of interior design, creating a more custom experience for my clients. That's how Good Ave Design Studio was born. The name itself has a special meaning.

THE JOURNEY

An exclusive interview

Around the time I closed my store and was searching for a new design studio, I was working out of a guest house for one of my clients who lives on Goodwin Ave. Interestingly, that property has marked three significant moments in my life. The first was when my husband and I lived in a cottage on the property, when we first met. The second time was when we lived there while looking for a new house. The third time was when I had closed my retail store and was searching for a new studio space. To me, that property represented periods of transition, but always positive ones. It became an intersection between wonderful moments that had already happened in my life and exciting new chapters that were just beginning. That feeling inspired the name Good Ave Design Studio.

Throughout your career you've worked in interior design, retail, and product sourcing. How have those experiences shaped the business you've built today?

I think I have a unique perspective on this industry because I've experienced it from several different angles. I've seen the manufacturing side of the business. I understand how retail operates.

Could you tell us how you first discovered interior design and how your career evolved?

Honestly, I think I've been an interior designer my entire life. I just didn't have a name for it until I was around twenty years old. Even as a child, I was constantly trying to redesign my parents' house. I'd go with them to furniture stores, help choose fabrics, and even created a proposal for redecorating my own bedroom. I remember putting together drawings, sourcing products, and assembling everything into what was essentially a sales presentation for my parents.

At the time I was probably pulling images from the JCPenney catalog, but I had everything planned, from the curtains to the furniture. Looking back, it's obvious that design was always part of who I was. Eventually I attended the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in San Francisco and graduated in 2001. I graduated right into the dot com boom, followed almost immediately by the dot com crash in the Bay Area. Fortunately, I landed a position with an interior design firm in Marin County, where I worked for several years.



Photographed by Lauren E Andersen | @sencreativeco

When I was about twenty seven, I decided to take a chance on myself and start my own business. To support myself while building that business, I also took a job at a retail furniture store. That's where I discovered that I really enjoyed sales. I attended High Point Furniture Market for the first time and was introduced to countless furniture brands that I hadn't been exposed to before as an interior designer.

That experience completely expanded my understanding of the industry. Later, my husband and I moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, where I worked as both a designer and product sourcing specialist for a large furniture retailer. The owner wanted the store to carry unique products that weren't commonly available in Knoxville or even through independent retailers. She would bring me magazine clippings or product ideas and ask me to figure out how to source them. That meant learning about importing products from overseas, working with customs brokers, and establishing relationships with luxury furniture manufacturers. We carried brands like Baker Furniture, Baccarat, and several others, and I absolutely fell in love with the sourcing side of the business. It was an incredible education.

" I've always believed that great design should feel cohesive. My overall design philosophy is deeply personal. Everything begins with listening."

-CHELSEA MILLER
FOUNDER OF GOOD AVE DESIGN STUDIO

When we eventually moved back to California, I was approached by Verellen, one of my favorite furniture brands. Tom Verellen hired me as the company's very first territory manager. Before that, he had personally handled all of the customer relationships himself, so being trusted with that responsibility was an incredible opportunity.



Every family has its own story. My job is to tell that story through design. Whether it's their background, hobbies, traditions, children, or daily routines, all of those details become part of the final design.

I worked with Verellen for about four and a half years, and during that time I saw something that completely changed the way I viewed the business. Many of the designers I worked with owned both retail stores and interior design firms. I watched how those two businesses complemented one another. The retail stores generated new design clients, while the design clients purchased products through the retail stores. Each side strengthened the other. That business model fascinated me. Eventually I decided to create that same combination for myself. I opened my own retail store, Olive & Rose, in Santa Rosa in September 2019. Six months later, the pandemic began. At first, I thought it was going to be the end of my business. Instead, it became one of the best things that ever happened. People suddenly became very focused on supporting local businesses. At the same time, many professionals from San Francisco, Silicon Valley, and the greater Bay Area began working remotely and relocating to wine country. The local housing market exploded. We became incredibly busy with new construction homes, large scale remodels, and luxury residential projects. By 2024, the market had started to slow down. That's when I decided it was the right time to close the retail store and dedicate my full attention to the design business. Although I still dream about opening another retail store someday, for now my focus is entirely on interior design.

You've lived in several different cities and states throughout your life. How has living in different places influenced your design style?

Even though I was born in California and very much consider myself a California girl, I've always been open to experiencing different places and cultures. I travel often, and living in different parts of the country has given me a much broader perspective on how people live. The United States has so many unique regional cultures. Being able to experience those different lifestyles firsthand has been incredibly inspiring. When I was younger, I lived in Boulder, Colorado. It has such an active outdoor culture surrounded by mountains, athletes, and nature. That environment definitely shaped the way I think about lifestyle and design. Later, my husband and I lived in Knoxville, Tennessee. The South is truly an incredible place. I think people who haven't spent time there often underestimate how rich the culture is. There are so many talented artists and designers throughout the region. One of the biggest lessons I took away from living in the South is the appreciation for hospitality and formality. It's something we don't experience as much here in California. People in the South truly know how to entertain. They bring out the beautiful dishes, create memorable gatherings, and make guests feel incredibly welcome. California tends to be much more casual, and while I love that about home, I also gained a real appreciation for the thoughtfulness and elegance that Southern hospitality brings. I think there's a lot we can all learn from that.

We spoke previously about how your primary focus is residential design.What services does Good Ave Design Studio offer, and what makes your design approach unique?

We really offer full scope residential design services. That can mean something as simple as designing a single room, like a living room or bedroom, but even then, I like to approach it holistically. If someone hires us to redesign their living room but tells me they recently painted the walls, I may still recommend repainting if it serves the overall vision. I don't like working within unnecessary limitations because my goal is to create the best possible result. Our projects range from furnishing individual spaces all the way to complete home remodels and new construction homes.

The majority of our work involves significant remodels and custom homes, but we also take on kitchen remodels and similar projects. Even then, we think beyond the room itself. If we're redesigning a kitchen, we also consider how that kitchen connects to the surrounding spaces and how the entire home should flow together. I've always believed that great design should feel cohesive. My overall design philosophy is deeply personal. Everything begins with listening. I want to understand how my clients actually live, what matters most to them, how they spend time together, how they entertain, what inspires them, and what kind of lifestyle they want their home to support. Every family has its own story. My job is to tell that story through design. Whether it's their background, hobbies, traditions, children, or daily routines, all of those details become part of the final design. That's what makes each project feel completely unique.

So would you say the consultation process is really the foundation of every project?

One of the first things we do is what I call a "deep dive." Before we begin designing, every client receives a detailed questionnaire that asks not only about design preferences but also about themselves as people. After that, we schedule what I call a pre-project interview. During that meeting, everyone involved in the project sits down together so I can hear every voice. If a husband has one vision and a wife has another, I want to understand both perspectives. Every person's opinion matters because ultimately everyone will be living in that home. The meeting also helps me understand how the family works together. I begin to recognize what excites one person, what matters most to another, and how I can create a design that makes everyone feel heard. That process builds trust very early in the relationship, and I think that's one of the reasons our projects are so successful.

You've built businesses, reinvented yourself, and successfully pivoted throughout your career. Looking back, what would you say are some of the biggest lessons you've learned as an entrepreneur?

The biggest lesson is simply to keep going. Over the years I've evolved tremendously. I've changed the way I've approached business, I've pivoted when necessary, and I've made decisions based on both business strategy and my own creative needs. But I've never given up on being an entrepreneur. Sometimes a pivot is driven by the market. Other times it's driven by the need to stay creatively fulfilled. Either way, I believe you have to keep moving forward. When you look back, it's easy to wonder if you could have done something differently. But I don't believe in regretting those decisions. Every experience teaches you something, and every step becomes part of the journey that ultimately brings you to where you're supposed to be.

For entrepreneurs who may be feeling burned out or questioning whether they should continue, what advice would you give them? I'm sure you've experienced moments like that yourself.

I've definitely experienced burnout myself. When that happens, my advice is to slow down and reconnect with what you're passionate about. As business owners, it's easy to get caught up in what we think we're supposed to do or to believe there's only one path to success. But I truly believe that passion is what sustains you over the long term. If you're excited to get up every morning and do your work, that enthusiasm naturally translates into better work, stronger relationships with clients, and ultimately greater success. When you lose that excitement, it's usually a sign that you need to step back, reconnect with your purpose, and remember why you started in the first place.

For someone interested in working with Good Ave Design Studio, what can they expect from the experience, and where can they book your services?

I would describe our experience as a true white glove service. Our goal is to make the interior design process feel as enjoyable and stress free as possible. That's one of the reasons we spend so much time getting to know our clients before the design process begins. Through our questionnaires and pre-project interviews, we build trust from the very beginning. It's incredibly important to me that my clients feel heard and confident that I understand what they're trying to achieve. At the same time, part of my responsibility is to guide them. Clients hire us because they want a professional perspective. My job is to help them see possibilities they may never have imagined on their own. One of my favorite parts of the process is introducing clients to new ideas and showing them design solutions they never knew were possible. Ultimately, I want every client to feel cared for throughout the journey. I want them to feel supported, guided, and excited from beginning to end. Most importantly, I want them to walk into a finished home that feels completely personal, timeless, and unlike anything they could have created on their own.

Then for people looking to book our services, we have a new client questionnaire on our website at goodavedesignstudio.com

Before we wrap up, are there any final thoughts you'd like to share with our readers?

Absolutely. Although we're based in Sonoma County, we currently work on projects throughout the Bay Area. We're also very interested in taking on remote projects and are always open to traveling. In fact, we almost had the opportunity to work on a project in Miami, and I was incredibly excited about it. Unfortunately, it didn't work out, but it reinforced how much I'd love to work with clients in different parts of the country. So I would encourage anyone reading this, regardless of where they're located, to reach out. We'd love the opportunity to help bring their vision to life.





Angelica & Matteo

Founders of The Hive Wellness Collective



An Exclusive Interview

With Founders of The Hive Wellness Collective

Kindly tell us a little about yourself and Hive Wellness.

Angelica: My name is Angelica. I'm one of the co-founders of the company. I'm a registered acupuncturist by trade. We began the Hive brand about a year ago, but I've been working in alternative medicine for about eight years now. I started off in holistic nutrition and functional medicine, so I was still working a lot with women, fertility, holistic beauty, and anti aging. Then I pivoted a little bit into Chinese medicine, not only because it helped me in my own journey, but because I found that a lot of women would wait until symptoms had already manifested and a pathology had already come up in the body. Diet can only take us so far, so I needed an additional modality that could help get to the root cause of things. That brought me to Chinese medicine.

Matteo: I'm Matteo. Angelica became an acupuncturist because she knows what it's like to be a woman and deal with the blessings and the challenges of being a woman. She decided to go into this field, and I supported her as much as I could. I'm a plumber by trade, so it was a big change in my life. I'm a licensed plumber and have been doing that for about eight years, just as long as she has been a practitioner. There came a time when I wanted to step away from the world of trades. I wanted to give back to people and help people as much as I could. I also wanted to create a space that was inclusive for everyone while supporting my partner. The Hive itself is a collective space where multiple practitioners have a common mission. Our basic pillars are longevity, rejuvenation, and prevention. We really believe that if you feel a certain way, it should not just be dismissed. There is often a reason and a root cause for whatever you are feeling. It is a space where women can be heard. We also see children, husbands, brothers, uncles, and other members of the family. It is not just women, but women tend to be one of our main focuses because, unfortunately, women can get dismissed a lot in the medical system. The Hive is a space that allows people to be heard, seen, and understood. It allows them to feel that what they are experiencing is not just in their head and gives all of our practitioners the opportunity to support them in different ways.

Your journey into holistic medicine began through your own health challenges. Can you share how those personal experiences inspired you to create Hive Wellness?

Angelica: For as long as I can remember, I dealt with personal digestive issues. When I was really young, I was poked and prodded by so many doctors and told that nothing was wrong with me and that everything was in my head. I was put on different anxiety medications and referred to psychologists because the theory was that everything I was feeling was caused by anxiety. I stayed in that cycle for years. Then, once I reached university, all of those symptoms got ten times worse. My background is actually in finance. I went to school for financial mathematics and completed a very intensive degree before I entered the holistic field. A lot of what I do now is focused on nervous system work and stress regulation. I was dealing with the imbalances I had growing up, and then I added the stress of university on top of that. I also was not very satisfied with the field. I had that feeling of not doing much and working for someone else's dream. So there was the stress, the feeling of being unfulfilled, and all of the symptoms I had been dealing with my whole life. I decided to see a naturopathic doctor and an acupuncturist, and I started seeing improvement in my symptoms. It fascinated me how connected everything was. I was finally getting validation that it was not all in my head. There were things happening within my body. Western medicine has its place, but alternative care looks at why the symptoms are happening and tries to understand the root cause. That really interested me, so I went back to school for a long time, and that eventually brought me here. I'm still dealing with my own things along the way because things will always come up throughout our journey, but I'm definitely in a better place than I was because of this medicine.

Hive Wellness brings together multiple practitioners under one roof with a shared goal of prevention, rejuvenation, and longevity. What inspired you to build a collaborative wellness model instead of practicing independently?

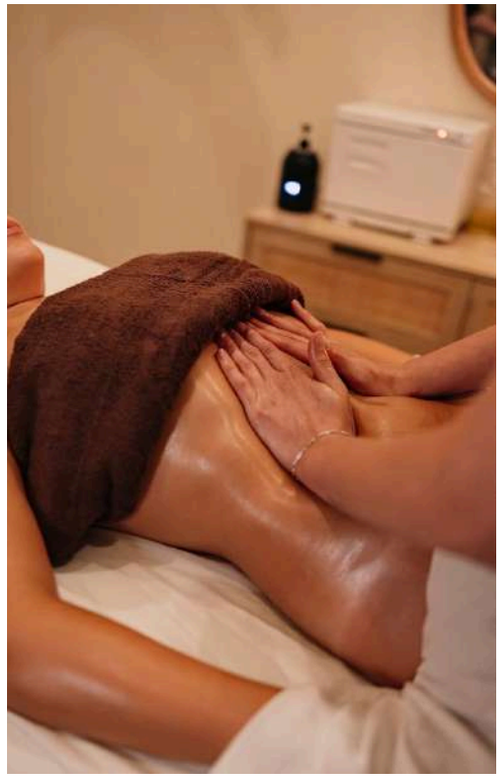
Angelica: I practiced independently for quite a while, and I found that I was still always referring people out. I was referring patients to naturopaths, lymphatic drainage practitioners, osteopaths, and other professionals. Over time, I built relationships with many of these practitioners. At some point, we thought that if we were constantly referring patients to one another, it would make sense to have everything under one space.

When you put everything under one brand, it also creates more credibility. A patient can come in and see me as their traditional Chinese medicine practitioner, while also having access to a naturopath and other practitioners within the same clinic. It allows everything to be connected under one space. It gives patients a sense of safety and comfort and allows them to build relationships with multiple practitioners who are working toward the same goal.

Matteo: Everyone has their own role, just like in a hive. When everyone does their job, the whole hive works. We wanted every client who walks in to feel at home. Everyone is welcomed, everyone knows each other, and everyone works together. Angelica: Everyone's patients become everyone's patients. We have one clinical space, and all of the practitioners work together.

Hive Wellness has become especially known for cosmetic acupuncture and Brazilian lymphatic drainage. What makes these treatments so effective, and why have they become signature services?

Angelica: There is a lot of science backing both services, and there are many benefits to internal regulation. Unfortunately, things become popular because of social media. Right now, both treatments are considered trendy, but they have actually been around for a very long time. We were offering them before they became trends. When it comes to cosmetic acupuncture, it is an alternative treatment for the anti aging process. It is a way to help prevent the aging process without altering your appearance. Right now, there is a big focus on Botox, fillers, and professional medical grade treatments that alter the appearance of the face. Cosmetic acupuncture is more about enhancing your natural beauty. It helps preserve the skin and collagen while also working internally. Aging really starts from the inside out. Cosmetic acupuncture helps regulate the body internally so we are supporting the body rather than simply freezing the aging process. That is what makes it attractive. It is a natural way to preserve beauty. With Brazilian lymphatic drainage, it was originally created in Brazil for body contouring, detoxing, and depuffing. It is a vigorous treatment that helps move the lymphatic system while also manipulating the facial tissue. By doing that, you can get a nice contoured and depuffed look.



The Hive Wellness Collective

Women can experience more bloating and fluid retention because of hormones and the way our bodies work. It is not a long term solution, but when someone follows a maintenance plan, it can be very effective. There is also that instant gratification. You feel really good. You feel lighter, and some people feel that their digestive system is working better.

Looking ahead, what excites you most about the future of Hive Wellness? What are your long term goals and vision?

Matteo: I'm very ambitious because we are expanding at an exponential rate. People are seeing the value in what we do and relating to us. The patients who come tend to stick around, and the word is getting out. We are growing at a pretty rapid pace. My vision is for the Hive to be present in as many communities as possible. I want to have as much community presence as possible and eventually expand our online presence as well. That could include online courses, therapy, education, and a little bit of everything. Eventually, I would love to open a location in the United States, preferably somewhere warmer. Miami would be a great spot. If there is demand and people tell me that their community needs this, I would want to find a way to bring Hive Wellness there. I want to bring wellness to as many corners of the world as possible. I also try to give back through fundraisers and community involvement. I want to make the business as accommodating as possible while still giving back. One of our goals is to take our signature Brazilian technique and create an online course for other practitioners that could be viewed globally. We also want to create an at home version that patients can use if they are interested in learning the technique.

Angelica: From a clinical standpoint, I think the healthcare system is also part of what makes the US market interesting to us. In Canada, healthcare is public, while in the United States, healthcare is private. People are already accustomed to paying for healthcare services. That makes the US market interesting because people may be more willing to invest in alternative care that helps them feel better and get to the root cause.

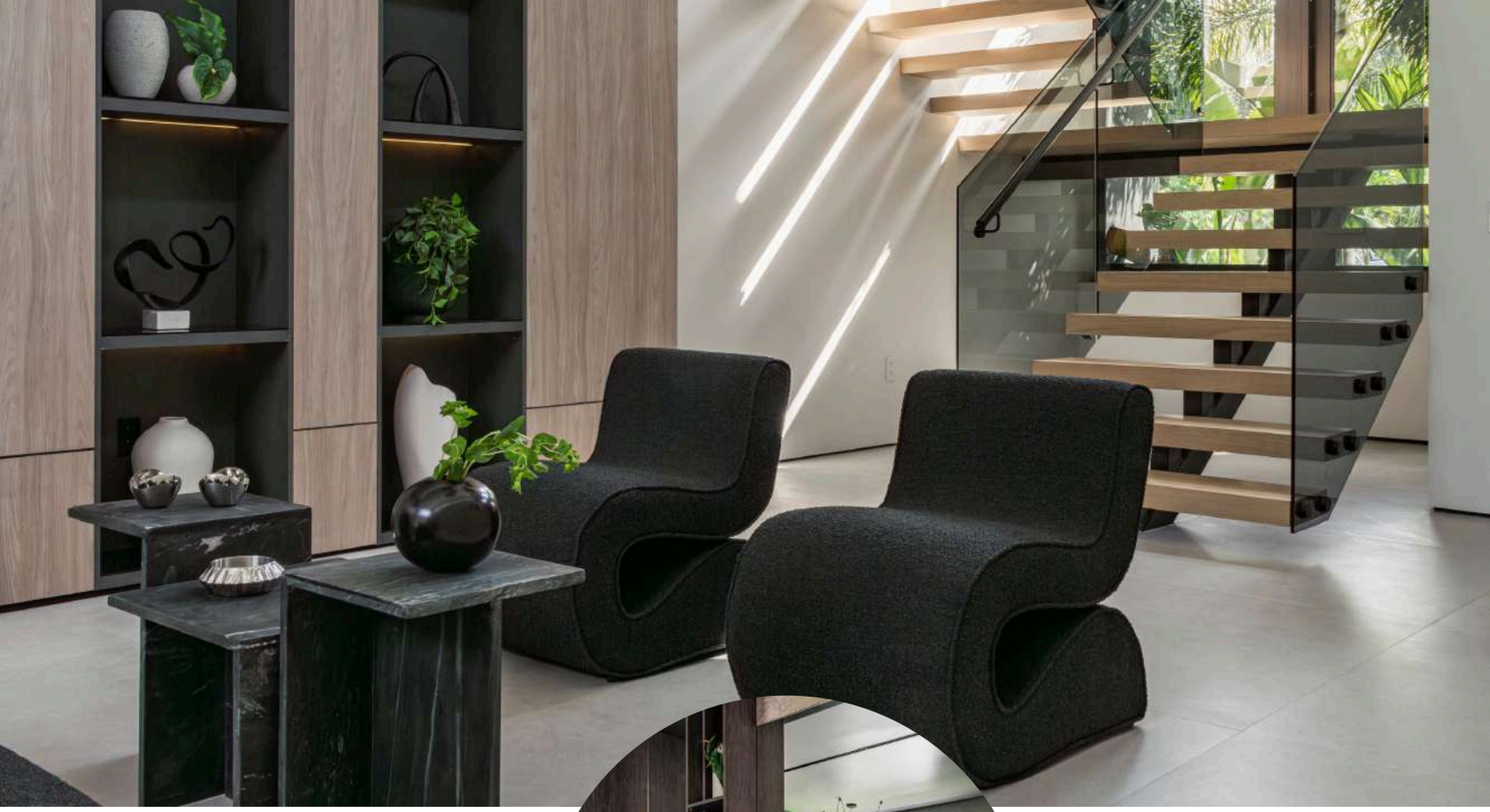
What do you think makes Hive Wellness something that could work well in the United States, particularly in a market like Miami?

I think it could be very popular in the United States, especially in Miami. There are a lot of people here who are interested in living a healthy lifestyle, but they may not always have access to natural ways of doing it. A lot of treatments can make you feel good immediately or change your appearance, but our approach is more natural. You are working with your body and helping it improve. I think that would be very attractive in the US market, especially in Miami, where there are a lot of influencers and people who are focused on health and wellness.

Where can people find Hive Wellness and book your services?

Angelica: Currently, everything is on our website, thehivewell.com. The majority of our services are physical services, including lymphatic drainage and acupuncture, so they are offered at our physical location. We also offer some virtual services, including herbal medicine, health consultations, and functional medicine. People can also reach out to us on Instagram. About eighty percent of our services are currently physical, but eventually we are hoping to expand our online offerings.

Matteo: We are open to expanding into the US market when there is the right opportunity and demand. We are not looking to make a million dollars just for the sake of it. We want Hive to be recognized as a community. We want people to hear the word Hive and think about luxury wellness services that are accessible, welcoming, and inclusive. At the end of the day, we still have a business to run, but the mission comes first. We want to be recognized as a face of wellness and create a space where people feel comfortable, supported, and cared for.



An Exclusive Interview

With Jeremiah Goll, Founder of Jegoll Interiors



Jegoll Interiors will be eight years old this December. Before starting my business, I spent three years selling high end luxury furniture while helping clients with interior design. But before that, I was actually in the food and beverage industry. I worked as a bartender for almost eight years and eventually became a bar manager at a luxury hotel in Miami called The Mondrian. I loved it, and honestly, I was making great money. Miami is a tourism city, so bartenders can do very well. But eventually I started asking myself, "Is this really what I want to do for the rest of my life?" School was never really my thing, but people had always told me I had an eye for design. They'd say I had good taste, knew how to style spaces, and even how I dressed reflected that creativity. Eventually, I decided to give interior design a chance. I took a design course at the University of Miami, not a degree, just enough to see if this was really for me. I ended up loving it and even became one of the top students in the course. At the same time, I got my first job selling luxury furniture while helping clients design their homes. Later, I worked at another luxury furniture showroom, and during those years I slowly started taking on my own clients. Eventually, I reached a point where I couldn't manage both my full time job and my own projects anymore. So, in February 2020, about a month before the pandemic, I made one of the biggest decisions of my life.

I quit my job and started Jegoll Interiors full time. If I had known COVID was coming, I probably wouldn't have done it! But looking back, it turned out to be the best decision I could have made. During that first year, while everyone was home, people began investing in their spaces, and by the end of the year I had ten projects. The following year it grew to fifteen, and since then we've consistently managed around twenty projects at a time. God has opened so many doors. We've built an incredible team, worked with our first A list client, and opportunities just keep coming. Even now, I still deal with imposter syndrome sometimes, but I know it's all part of God's plan.

Faith seems to play a big role in your journey. How has it influenced your business?

It's everything. One of my daily prayers is, "Lord, don't let me take a step unless it's Your will." I trust God with every decision I make. There are moments of stress and uncertainty because, as entrepreneurs, we never really know where the next opportunity is coming from. But that's where faith comes in. God knows tomorrow. I don't. Whenever I panic, I simply give it back to Him. Every blessing we've experienced has been because He has guided us every step of the way.

Looking back, when did you first realize interior design was your passion?

Honestly, it started when I was a kid. I was constantly rearranging my bedroom. Every week my bed would be in a different spot. At the time, I didn't realize that was interior design. I just thought it was something I enjoyed. Whenever I'd visit hotels or restaurants, I'd study the spaces. I'd look at the colors, the lighting, the furniture, and wonder why certain design choices were made. I've also always loved fashion, and I think creativity naturally connects across different forms of design.



Jeremiah Goll

Founder of Jegoll Interiors

THE INSIDER'S LOOK: EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH FOUNDER OF JEGOLL INTERIORS

The real turning point came while I was bartending. I looked around at coworkers who had been doing it for years, and I realized that although there was nothing wrong with that career, it wasn't the future I wanted for myself. My mom also played a huge role in shaping my work ethic. When she first moved to Miami, she worked cleaning offices and galleries, and she would take me with her. I was probably ten or eleven years old. That experience taught me the value of hard work. Making the switch into interior design meant taking a huge pay cut and starting completely from scratch. It was scary because I'd never worked for an interior design firm before. The first few years were difficult. I didn't know how to price projects, manage clients, or build systems. It was all trial and error. But every mistake became a lesson, and every lesson helped me grow.

How would you describe the design philosophy behind Jegoll Interiors?

Our philosophy is simple: We don't design for our clients, we design with them. It's their home, not ours. Yes, clients hire us because they appreciate our style, but this is the space where they'll build memories, raise their families, and spend their lives. That's why collaboration is so important. About 95 percent of our business comes through referrals, and I think that's because we build genuine relationships with our clients. By the end of most projects, we're friends. We still keep in touch with many of them. Our goal is to create a home that feels completely personal to them a space they've always dreamed of but didn't know how to bring to life.

How do you balance your creative style with each client's personal vision?

I always say it's a 50/50 partnership. Clients hire us because we have a strong design aesthetic. We love neutral, modern contemporary spaces with natural elements. But we're not designing a house for Jeremiah, we're designing a house for the client. Some clients love coastal design. Others prefer traditional or transitional styles. Thankfully, God has blessed us with the ability to adapt. We can design across different styles while still bringing our creativity into the process. Every project is unique because every client is unique.



What has been one of the biggest lessons you've learned while building your business?

Transparency. Early in my career, whenever I made mistakes, I'd sometimes try to cover them up because I was afraid. Eventually I realized that honesty builds trust. Now, if I make a mistake, I simply tell my client: "I messed up. Here's what happened.I'll take responsibility, and here's how we're going to fix it." Clients appreciate honesty far more than excuses. It's not just about admitting mistakes, it's about presenting solutions. That's something I apply across every project.

What challenges have helped shape you as a business owner?

There are challenges all the time. Interior design involves so many moving parts contractors, electricians, plumbers, vendors, deliveries and something will eventually go wrong. What I've learned is not to focus on who's to blame. Instead, I bring everyone together and say, "We have a problem. Let's stop worrying about who caused it and figure out how we're going to solve it." That mindset has helped us complete projects more smoothly. I've also grown personally. Earlier in my career, I was incredibly shy. I still consider myself an introvert, but God has built my confidence over time. Today, I can lead conversations, solve problems, and confidently represent my business.

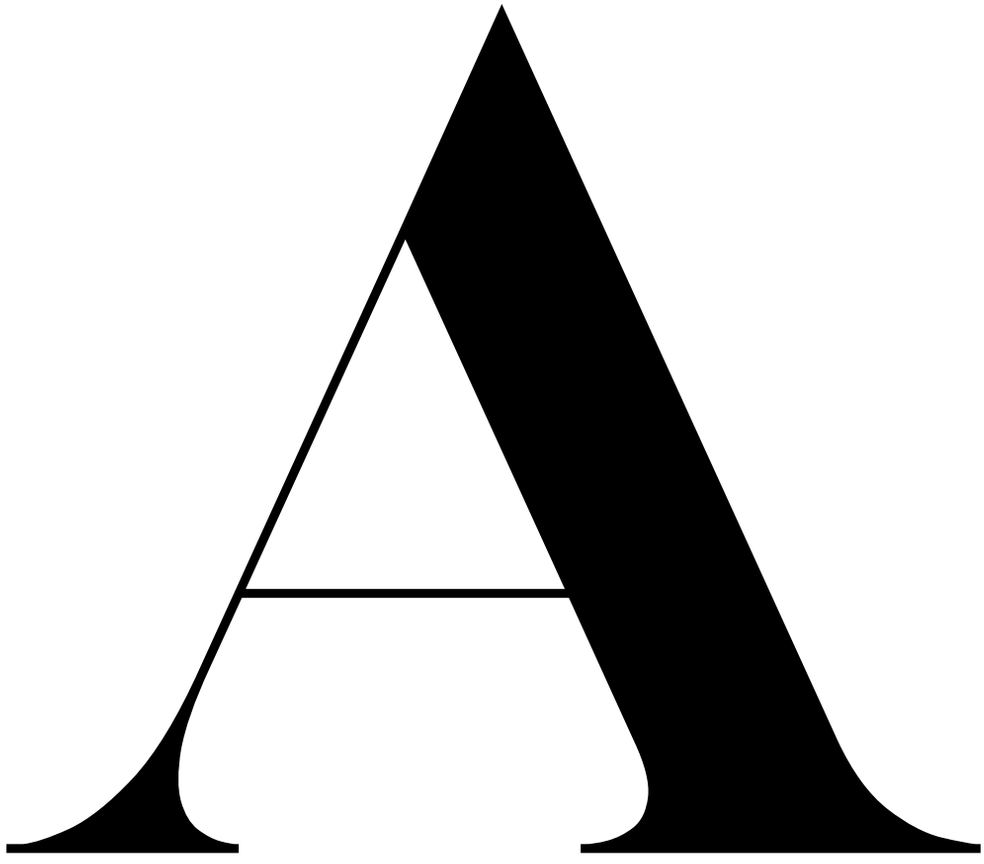


Looking ahead, what excites you most about the future of Jegoll Interiors?

Interior design is just the beginning. I love what I do, but I also know God has placed even bigger ideas on my heart. We recently launched our second business, Alto, which specializes in custom window treatments. The next dream I'm working toward is opening a concept store called **NOOD**. It will be much more than a retail space. I want it to be a beautifully designed environment where people can shop for home accessories, enjoy great coffee, work, study, and feel inspired.

One of the biggest reasons behind this vision is to support young interior designers. When I first started, I didn't have a creative space where I could work or meet clients. I want NOOD to become that place for the next generation. A place where creativity is encouraged and where beautiful design is accessible to everyone, not just luxury homeowners. I truly believe everyone deserves a beautiful home. There are so many exciting opportunities happening right now from launching new businesses to television projects, magazine features, and national recognition. Sometimes it still feels surreal, but my heart is full of gratitude. I genuinely believe the best is yet to come.

ALEXIA NEPOLA



YOU'VE BEEN THE HEART OF MIAMI REALITY TV SINCE DAY ONE, AND FANS LOVE YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE UNAPOLOGETICALLY YOURSELF. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS IN THE SPOTLIGHT, HOW DO YOU PROTECT YOUR PEACE AND STAY SO GROUNDED?

I think being grounded comes from knowing who you are and remembering where you came from. I'm very proud of being Cuban, being a Miami girl, being a mother, and everything I've lived through. Reality television can be very loud. Everyone has an opinion about you, your relationships, your family, even the way you look. In the beginning, I probably took more of that personally. Today, I'm much more protective of my peace. I've learned that not everything deserves a reaction, and not everyone deserves access to you. My family keeps me grounded, especially my boys. They remind me what really matters. At the end of the day, I can take off the lashes, the heels, the glam, all of it, and I'm still Alexia. The people who really know me and love me know my heart. That's what matters most.

WE LOVE SEEING YOUR BOND WITH FRANKIE, ESPECIALLY YOUR WORK TOGETHER AT ALEXIA + FRANKIE'S BEAUTY BAR. WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST REWARDING PART OF BUILDING A BUSINESS ALONGSIDE YOUR SON?

Frankie has taught me more about life than I could ever teach him. After his accident, our lives changed forever. As a mother, you go into survival mode. You want to protect your child and make everything okay. But over the years, I realized that what Frankie needed most wasn't for me to do everything for him. It was for me to help him find his independence, confidence and purpose. The Beauty Bar became part of that journey for both of us. And obviously, I love the beauty business, I'm a Miami girl! I love hair, nails and glam. But the most rewarding part has nothing to do with beauty. It's watching Frankie interact with people, take pride in what he does and feel like he belongs. Seeing him grow and become more independent makes me prouder than anything I could ever accomplish professionally. That is success to me.

alexiae_says| **instagram**



Alexia Nepola



Production Team:

Model: Alexia Nepola
Photographer: Gato Rivera
Location: Dua Miami Hotel
Styled by: Nicole Marie
MUA: Ilona Ivarovska
Hairstylist: Glennys Hernandez

"REALITY TELEVISION CAPTURES REAL PARTS OF YOU, BUT IT CAN NEVER CAPTURE ALL OF YOU. THERE'S A LOT MORE TO ALEXIA THAN WHAT FITS INTO AN EPISODE"

- Alexia Nepola



AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW ON RESILLIENCE, REALITY, AND REAL LOVE

Your relationship journey has taught a lot of people about resilience. What advice would you give women who are trying to navigate love, forgiveness and choosing their own happiness on their own terms?

I'm still learning, so I never want to speak like I have all the answers. I love love. I always have, and I probably always will. I believe in forgiveness, second chances and fighting for the people you love. But I've also learned that loving someone cannot mean losing yourself. As women, sometimes we give and give because we want to keep our family together or make a relationship work. But your happiness matters too. Forgiveness doesn't make you weak, and neither does walking away when something no longer serves you. For me, one of the biggest lessons has been learning to listen to myself and trusting myself. Love should add to who you are, not make you smaller. And whatever decision you make, make it because it feels right for you, not because of what other people think your life should look like.

You are the ultimate "Cuban Barbie" and a Miami icon. How has your personal style, and your relationship with the city of Miami, evolved since we first met you on Season One?

Miami is part of my DNA. I'm Cuban, I grew up here, I raised my children here, and so many chapters of my life happened here. The city has changed so much since Season One, and I have too. My style has definitely evolved. I still love being sexy and glamorous, that part of me is never going anywhere! But today, I understand fashion and my body differently. I know what works for me. I don't feel like I have to follow every trend. I can appreciate something sophisticated and timeless and still give you a little Cuban Barbie. That will always be there. And my relationship with Miami has gotten deeper. When you've experienced love, motherhood, loss, heartbreak, success and starting over all in the same city, everywhere holds a memory. Miami isn't just where I live. It's home. It's part of my story.

Filming a hit reality show means putting your whole life out there for the world to judge. Is there anything about your day to day life that you think would surprise fans who only see you on television?

Probably how normal, and unglamorous, a lot of my life actually is! People see the parties, the fashion, the trips, the drama and the glam, but that's only one part of me. Most days, I'm a mom first. I'm checking on my boys, dealing with the Beauty Bar, answering emails, taking care of things at home, working out, talking to my friends… just living my life. And I actually really enjoy being home and having quiet time. People might be surprised by that because they see this big personality on television. I also think I'm much softer than people sometimes assume. I'm emotional. I worry. I overthink. And I love very deeply.

Reality television captures real parts of you, but it can never capture all of you. There's a lot more to Alexia than what fits into an episode

Looking ahead, what is a dream or project you haven't checked off your bucket list yet? What does the ultimate "next chapter" look like for Alexia?

This question is very special to me because I really do feel like I'm entering a new chapter. There are some things I'm working on that I'm really excited about, but I'm not quite ready to share everything yet. I've learned that sometimes it's nice to protect something while it's still becoming. But I definitely don't look at this stage of my life as slowing down. Actually, I feel the opposite. I want to keep working, traveling, creating, growing as a woman and exploring new opportunities in television and beyond. And personally, I want to keep loving and being loved. I'll never become cynical about love just because life hasn't always gone according to plan. That's not who I am. For me, this next chapter is really about freedom, being secure in who I am, choosing what makes me happy and continuing to evolve. I've had many different lives already, and I feel like some of my best chapters are still left to write. I'm still becoming my best self.

alexiae_says| **instagram**



Exclusive interview with Alan Di Leo, Manager of Dua Miami

Kindly tell us about yourself as well as DUA Miami Hotel.

I have always believed that hospitality is about creating meaningful experiences, not simply providing accommodations. Throughout my career, I've been passionate about building hotels that connect with their communities while delivering exceptional service to every guest. As General Manager of DUA Miami, Autograph Collection, it has been incredibly rewarding to lead a property that embodies both sophisticated luxury and authentic Miami energy. DUA is more than a hotel, it is a lifestyle destination located in the heart of Brickell where wellness, culture, design, culinary excellence and personalized hospitality come together. Whether someone is visiting Miami for business, leisure or simply enjoying a staycation, our goal is for every guest to leave feeling refreshed, inspired and eager to return.

DUA Miami has quickly become one of Brickell's standout destinations. Can you tell us the story behind the hotel and what inspired its vision?

DUA was created with the belief that luxury today is defined by balance. Today's traveler wants beautiful accommodations, but they also want meaningful experiences, wellness, incredible food and beverage, and genuine human connection. As part of Marriott's Autograph Collection, DUA was designed to have its own personality rather than follow a traditional luxury hotel model. Our vision has always been to create a destination that feels distinctly Miami, vibrant, sophisticated and welcoming, while offering an elevated experience that encourages guests to disconnect from routine and reconnect with themselves. Being located in Brickell places us at the center of one of the most exciting neighborhoods in the country, and we've embraced that energy throughout every aspect of the guest experience.

The hotel is going through an exciting transformation. Can you tell us more about this new chapter and what inspired the vision?

This transformation represents much more than a renovation, it reflects an evolution of who we are and where we see the future of hospitality heading.

Every enhancement has been carefully considered to elevate the guest journey, from our redesigned public spaces and guestrooms to our culinary experiences, wellness offerings and programming. We wanted every detail to feel intentional while maintaining the warmth and personalized service our guests have come to expect. The inspiration was simple, create a hotel that feels contemporary yet timeless, luxurious yet approachable, and capable of serving both international travelers and the local Miami community.

What do you hope guests feel the moment they walk through the doors of the newly renovated hotel?

Our hope is that guests immediately feel a sense of calm, comfort and possibility. Life moves incredibly fast, and we want DUA to become a place where guests can slow down, breathe and enjoy the moment.





From the design and music to the aromas, lighting and personalized service, every element has been thoughtfully curated to create an atmosphere that feels welcoming and restorative. We want guests to feel that they've arrived somewhere special, a place where they can truly disconnect while remaining connected to everything Miami has to offer.

Every renovation takes a lot of teamwork. What has this journey been like for you and the team behind the scenes?

One of the most rewarding aspects of this transformation has been watching our entire team embrace the vision. A project of this scale requires collaboration across every department, and our associates have been involved every step of the way. There has been tremendous pride in helping shape what DUA is becoming, and that shared commitment is reflected in the guest experience. Hospitality is ultimately about people. Beautiful spaces are important, but it is our team that truly brings the hotel to life every single day.

Each luxury hotel has its own personality. What would you say makes the guest experience at DUA Miami different from other hotels in Miami?

DUA offers a luxury experience that feels genuine rather than formal. Guests receive highly personalized service in an atmosphere that feels sophisticated yet comfortable. Our culinary offerings, rooftop pool experience, wellness amenities and thoughtfully designed spaces encourage guests to enjoy Miami at their own pace.What also makes us unique is that we are equally committed to serving locals. Through our restaurants, partnerships, special events and experiences, DUA has become a gathering place, not simply a hotel where visitors stay, but a destination where Miami comes together.







DUA Miami, Autograph Collection, represents a new generation of luxury hospitality, where exceptional design, personalized service, wellness, culinary excellence and authentic Miami culture come together to create experiences that are memorable long after checkout. As the hotel continues its evolution, its commitment remains the same, offering every guest the opportunity to discover the very best version of Miami while finding a moment to reconnect with themselves.

Miami is one of the world's top travel destinations. How does DUA Miami reflect the city's culture while creating a great experience for both visitors and locals?

Miami is one of the most dynamic and culturally diverse cities in the world, and DUA reflects that spirit in everything we do.
Our design celebrates contemporary sophistication while embracing the warmth and energy that define Miami. Our culinary concepts draw inspiration from international influences, our programming connects guests with local culture, and our partnerships highlight the incredible talent that exists throughout our community. Whether someone is visiting from another country or lives just a few blocks away, we want them to experience the authentic character of Miami through DUA.

As you look ahead, what is your biggest hope for the future of DUA Miami Hotel and the community it serves?

My hope is that DUA continues to evolve into one of Miami's most respected hospitality destinations, not only because of the quality of our accommodations, but because of the relationships we build.

We want to continue investing in our team, strengthening our connection to the Brickell community, supporting local organizations and creating memorable experiences that bring people together. Success isn't measured solely by occupancy or awards. It's measured by the lasting impression we leave on every guest and the positive role we play within the community we call home.



> EVERY FACIAL I PERFORM IS COMPLETELY CUSTOMIZED BECAUSE NO TWO CLIENTS HAVE THE SAME SKIN. I'M AN AWARD-WINNING ESTHETICIAN, AND MY APPROACH IS ALWAYS TO ASSESS THE CLIENT'S SKIN FIRST BEFORE DECIDING ON THE TREATMENT. ❞

Kindly tell us about yourself and the journey behind Skin & Strategy?

I've been a licensed Esthetician for about 13 years now. Right after school, I started working in retail skincare and spent eight years with the company, working my way up through different leadership positions. I was exceeding expectations and hitting every benchmark, but eventually I realized I was working incredibly hard to build someone else's dream when I wanted to build my own. That realization pushed me to start my own business. I'll be honest, I probably went solo a little earlier than I should have. Building a clientele from scratch wasn't easy. Suddenly, I wasn't just an Esthetician anymore; I was the receptionist, marketer, accountant, social media manager, and business owner all at once. Eventually, I partnered with a medical spa, which allowed me to continue operating my own brand while eliminating a lot of the overhead costs that come with running an aesthetics business independently. It gave me the freedom to focus on what I truly love: helping clients achieve healthy, beautiful skin. As my career continued to grow, I also recognized a major gap in our industry. Esthetician school teaches us how to perform treatments, but very little about how to build a successful business. I remember exactly what it felt like to graduate with a license, technical skills, and absolutely no idea how to find clients or build a business. School taught me skincare, but it never taught me entrepreneurship. That realization became the foundation for my mentorship. Today, through Skin and Strategy, I continue helping clients with their skin while also helping aspiring Estheticians and beauty entrepreneurs build sustainable businesses using the lessons I've learned throughout my career.

What first sparked your passion for skincare?

Honestly, it started with my own skin. I struggled with acne when I was younger, and I really didn't know how to care for it. My mom wasn't very into skincare or beauty, so I had to learn through researching, experimenting, making mistakes, and figuring out what actually worked. That process made me fall in love with aesthetics. While I was in cosmetology school, people started noticing how much my own skin had transformed. They began asking me for facials and skincare advice. I've always been a perfectionist, so whenever I treated someone, I genuinely wanted to give them my absolute best. I think that commitment to excellence is what really propelled my career forward.

What services do you currently offer at Skin & Strategy?

Every facial I perform is completely customized because no two clients have the same skin. I'm an award-winning Esthetician, and my approach is always to assess the client's skin first before deciding on the treatment. I specialize in sensitive skin and anti-aging, but over the years I've mastered treating a wide variety of skin concerns. Beyond customized facials, I offer advanced treatments like microneedling, Hydrafacials, and corrective skincare services. But the treatment doesn't end when clients leave my studio. I create a personalized home-care plan for every client because skincare is a journey. We talk about their goals, evaluate where their skin is today, and develop a realistic treatment plan that helps them achieve long-term results.

Your Korean Facial Experience has become one of your signature treatments. What makes it so unique?

Korean skincare is considered one of the gold standards in the beauty industry. Their philosophy focuses on prevention, consistency, and nourishing the skin rather than simply correcting problems. That's what inspired me to create my Korean Facial Experience. The treatment follows the famous twelve-step Korean skincare philosophy, but I also incorporate professional modalities based entirely on what each client's skin needs. If someone is dealing with acne, I may include high-frequency therapy. If they're looking for skin tightening, I can incorporate radio frequency. For sensitive skin, I use calming technologies that reduce inflammation while strengthening the skin barrier. One of the most important parts of the treatment is the deep facial massage. We carry so much tension in our faces every day without realizing it. The massage promotes lymphatic drainage, creating a more sculpted and lifted appearance while also relieving muscle tension. Clients often tell me they leave feeling lighter, calmer, and more relaxed. It's truly both a skincare treatment and a wellness experience.

Over the past few years you've grown your business into six figures while mentoring other beauty professionals. What are some of the biggest lessons you've learned?

One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that not every client is meant for you. When you're first starting out, it's easy to feel desperate for clients.

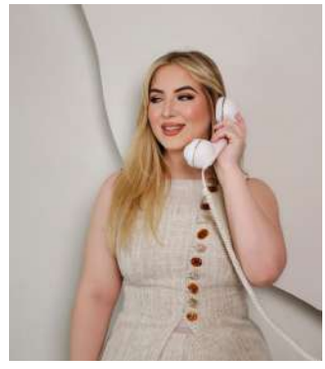


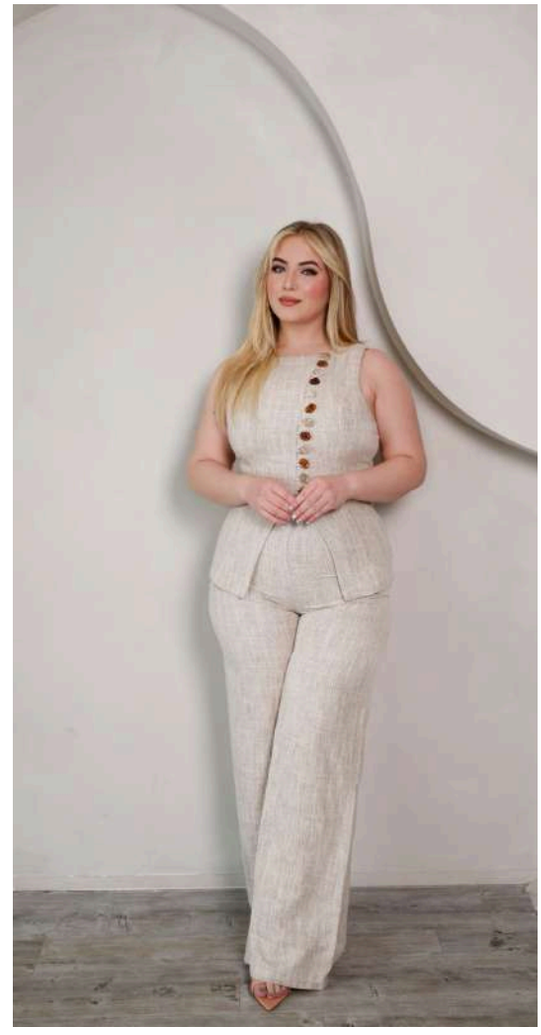
Restore your confidence with Skin & Strategy

By

Ornella Lopresti







When you know exactly who your ideal client is, your marketing becomes stronger, your messaging becomes clearer, and your business grows much faster. I've also learned the importance of consultations.

You try to serve everyone, lower your prices, and say yes to everything. But the truth is that building a successful business starts with defining your niche. When you know exactly who your ideal client is, your marketing becomes stronger and your messaging becomes clearer. I've also learned the importance of consultations. Not every client has realistic expectations, and part of being an ethical practitioner is making sure you're genuinely able to deliver the results they're hoping for. That honesty builds trust, and trust builds long-term relationships.

Tell us more about your mentorship program.

I created this mentorship because I remember exactly what it felt like to graduate with a license, technical skills, and absolutely no idea how to find clients or build a business. School taught me skincare, but it never taught me entrepreneurship. My mentorship exists to bridge that gap. I teach new estheticians and beauty entrepreneurs how to build a profitable business, covering personal branding, marketing strategy, creating a treatment menu, identifying their niche, pricing, and search engine optimization.

Everything comes from over 13 years of hands-on experience working directly with clients, performing more than 5,000 treatments, building my own business, and navigating the challenges I've personally experienced throughout my career. My goal isn't simply to help someone build a six-figure business. I want to help estheticians build profitable, sustainable businesses that create long-term careers, confidence, and freedom.

How can aspiring beauty professionals work with you?

I offer a free guide called How to Book Your First 5 Clients, where I share practical strategies they can begin implementing immediately. From there, they can schedule a discovery call with me if they're interested in joining my mentorship program.

I also encourage people to connect with me on Instagram. Whether they're interested in becoming a skincare client or a mentee, I personally respond to my messages because I believe relationships matter.

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What advice would you give women who dream of starting their own business but are afraid to take that first step?

Get crystal clear on exactly who you're trying to serve. Don't try to market to everyone. Instead, create a detailed picture of your ideal client. Think about their daily routine, their hobbies, where they shop, and what events they attend.

When you truly understand your ideal client, everything becomes easier, your marketing, your content, your partnerships, and even the way you speak about your business. Success comes from serving one specific audience exceptionally well.

For readers interested in experiencing Skin and Strategy or learning from you, what's the best way to connect?

The easiest way is simply to send me a direct message. Whether you're interested in booking a facial, learning more about my skincare philosophy, or joining my mentorship program, I'll personally answer your questions and help you figure out the next step. I believe every client and every entrepreneur deserves personalized guidance, and that's exactly what I strive to provide.

Tell us a little about yourself and Altra Studio.

I'm Alessandra Travaini. I was born and raised in Italy, so I'm Italian. I studied architecture there and worked for a few years before moving to the United States. I've been based in New York City for about 12 years now. Altra Studio is my architecture and interior design firm. The name actually has a meaning. It comes from a mix of my first and last name, but in Italian, "Altra" means "others" in a feminine way because of the "A" at the end. For me, it was perfect because what I do is for other people. That is very important to me.

What inspired you to become an architect?

I always knew I wanted to be an architect, and that was because of my mom. She is also an architect. When I was a kid, I would go with her to her office. Another girl and I would spend the afternoon on the floor drawing and coloring while the adults worked. I grew up around that environment, and it was really inspiring for me. Then, when I started architecture school, I became very interested in the history of Greece, especially the agora, which were public squares where people gathered. That idea always stayed with me. Architecture is about bringing people together, and that is something I still love about what I do today.

You worked with several architecture firms before starting your own studio. What inspired you to go out on your own?

I worked for about five or six firms throughout my career, most of them here in the United States. I worked for smaller firms and eventually worked for a large corporate architecture office. One thing I noticed across those experiences was that the client was sometimes passed between different people throughout the project. Not every firm offered the full experience from beginning to end. For me, the client experience has always been very important.

Originally when I founded Altra Studio, I wanted to be able to follow the client throughout the entire journey. I wanted to be hands-on and really go through the process with them. At the end of the day, the final result is only as good as the experience getting there. A lot of people are already nervous about construction or renovation. They hear the word "renovation" and think, "Oh my God, this is going to be stressful." I think our industry sometimes forgets to focus enough on the client. For me, that is very important.

So would you say giving clients a hands-on experience is one of the biggest parts of your approach?

Absolutely. It is about guiding them through the process, but it is also about the relationship you create along the way. I also personally love bringing people together. With Altra Studio, I organize events called "Wine and Design." I do about four of these events a year. They combine two of my passions: wine and design. I invite clients and people in the industry to come together, talk, make new connections, and hopefully create new collaborations. We also get to try different wines, usually in a showroom or design space. I always choose a different showroom or space for each event. For the next one, I may even do it in a client's home. That way, the event becomes part of the story of the space.

How has growing up and studying architecture in Italy influenced the way you approach design today?

I think it has influenced me a lot, especially when it comes to relationships and working with people. I always say I like to work with people I like. That is very important to me. Architecture is also very much about teamwork. That is something they teach you a lot in Italy. Another thing I learned is the importance of context. Every project is connected to the place where it is located. You cannot separate the building from its surroundings. That is something I still bring into my work today. Every project is different depending on where it is, what it sees, where the light comes from, and how the space feels. For example, I recently visited a potential project where the apartment was very dark. So naturally, I started thinking about how the design could bring in more light. If you have a very bright apartment or house, that becomes a completely different design story. You can use different colors and finishes.

Altra Studio combines architecture and interior design. Why is it important for you to guide your clients from concept to completion?

It is important because I want the client to have one point of reference throughout the entire project. They have one person they can contact, and it also helps make the project more cohesive. In the United States, it is common to have an architecture firm and an interior designer working together. But I have seen many projects where the two sides do not really match. For me, the project needs to have a clear story. It should tell the story of the client and who they are. That is something I learned from the way architecture is taught in Europe. You are encouraged to think about the whole project. I also find that clients are usually the happiest when one person or one studio can guide them through the entire process.

How would you describe your design style, and how do you make sure each project reflects the client?

I struggled for a while to define my style, but I have come to the conclusion that it is European contemporary. You can see different elements in every project, but there is always a common thread. It could be a specific material, a detail, the connection between two elements, or even the layout of the space. The way a home flows is very important to me. A space needs to be beautiful, but it also needs to be functional. At the same time, the design has to adapt to the client. It changes depending on what they like and how they want to live. It could mean different materials, colors, or even a more eclectic style if that is what the client wants.



ALTRA STUDIO BY ALESSANDRA TRAVAINI

"Every project is connected to the place where it is located. You cannot separate the building from its surroundings. That is something I still bring into my work today."

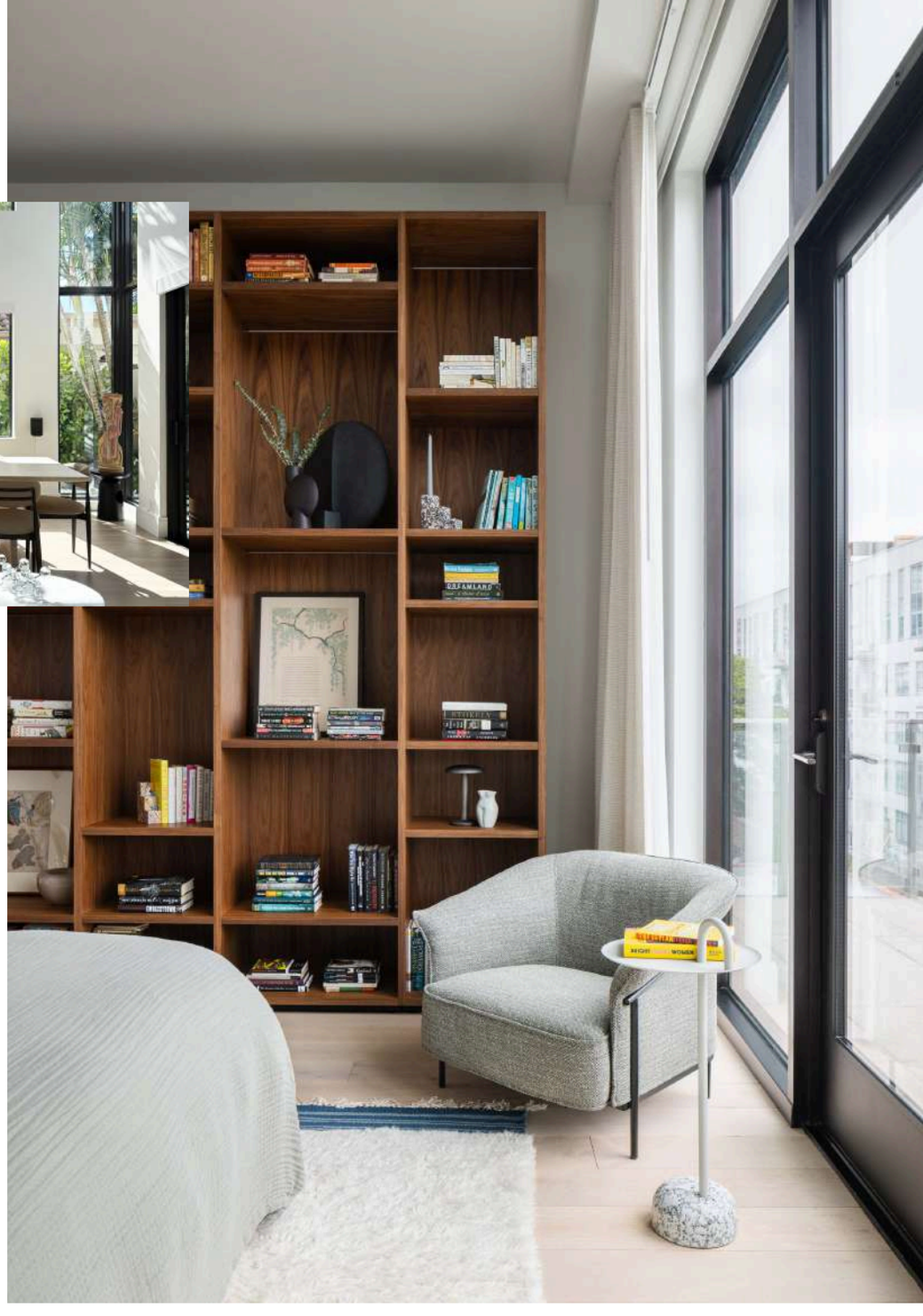


. Every day, you learn something new. There is always someone who has been doing this longer than you, so ask questions. Learn from people who have more experience.

At the end of the day, I want the client to be happy and feel relaxed in their home. To me, your home is your sanctuary. You come home after a long day, and you should feel good there. When people come to my apartment, they often say, "Wow, this is beautiful," but what I really want is for them to also feel good in the space. The home needs to feel like the person who lives there. It needs to be personal.

How does designing in different locations, such as New York and Florida, inspire your creativity?

For me, it always starts with the context. I look at where the project is, who the client is, and what they need. When I meet a client and talk to them, I usually start to understand their personality and what they are looking for, even if they cannot always explain it themselves. Then I reflect that in the space. For example, New York tends to have darker and moodier colors. You might not see as many bright colors. Florida is completely different. You have more natural light, brighter colors, and greenery outside. When you have big windows and beautiful views, the outside becomes part of the home. The layout is also different. A New York apartment might be designed for a family to live in every day, while a Florida or Hamptons home might be designed more for entertaining and gathering. I have a client who has a home in New York and another in the Hamptons. In New York, we designed the apartment around everyday family life. For the Hamptons home, they wanted more gathering areas because they host more people there. So we designed a living room that could accommodate eight to 10 people and included a larger dining table. You have to consider how people actually use each space.

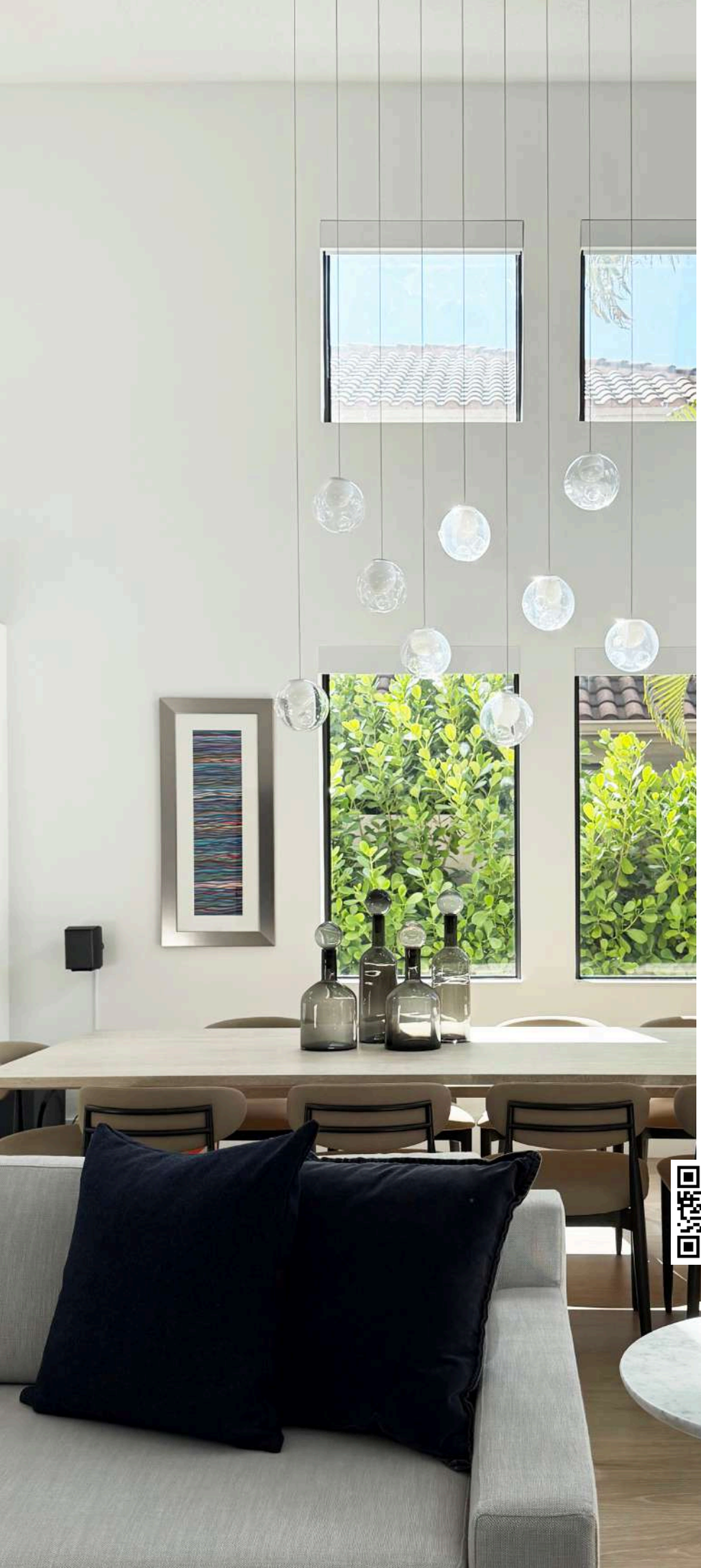


How long does a typical project take from start to finish?

It really depends on the project. If we are doing a full renovation along with the interior design, it can take anywhere from one to two years. For example, if you purchase a 4,000-square-foot apartment, we have to go through the design process, permits, demolition, construction, and everything else. A project like that could take around 18 months to two years. A smaller renovation or furnishing project could take around a year or less. There is a lot of work behind what people eventually see. There is also a lot of communication. Our job is really only half of the process. During construction, the contractors have to bring the design to life, so their work is extremely important. If the design is not built properly, the final result will not be what we intended.

Looking back on your journey, what advice would you give to architects or designers who dream of starting their own studio?

Be consistent and have a passion for the work. If you do not have passion for this job, it can become very stressful. If you want to open your own studio, I would say go for it. But learn as much as you can before you start and continue learning throughout the journey. You never stop learning. Every day, you learn something new. There is always someone who has been doing this longer than you, so ask questions. Learn from people who have more experience.



Would you recommend that someone fresh out of design school immediately start their own studio, or should they gain experience first?

I would definitely recommend getting experience first. Architecture is a profession where experience really matters. You need someone who can show you how things work and teach you how to handle real projects. School teaches you a lot, but it does not teach you everything about real life. I would suggest starting at a small firm because you get to learn different parts of the business. You have to be a project manager, a designer, handle administrative work, build relationships, and learn technical drawings. There are so many different parts to the job. Starting at a smaller firm allows you to learn all those different roles and build from there. And relationships are also very important. A lot of this industry is about relationships, conversations, coffee, and getting to know people.

What is the best way for people to get in touch with you or book your services?

Email is great. I usually respond within a day or two. People can also contact me through my website, where there is a contact form, or through Instagram.

Finally, what would you like readers to take away from your story and your work?

I decided to open Altra Studio because I wanted to create spaces where people can truly feel like themselves and express themselves fully. I love creating spaces for people. That is really my mission. Somehow, I ended up focusing more on interiors than on building buildings, and I think it is because I love creating relationships with people. I want to understand how they live, what they do, why they do it, and what their lifestyle is like. From there, I can create a space that is truly their own. Hopefully, they can enjoy it and feel good about it.

RONI EDRI

THE BODY GLOW STUDIO

ABOUT THE FOUNDER!

Kindly tell us about yourself and The Body Glow Studio.

I'm Roni, and I'm the owner of Body Glow Studio. We started about 10 years ago out of my apartment as something I was doing on the side while working. I was originally supposed to go to law school, but I decided it wasn't the path I wanted and started Body Glow instead. I worked from home for about a year before opening my first location. Then COVID happened, and I was already six months pregnant. With businesses shut down and my lease coming up for renewal, I decided to take a break from the business and focus on becoming a stay-at-home mom. I had my first child and then my second, and ultimately took about three years away from the business. When I returned, I opened a salon suite, and for a while, it was just me. Eventually, I realized I needed more space and an environment I could truly make my own. That led me to our current location, which has five rooms and gives us so much more room to grow. Now I have employees, a beautiful new space, and it's been incredibly exciting to see how far Body Glow has come..



You've built The Body Glow Studio around your own experiences and interests. How has your personal experience influenced the work you do today?

My philosophy is basically that I am my target client. My target client is me. Anything that I want to get done, realistically, my girls probably want to get done too. Anything I'm interested in, they're usually interested in as well. That has always been my motto. If I see something and I want to try it, there's a 99.9 percent chance that my clients are going to want to try it too. I think that helps me understand what women actually want. I'm not trying to create things that I think people should want. I'm offering things that I genuinely believe in and would want for myself.

You've been in the aesthetics industry for almost 10 years. What has that journey been like, and how has your experience shaped the way you operate your business today?

It has been a lot of ups and downs. Ten years is a really long time. The aesthetics industry can be very competitive, but I've always believed there is space for everybody. There are enough women for every beauty entrepreneur to build a successful business. My clients might not be somebody else's clients, and that's okay. They come to me because they connect with my personality and my energy. I'm a very specific type of person, and I attract women who enjoy that energy. I like having fun with my clients, and I think that makes the experience different. There have definitely been difficult moments along the way, but we survived, and every experience has taught me something.

Body Glow has become especially known for its XERF treatments. For someone hearing about the technology for the first time, what attracted you to it?

XERF is one of the strongest skin tightening treatments available right now. It works by helping stimulate and restructure collagen from the inside out. So, it's not just about making the outer layer of your skin look nice. It works deeper to help lift and tighten the skin. I describe it as being similar to a non-surgical facelift. The other thing I love is that it's non-invasive and has zero downtime. That is a huge part of Body Glow. I don't want my clients leaving red and unable to wear makeup or go about their day. I want effective, quick treatments that give you results without surgery or a long recovery. Once I tried XERF, I was sold. The technology behind it is really impressive.





I wanted effective, quick treatments that give you results without surgery or a long recovery. Once I tried XERF, I was sold. The technology behind it is really impressive."

You also specialize in lymphatic drainage. How do you determine which treatment is right for someone visiting Body Glow for the first time?

I love when new clients book a consultation before their treatment because it gives us a chance to understand what they want and recommend the right option. Lymphatic drainage is something almost everyone can benefit from. We all deal with environmental factors and things in our daily lives that can affect the body. Our lymphatic system naturally helps move waste and fluid through the body, and as we age, that system can become less efficient. That's one reason people may experience more swelling or inflammation as they get older. Lymphatic treatments can help support circulation and reduce that feeling of puffiness. It's also something that people of different ages can enjoy. It's not just a luxury treatment. For many people, it becomes part of their overall wellness routine.

Looking back over the last 10 years, what have you learned about building a business?

Honestly, I throw everything at God. I just go with God. A lot of times, an idea will come into my head and I'll wonder why I'm thinking about this, but I believe that if God gives me an idea, He is also going to give me a way to make it happen. I'm not a huge planner. I'm not the best with logistics, and I'm definitely not a numbers person. But somehow, every time something needed to happen, the money or the opportunity would come. People ask me how I built all of this, and I'm like, I really don't know. Every time something was due, somehow God would come through and say, here you go, girl. I think we overcomplicate life as humans. We make things much harder than they need to be. Sometimes you just have to keep moving, trust yourself, trust God, and keep going.

What are you most excited about for the future of Body Glow Studio?

I'm excited about growing the team and hiring more people. I would also love to build a few more locations. We're very well known in South Florida, but I'd love to eventually expand into other parts of Florida and then even farther. We already have clients who drive long distances to see us, and some people even fly in. So, having Body Glow locations closer to them would be amazing. I'm also open to bringing in new technologies, but I don't rush into buying every new machine that comes out. A lot of devices are basically old technology with a new marketing campaign. Just because something has more advertising behind it this year doesn't mean the technology is actually new. I want to make sure that anything we bring into Body Glow is genuinely innovative and can provide something valuable to our clients. And one thing that will always remain important is that we only focus on non surgical treatments.

Where can people book your services from?

The easiest way is through our website or Instagram. We're very active in our DMs and we respond quickly. We also answer phone calls, so people can reach us that way too.

Interestingly, our busiest booking hours are usually between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. I think all the moms finally get into bed, have a moment to themselves, and suddenly think they need this tomorrow! It's actually funny because I do the same thing. You spend the whole day busy, and when you finally have time for yourself at night, that's when you start booking things and shopping online. So, if you're lying in bed late at night thinking about booking your Body Glow appointment, we understand.

Lastly, is there anything you would like readers to take away from your story or from Body Glow Studio?

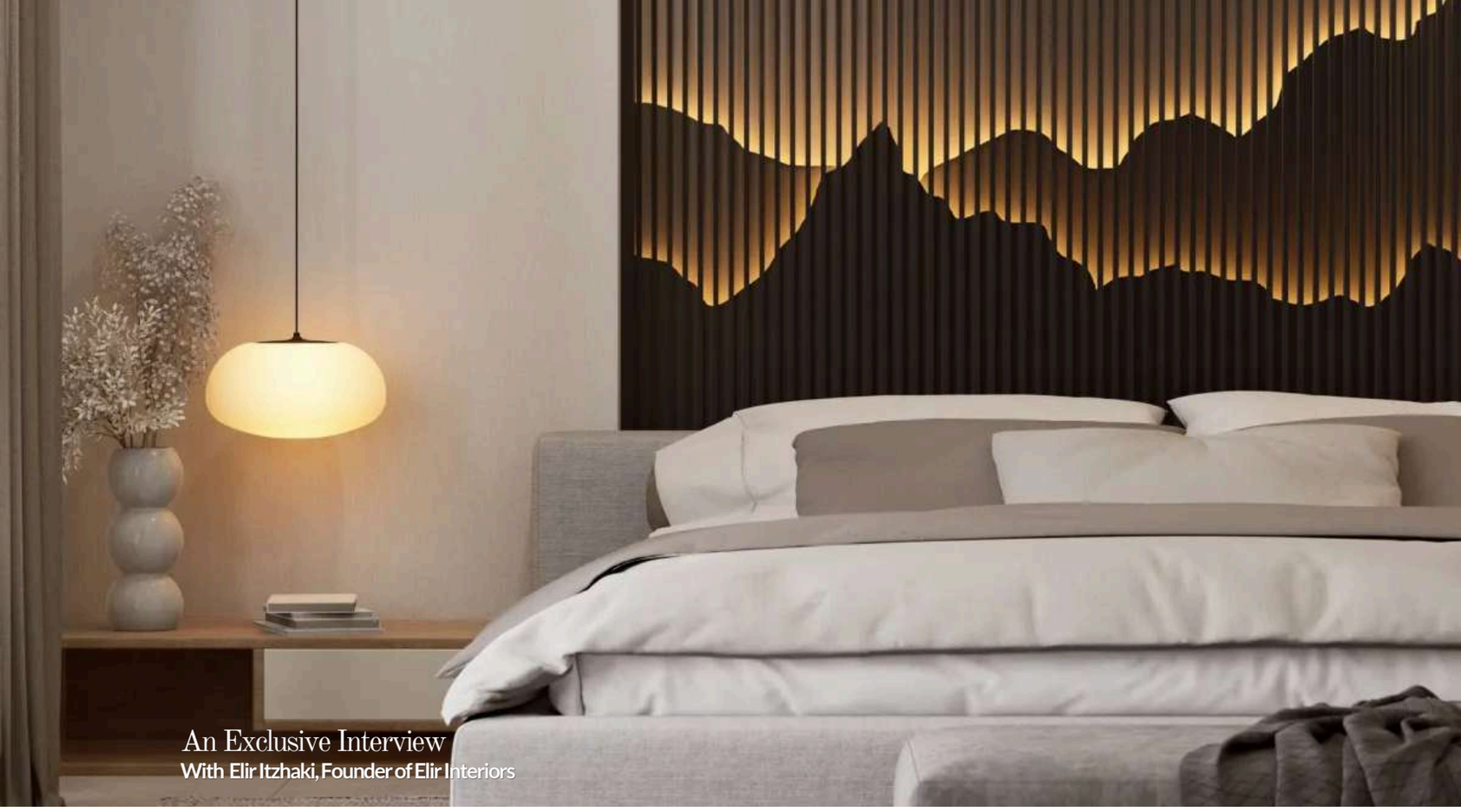
I would just say, don't overthink everything. Take care of yourself, do what makes you happy, and find people who make you feel good. I really believe there is space for everybody. You don't have to be like someone else, and you don't have to build your business the way somebody else built theirs. At Body Glow, I want people to come in, feel comfortable, have fun, and leave feeling good about themselves. That's really what it's all about.

Roni Edri

The Body Glow Studio



"At Body Glow, I want people to come in, feel comfortable, have fun, and leave feeling good about themselves. That's really what it's all about."



An Exclusive Interview

With Elir Itzhaki, Founder of Elir Interiors

Tell us about yourself and Elir Interiors.

My name is Elir Itzhaki, I'm 29 years old and originally from Tel Aviv, Israel. I'm the founder and principal designer of Elir Interiors, a luxury design firm based in San Diego. We also work throughout Orange County and Los Angeles, but San Diego is our main base. I moved to the United States when I was almost 20, shortly after completing my military service in the Israeli Air Force. Military service is mandatory in Israel, and looking back, it became one of the experiences that shaped me the most. It taught me discipline, responsibility, organization, and how to remain calm under pressure. Those are skills I continue to use every day as a business owner and designer. Creativity has always been a big part of who I am. I started playing piano when I was seven. Growing up, I loved painting, drawing, sewing, and creating things. My mother was also an interior designer, so I grew up surrounded by floor plans, fabrics, samples, and conversations about design. My family encouraged me to pursue technology and mathematics. During my military service, I worked in cybersecurity, but I always knew my heart belonged to something more creative. Eventually, after moving to the United States, I decided to fully pursue that side of myself. I spent a lot of time studying architecture, construction, design history, and materials because I didn't want to become just another interior designer. I wanted to understand every part of creating a home. Today, what started as a dream has grown into Elir Interiors and our 6,000-square-foot showroom and design center in San Diego.

You went from cybersecurity and the Israeli Air Force into interior design. How did you make that transition?

I don't really see it as leaving one career behind. I think I combined everything I learned throughout my life into the designer and business owner I am today. My military service taught me discipline and leadership. It taught me how to stay organized and make decisions under pressure. Cybersecurity taught me how to think differently. You have to anticipate problems before they happen and approach challenges with structure. That's actually very similar to design. Design also involves a lot of technology, computers, and software, which I've always enjoyed. So even though cybersecurity and interior design look like completely different worlds, I use many of the skills I learned in both. Eventually, I realized that if I didn't pursue my creativity, I would always wonder, *What if?* Moving to the United States gave me the opportunity to reinvent myself. Starting Elir Interiors wasn't simply about changing careers. It was about building a life around something I genuinely love.

Before focusing entirely on interior design, you intentionally worked in construction. Why was that important to you?

I always believed that beautiful design only works when it can actually be built. Early on, I noticed that designers and contractors sometimes approached projects from very different perspectives. Designers often focus on aesthetics, while contractors have to focus heavily on labor, budgets, engineering, and execution. I wanted to understand both worlds. I spent years learning construction from the inside. I worked alongside architects and engineers, created architectural plans, managed projects from demolition through completion, and coordinated different trades. I was there for everything, from foundation and framing to waterproofing, plumbing, and electrical. For example, something as simple as wanting a certain type of shower can involve much more construction than a client might realize. Sometimes the concrete needs to be trenched, the drain needs to be lowered, and there is a lot of labor involved. That experience completely changed the way I design. Now, I don't just think about finishes and furniture. I think about functionality, labor, engineering, timelines, and budget. Because I understand construction, I can create spaces that are beautiful but also realistic and buildable. I can explain to clients what is actually involved before they take a design to a construction company. I truly believe great design should make everyone's job easier, the homeowner, the contractor, and the designer.

What began as a one-woman business has grown into a full-service design firm and a 6,000-square-foot showroom. Did you ever imagine getting this far?

When I started, I was a very small company. It was just me. I don't think I ever imagined exactly where I would be today, but I knew I was willing to work very hard for it. When I moved to the United States, I left a lot behind. Many of my friends from the military were traveling and exploring the world after their service. I decided to do something different. I wanted to go to school, learn, and make my dream happen faster because I had so many things I wanted to accomplish. I think that ambition really pushed me. But one of the biggest factors behind my growth has been relationships. Every relationship matters, whether it's with a homeowner, architect, contractor, or vendor. As the company grew, I realized that creating a showroom wasn't just about displaying beautiful materials. I wanted to create a place where clients could experience the entire design process in one location.

Elir Interiors

Founded by Elir Itzhaki

People can find us through our Instagram and website. They can book directly through the website or contact us by phone. We offer a full design experience, but we also provide individual services for people who may only need architectural plans, layouts, cabinetry plans, or specific design services. We offer different levels of service depending on what the client needs. Our website and Instagram have all the information people need to get started.



ELIR INTERIORS

We work directly with manufacturers and vendors, which gives us access to a wide range of materials, products, and custom solutions. We also travel throughout the United States and Europe to attend design conferences, trade shows, and industry events. I love discovering new materials and technologies. I feel responsible for continuing to learn and bringing those discoveries back to our showroom so our clients can experience something fresh and unique. Today, we have a team of six designers and an architect on site, and we're continuing to grow.

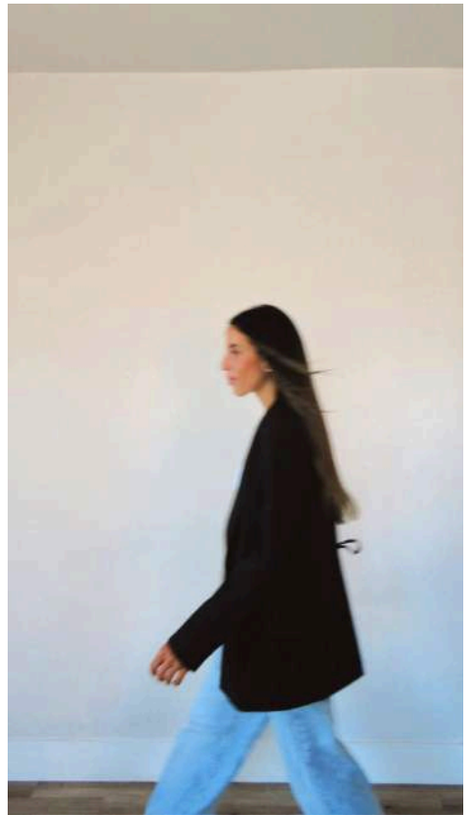
How does the Elir Interiors showroom make the design process easier for your clients?

Having everything under one roof makes a huge difference. Clients can come into our showroom and select materials while we're working through their design. We can coordinate with vendors and contractors and make the entire process more organized. We also create 3D renderings, including images and videos, so clients can actually visualize what their space will look like before anything is built. That helps eliminate surprises. The contractors also have everything they need, and the clients understand what they should expect. For us, it makes the entire process much easier. A construction or remodeling project can become very confusing for homeowners because they don't always know who they should be talking to or what happens next. We want to simplify that experience.

Elir Interiors is known for combining beautiful design with practical execution. How do you balance creativity, functionality, and a client's budget?

Everything begins with listening. There are designers who have one particular style and tell clients, "These are the materials I use, and this is how I work." That's not how I approach design. Every client has different needs, routines, priorities, and goals. Before I think about colors or finishes, I want to understand how my client lives. The home should support their lifestyle. Once I understand their vision, I combine creativity and practicality to create the design. Understanding construction also helps me know where it makes sense to invest and where we can create the biggest impact without unnecessarily increasing the budget. Because we have direct relationships with manufacturers and vendors, we can offer materials at different price points while maintaining quality.

We have options for someone doing a smaller project or an ADU, and we also work with clients building their forever home or making a significant investment in their property. I'm not going to show someone with a small budget custom cabinets from Spain just because I love them. I have to be practical. Luxury is not simply about spending the most money.



As a woman working in an industry that is still heavily male-dominated, what has the journey taught you?

Being a woman in construction has been challenging. Construction is still largely male-dominated, especially when you're trying to establish yourself and earn people's respect. I quickly realized that respect comes through knowledge, consistency, and the quality of your work. That's why I wanted to understand the industry from the inside. I didn't want to only focus on the design side. I wanted to understand construction at its core. I believe women bring an incredible balance of creativity, empathy, organization, and leadership.

I also want more women to feel comfortable learning about construction. You don't have to be afraid of it. I want women to know that they can lead a project from the initial concept all the way through construction.

You've built strong relationships with contractors, architects, vendors, and homeowners. What have you learned about leadership and collaboration?

I've learned that trust is built through consistency. Every successful project is the result of many talented people working together toward one vision. Because I understand construction and architecture, contractors, architects, and homeowners know that they can communicate openly with me. Our relationships with vendors and manufacturers also help simplify the material-selection process and make sure everyone is working with accurate information from the beginning. Leadership isn't about having all the answers. It's about listening, staying organized, solving problems quickly, and making sure everyone feels like part of the team. It's important to involve contractors during the design process instead of simply handing them a file and saying, "Okay, you deal with it." We have to work together.

What is your vision for the future of Elir Interiors?

My vision goes far beyond designing beautiful homes. I want Elir Interiors to become a destination for clients, architects, builders, and designers, not just for services, but for inspiration. I want to continue discovering new materials and technologies and eventually work directly with people and companies all over the world. I have so many dreams. I would love to expand internationally and have offices in different parts of the world, including Europe and Asia. Miami is also something I've been thinking about. I definitely see the possibility of having an office there in the future. But one of my biggest goals is to inspire more women to learn both design and construction. I want people to see that creativity and leadership can coexist and that women can lead projects from concept through construction. Ultimately, I want Elir Interiors to become a recognizable brand. I want it to be a name people know when they think about clean, timeless design and homes that can change people's lives.



HANNAH CANTOR

Exclusive Interview With Founder, Hannah Cantor Aesthetics

For Sense N' Style Magazine

Kindly tell us a little about yourself and Hannah Cantor Aesthetics.

Hannah Cantor Aesthetics has always been a dream of mine. I come from a family of entrepreneurs. My family owned and operated a multi-location lighting business for nearly 6 decades. My grandfather came to America with nothing and started our family business in 1965. We stayed open for 56 years before closing in 2021. Growing up I spent my entire childhood watching my grandparents and my father run the business and build an empire. That is how I got inspired to create something I was passionate about. At the same time, I struggled with acne growing up, and I still deal with it from time to time. I remember what it felt like to dread looking in the mirror or avoid pictures because of my skin. After trying numerous treatments, I eventually found Aestheticians who truly understood my skin. I realized I wanted to help other people feel confident in theirs. I knew I wanted to combine my passion for skincare with my passion for business. I had studied business, but I knew aesthetics was where my heart was. I went to Aesthetician school and started Hannah Cantor Aesthetics in a small suite in West Virginia with just a few loyal clients. I made a meaningful connection that ultimately led to an opportunity at a functional medicine and aesthetics practice in Boca Raton, Florida. That experience became the foundation for everything that followed in my career.

You struggled with acne growing up and always knew you wanted to work in skincare. How did your personal experience influence your decision to become an Aesthetician?

My personal experience is truly the reason I do what I do. I know firsthand what it's like to not want to leave the house because of your skin. I know what it's like to not want to take a picture because of acne. I know that feeling of struggling with your skin and not feeling confident.

I began to feel that helping others was truly my calling. I fell in love with the impact I could make in people's lives through skincare. Having personally visited numerous dermatologists and trying various treatments without achieving the results I was looking for, I understood how frustrating that journey could be. After discovering the right Aestheticians and experiencing the difference firsthand with the right treatments, I realized this is what I wanted to do.

You initially studied business before pursuing aesthetics. What made you realize that skincare was truly the path you wanted to follow?

I went to West Virginia University and studied business and marketing. When I graduated, I felt like there was an empty space in my heart. I was applying for different jobs, but nothing felt right. I didn't love anything. Something in my heart kept telling me, "You have to follow your dream." I had always wanted to become an Aesthetician. I just never really knew how to make it happen. After graduating college, I thought, "It's now or never." I knew I had to follow my dream.

You specialize in medical aesthetics. Kindly tell us about the treatments you offer, and what makes them popular with your clients?

I offer a wide range of medical aesthetic treatments. I specialize in acne and corrective treatments. From hyperpigmentation, to sun damage, to rosacea, my goal is to correct previous damage and prevent any future damage to the skin. Also, I offer advanced Facials**,** Hydrafacials, Lasers, Chemical Peels, Microneedling, and Topical Skin Revitalizers. I really focus on the medical side of aesthetics.

I think people are starting to understand the importance of taking care of their skin. Clients are coming to me not only for correction but also for prevention, and that's really where my heart is. More than anything, I develop a special relationship with every client. I learn about their skin because no two faces are the same. I want to understand the person and then create the right treatment for them. Depending on the skin type, skin concerns, and what we're actually dealing with, I create a customized treatment plan. For example, anyone can get a Hydrafacial, but if someone is struggling with acne, I'm not necessarily going to start with a Hydrafacial. I might recommend starting with a good home routine first. Once we get that routine under control, then we can look at a Chemical Peel, Laser, or another treatment. I'm really passionate about creating a custom treatment plan for each person.

You've mentioned wanting to change the stereotype of what people expect from an Aesthetician. What does that mean to you?

I think when some people hear "Aesthetician," they think of a typical fluffy facial or a relaxing spa facial. Don't get me wrong, I'm always happy to do that because I know people love those treatments.



I want people to understand that Aestheticians are experts in skin. We eat, sleep, and breathe skin. It's not just about having a relaxing facial. It's about prevention, correction, and finding the problem. I also want people to understand that you don't have to wait until you have a serious skin concern to see an Aesthetician. Prevention is everything. You don't have to wait until you have acne or sun damage before you start taking care of your skin.

Your family has a long history of entrepreneurship. How has that legacy influenced the way you approach your own business?

Watching my grandfather, grandmother, and father truly taught me everything I know. I always call them the trifecta. I watched the three of them work so hard to build an empire for our family. That really lit a fire under me. I think my work ethic and my drive came from all those years of watching my family work in our retail stores. We were well known nationally for our exquisite quality and customer satisfaction. It was such an amazing feeling to be recognized by customers throughout my city Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. I always thought, "I want that one day. I want to build something that people know and appreciate."

As you continue growing Hannah Cantor Aesthetics, what are you most excited to learn, offer, or accomplish next?

I'm really excited to continue building my clientele here in South Florida. I'm also honored to work with Krystie Lennox, who is a physician assistant. I've learned so much from her, and being able to work under her has been amazing. My goal is to continue advancing my skills and my craft, because I never stop learning. I'm always attending conferences. I go to at least two conferences a year around the country because you can never have too much knowledge.

"FROM ACNE, TO SUN DAMAGE, TO HYPERPIGMENTATION, MY GOAL IS TO CORRECT PREVIOUS DAMAGE AND PREVENT ANY FUTURE DAMAGE TO THE SKIN."

Hannah Cantor

There's always something new coming out, whether it's a new device or a new skincare product. For Hannah Cantor Aesthetics, my goal is to continue perfecting my craft, building my clientele, and helping people feel more confident. Honestly, making people feel more confident is the best job in the world.

What advice would you give to upcoming entrepreneurs looking to begin their journey?

The biggest thing I can tell people is that if you're passionate and you're willing to work for it, you can go far. Don't be scared. I took the biggest risk of my life. I'm from Pittsburgh and went to college in West Virginia, so I was only about an hour away from home. Then I got a job in Boca Raton, Florida, which was over 1,000 miles away. I didn't know anybody here. I had no family or friends here. I just took the biggest risk of my life and moved. It was the best decision I ever made. My biggest advice is to follow your dreams. You might not always get a second chance. Go with your gut, get on that plane, take the risk, because everything will always work out.

Where can people book your services?

There are a few different ways to book. I'm located inside of Lennox Aesthetics in Boca Raton Florida. You can call the office and our amazing receptionists will get you started towards a new chapter in your skincare journey. Social media has also been a huge part of my business. My phone number is in my Instagram bio, and there's also a booking link where people can book a consultation. You can technically book any service, but I won't perform a treatment unless I believe you're a good candidate for it. The two easiest ways are through the booking link in my Instagram bio or by calling the office.

Are there any final words you'd like to share with our readers?

I really want to highlight my grandparents, my grandfather Eric and my grandmother Thelma. Without them, I will not be where I am today. My father, Lewis Cantor has given me the world. He recognized that I had a dream and really encouraged me to go after it. I'm incredibly thankful that I had such a supportive family and that I had this beautiful family business, **Lighting By Erik** to look at for inspiration. I knew the family business was coming to an end. Times were changing, and retail wasn't the same anymore. I knew I couldn't take over that exact business, but I still wanted to continue the legacy in a different way. It started with my grandfather, then my grandmother was right beside him, my dad went straight into the family business, and now here I am. It's really special to know that I'm carrying that legacy forward in my own way. I love what I do, and my clients become family to me. I'm really excited to see where the future takes me.

> "DEPENDING ON THE SKIN TYPE, SKIN CONCERNS, AND WHAT WE'RE ACTUALLY DEALING WITH, I CREATE A CUSTOMIZED TREATMENT PLAN."



An Exclusive Interview
With Melissa Bautista Founder of Wellness Haus

Kindly tell us a little about yourself and Wellness Haus.

My name is Melissa, and I am the founder of Wellness Haus. We host elevated wellness experiences that bring together movement, mindfulness, recovery, and community throughout Central Florida. Our mission is simple: to help people integrate wellness into their everyday lives so they can show up as healthier and happier versions of themselves at home, at work, and in their communities. Before Wellness Haus, I was actually an occupational therapist. I loved helping people regain their independence and improve their quality of life. But over time, I found myself experiencing the very thing I was encouraging others to avoid, which was burnout. I spent so much time taking care of everyone else that somewhere along the way, I stopped taking care of myself. As I began my own wellness journey, I realized that wellness had become overwhelming. There was so much noise about the "right" way to be healthy that I lost touch with what I actually needed. What I needed was a space to slow down, reconnect with myself, and learn how to care for myself in a way that was unique to me, not the way everyone else said I should. That is really what inspired Wellness Haus.

Mental and emotional well-being are such an important part of what you do. Why was it important for you to create wellness experiences that go beyond physical health?

To me, true wellness really starts from within. I believe that nothing in our lives truly changes until what we think and believe about ourselves changes first. Those beliefs shape everything: how we show up in our relationships, the opportunities we say yes or no to, the boundaries we set, and ultimately, the life we create. That is why Wellness Haus has never been just about movement or biohacking.

Those things have incredible benefits, and I love including them in my events,

but they are not the foundation of true wellness. It starts with how you speak to yourself, what you believe about yourself, and whether your daily choices reflect those beliefs. To me, wellness is about loving and respecting yourself so deeply that your daily actions become an extension of that love. When you begin caring for yourself from that place, movement becomes something you get to do rather than something you have to do. Boundaries become easier to set, rest no longer feels selfish, and you begin making choices that honor the person you are becoming. That is the experience I want every person to leave Wellness Haus with. Not just feeling healthier, but feeling more connected to who they truly are.

Your events combine fitness, mindfulness, and community. What do you hope people take away when they attend a Wellness Haus experience?

Honestly, I hope they leave remembering themselves. We live in a world that is constantly asking us to become more productive, more available, and more successful. We spend so much time taking care of everyone else that it is very easy to lose sight of who we are underneath all the roles and responsibilities we carry. So my hope is that when someone leaves a Wellness Haus event, they do not just feel like they had a good workout or enjoyed a beautiful morning. I hope they leave feeling lighter, more grounded, and more connected to themselves than when they arrived.

What does a typical Wellness Haus event look like?

Our events are typically three to four hours and divided into two parts. The first half is what I call Movement and Mindset. We move our bodies through yoga, Pilates, or a full-body workout, followed by meditation, visualization, or a reflection exercise. Every event has a theme, like surrender, alignment, thriving, or rebirth, and everything from the movement to the journal prompts ties back to that theme. It's really an opportunity for people to slow down, reflect, and connect with themselves and the people around them. The second half is what I call the Haus Party. We have a live DJ, brunch, mocktails, and fun wellness activations like massages, B12 shots, and cold plunges. It's where everyone gets to connect, socialize, dance, and just have fun. I love that balance.



Melissa *Bautista*

I encourage everyone to take a few minutes each day to pause and really check in with themselves. When I was feeling burned out and overwhelmed, I realized I needed to spend more intentional time with myself. And being alone doesn't necessarily mean watching Netflix or finding another distraction. Sometimes you just need to be still.

Whether it's through prayer, movement, journaling, or a quiet walk without a podcast playing, those small moments give you space to process what you're actually feeling. The world is so noisy, and we're constantly taking in information. Sometimes we need to quiet that noise long enough to hear ourselves and understand what we actually need.

Building a wellness community takes more than simply organizing events. What has been one of the biggest lessons you've learned about creating a space where people truly feel welcome?

One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that people rarely remember every detail of an event, but they always remember how you made them feel. For me, creating that feeling comes from being intentional about every single touchpoint. It is in the small moments: the smile that welcomes you at check-in, an affirmation card waiting on your mat, or a hug from a new friend before you leave. Those little moments communicate, "You belong here." I think a lot of people focus on making things bigger, but I focus on making them more meaningful. At the end of the day, people may forget the schedule or what service they experienced, but they will remember how they felt. That is what we obsess over at Wellness Haus. Everything else is just extra.

Wellness means something different to everyone. How would you personally define wellness, and what simple habits help keep you grounded?

I think wellness is learning to listen to yourself. We spend so much of our lives listening to everyone else that we can really lose touch with our own needs.

For me, two simple practices keep me grounded: prayer and journaling. The way I journal is by writing a letter to God. I pour out every fear, doubt, insecurity, or thought that is weighing on my mind. Once it is on paper, it feels like I am surrendering it instead of carrying it. I usually walk away with more peace, more clarity, and a better understanding of what I need to do next.

You mentioned that your personal faith is important to you. How do you approach that within your Wellness Haus events?

My faith is really the foundation of everything I create. It guides the intention behind each event and it guides me through the process of creating them too. There are definitely days when I'm filled with self-doubt or anxiety, and during those moments, I turn to journaling. For me, journaling is often just a conversation with God. I write about what I'm feeling, what I'm struggling with, or what I'm trying to understand. It gives me a space to surrender those thoughts and find some clarity along the way. I try to bring that same sense of reflection and release into the Movement and Mindset portion of our events..

Looking ahead, what is your vision for Wellness Haus?

My vision for Wellness Haus is to create more than just events. I really want to build a physical wellness space where people can integrate wellness into their everyday lives. I envision a place where people can work, move, recover, connect, and truly feel at home.

My hope is that Wellness Haus becomes a community that people do not just visit once a month, but one that supports them every single day. To stay connected, you can follow us on Instagram at @wellnesshausorl. We share upcoming events and ticket releases there. You can also follow my personal journey at @melissa.amimo.

What would you say to someone who is reading this and trying to reconnect with themselves?

Il have always felt that yourself is your ultimate home. We move around and experience different places, but your body is the one place you can truly call home for the rest of your life. I believe true wellness starts when you are comfortable being with yourself, speaking to yourself, spending time with yourself, and being at peace with yourself. So Wellness Haus is really a play on the idea that your house is yourself, and wellness begins within. Everything else comes from that foundation. The changes you want to make in the world and the goals you want to accomplish all become possible when you are in a healthy place mentally and emotionally.

> TRUE WELLNESS REALLY STARTS FROM WITHIN. I BELIEVE THAT NOTHING IN OUR LIVES TRULY CHANGES UNTIL WHAT WE THINK AND BELIEVE ABOUT OURSELVES CHANGES FIRST.








NK ANGEL

TATIANA ALMONTE

Exclusive Interview With Founder of Skin Touched By Tati

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF AND SKIN TOUCHED BY TATI.

My full name is Tatiana, but everyone calls me Tati, which is where the name Skin Touched by Tati came from. I have been an licensed Aesthetician since 2021. I am a 2x face reality acne expert, a Glacial ambassador and a hydrafacial master. I currently work at a company called Ink Angel located in West Boca. It is an amazing space that also offers cosmetic tattooing, lash and brow services and laser services as well. I originally wanted to become a nurse. That was the plan for my entire life. When I moved to Florida right after high school, I decided I did not want to follow the traditional college route. Instead, I went to medical assistant school, which was about a year long. Starting as a medical assistant gave me a strong foundation in anatomy, patient care, professionalism, and working in a medical environment. I later completed an internship at a dermatology practice, and that was actually where I discovered what an Aesthetician was. I remember seeing the Aesthetician doing facials and helping people, and I thought, "Wow, I really love what she does." I liked that people were coming to her because they wanted to feel better about themselves. It was different from visiting a dermatologist. From there, I worked with dermatologists, medical spas, and plastic surgeons. After gaining all of that experience, I decided to become an Aesthetician.

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WHAT MADE YOU REALIZE THAT BECOMING AN AESTHETICIAN WAS THE RIGHT PATH FOR YOU?

I think it really became clear when I was working for a plastic surgeon and going through my own acne journey. At the time, I was still a medical assistant, and I was seeing the Aesthetician there. I got to experience my own transformation, and that made me feel so much more confident. I remember thinking, "I want to help someone else experience this feeling."

I knew what it felt like to feel down about your skin, especially because your face is one of the first things people see. I hated having acne and constantly breaking out, so I wanted to help other people feel better about themselves. That was really where everything started for me. I took a leap of faith and decided, "You know what? This is what I want to do."

YOU ALSO EXPERIENCED ACNE YOURSELF, AND YOUR SISTER HAS STRUGGLED WITH SEVERE ACNE. HOW HAVE THOSE EXPERIENCES INFLUENCED THE WAY YOU CARE FOR YOUR CLIENTS?

My sister has struggled with pretty severe acne for a long time. I watched her go through rounds of Accutane and constantly visit dermatologists, and I felt like nothing was really working for her. When I became an Aesthetician, I made it my goal to help her with her skin. She lives a little farther away and can be a little stubborn, so sometimes it was hard to get her into my treatment room. But whenever she could come, we did everything. I always joke that she was my little guinea pig! I helped her improve her acne, and it was one of the only things that had really helped her. It was also nice being able to approach it differently, using more superficial treatments and topical products rather than medications that she would have to take internally. Having experienced acne myself, I understand that when someone brings you their skin, they are not just bringing you their skin. They are also bringing you how they feel about themselves. That is something I always keep in mind with my clients.

WHERE DID THE NAME SKIN TOUCHED BY TATI COME FROM?

I went through a couple of different names before Skin Touched by Tati came about. At first, I was using my name and initials, but I wanted something that felt a little more unique. A lot of Aestheticians have their city and name in their business handle, and I wanted something different. A lot of my clients would always tell me, "I love your touch. You have the best touch." Eventually, the word "touch" just stuck with me. I thought, "You know what? Skin Touched by Tati." Honestly, I have to give my clients credit for helping me come up with the name.

YOU HAVE WORKED WITH DERMATOLOGISTS, PLASTIC SURGEONS, AND MEDICAL SPAS. WHAT IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST LESSONS YOU LEARNED FROM THOSE EXPERIENCES?

One of the biggest things I learned is how important it is to work within your scope of practice. As Aestheticians, there is only so much we can do. Working alongside dermatologists and plastic surgeons gave me the confidence to tell a client, "I cannot help you with this, but I know who can." Sometimes I have to turn down a client because I know they need someone else to address their concern. I think that experience taught me when I can help someone and when I cannot. There are clients who come to me and say they had a treatment somewhere else that made their skin worse. Sometimes that could have been avoided if the Aesthetician had simply said, "I am not comfortable treating this." I am very honest with my clients from the beginning. If I feel like I can help them, I will do everything I can. But if I think they need to see a dermatologist, I will tell them that. I do not want to give anyone unrealistic expectations because, at the end of the day, that does not help anyone.



Personalized Aesthetics, Natural Results, Lasting Confidence

Tatiana Almonte, Founder of Skin Touched by Tati

WHAT TREATMENTS DO YOU OFFER, AND HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT IS RIGHT FOR EACH CLIENT?

I would say I am more acne focused. I do love treating other concerns, but I am a 2x Face Reality Acne Expert. I am also a Glacial ambassador and a Hydrafacial Master. The most important part of choosing the right treatment starts with the consultation. When a client comes in for the first time, the beginning of the appointment is always about getting to know them. I want to understand their skin history, their current skin condition, their at-home routine, medications, lifestyle, previous treatments, and most importantly, their goals. Everyone's skin is different, so you cannot treat every person the same way

WHAT IF A CLIENT HAS SEVERAL SKIN CONCERNS BUT ONLY WANTS TO FOCUS ON ONE?

I always respect what the client feels is their main concern. If someone comes to me and says their biggest concern is fine lines and wrinkles, that is what I am going to focus on. I may make suggestions about other things I notice, but I do not want to make someone feel like they have a problem they did not come to me to address. I always say, if someone does not think something is a problem, then it is not a problem. Of course, there are situations where we have to approach things differently. For example, if someone has acne and hyperpigmentation but only wants to treat the pigmentation, we may have to address the acne first because it is connected to the pigmentation. So it really depends on the client and their skin.

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WHY IS BUILDING A PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH YOUR CLIENTS SO IMPORTANT TO YOU AND YOUR BRAND?

Skincare can be very vulnerable. When someone comes to you, they may have been dealing with a skin concern for a long time. Since your skin is one of the first things people see, it can make people very self-conscious. I want my clients to trust me before they even book an appointment.

That is why I always tell people to look through my Instagram and see my work. I also share my own acne journey and a lot of videos where I am simply talking and showing my personality.

Not every client is going to be for you, and that is okay. There are so many Aestheticians and so many different personalities. You want to find clients who connect with you. At the end of the day, yes, you are providing a service, but you are also building a relationship. I absolutely love my clients. Some of them have literally become my best friends. We can talk for hours, and that comes from having that connection and trust.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO BECOME AN AESTHETICIAN?

Do not give up. After COVID, aesthetics became a much bigger industry, and there are a lot of people entering the space. It can be difficult to build yourself up, especially when you are starting out. You are not going to graduate from Aesthetician school and immediately have a completely full schedule. It takes time. I would say keep putting yourself out there. Be real and honest with your clients. Also, before-and-after photos are huge. People want to see what you can actually do for someone's skin, so building a strong portfolio and showing your work is very important. Most importantly, do not give up on yourself.

AS YOU CONTINUE GROWING SKIN TOUCHED BY TATI, WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST GOALS FOR THE BRAND?

I really love helping people get to where they want to be. When I was starting out, there were times when I felt discouraged. I would look at my page and think, “Oh my God, my followers are not growing. Nothing is growing.” Now I get messages from Aesthetician students asking me for advice or asking how they should handle certain clients, and I am always happy to help. I want to expand more into educating other Aestheticians and helping them grow. There are so many people who need good skincare, and there are so many faces to go around.

I think it is a great industry to be in because we are never going to run out of people who need skincare. I want to make sure that the people treating clients are doing it with honesty and because they genuinely care about helping others.

WHERE CAN PEOPLE CONNECT WITH YOU AND BOOK YOUR SERVICES?

People can find me on Instagram at @skintouchedbytati. The booking link is in my bio. I highly encourage clients get to know who I am through my instagram and see if my personality is a good match for them before booking. My DMs are also always open. If someone reaches out to me, I can help guide them toward the right service before they book an appointment. I also offer complimentary virtual consultations, which are typically around 30 minutes.

THE INSIDER'S LOOK: EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH TW INTERIORS

Kindly tell us about yourself, as well as how you got started in interior design.

Tiffany: I was raised in South Florida, and I knew by middle school that interior design was going to be my path. My dad was a yacht builder and had an in-house design firm, so I grew up surrounded by beautiful things and the creative process behind them. During summers and weekends, I helped select fabrics, lighting, accessories, and other details. After college, I worked with my dad and realized how much I loved residential design. I then spent about eight months with an AD100 high-end residential design firm before taking the leap and starting my own business. I've never worked for anyone else since. I've always done this because I genuinely love it. It has never felt like a job.

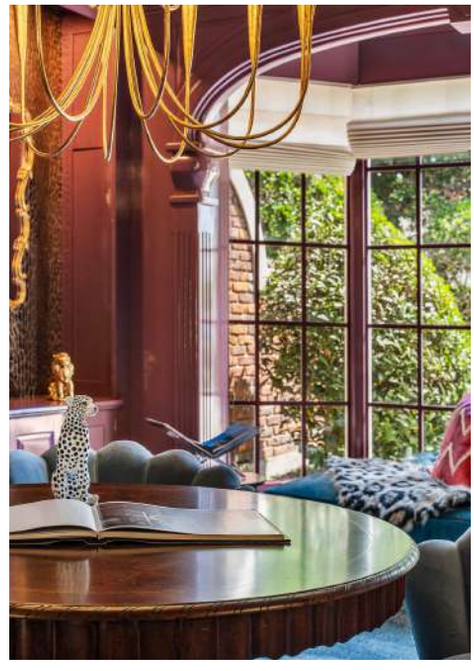
Scott, how did you eventually become involved in the design business?

Scott: Tiffany and I were already married, and she had designed our home. I've always loved beautiful things and had a strong sense of style, but I was focused on my own businesses. I've been an entrepreneur my entire life. My father owned grocery stores in New York, and I started working with him when I was about 11. After college, I opened my own grocery store in Florida and eventually grew it into a chain of high-end gourmet markets and liquor stores with roughly 5,000 employees. I later moved into television and film production, building a company with more than 200 employees that produced over 1,400 television episodes, along with films, music projects, and commercials.

After selling the production company, Tiffany was ready to take TW Interiors to the next level, so we decided to build the company together. I had spent my career building businesses with partners, employees, and investors. This was different because I was going into business with my best friend.

What is it like working together as a married couple?

Scott: It's not always easy, but what makes it work is that we come from completely different sides of the business. Tiffany is incredibly creative, while I focus more on strategy, budgets, time management, and business. Tiffany has an extraordinary ability to walk into a space and immediately see what it could become. She has designed close to 500 homes, and most of our business has come through word of mouth. Clients come to us because someone they trust recommends Tiffany, and there's no better compliment than that.



She has designed close to 500 homes, and most of our business has come through word of mouth. Clients come to us because someone they trust recommends Tiffany, and there's no better compliment than that.

Tiffany: We complement each other extremely well. I can get completely lost in my creativity, and Scott brings me back to reality and the business side. We've learned that we don't have to do everything together just because we're married. We're most successful when we each focus on what we do best.

You also have three daughters. How important is family to both of you?

Scott: Our life really revolves around our three girls. We both work every day, but our goal is to build something that gives our family opportunities and experiences. The girls have also become involved in music. They formed a band called The Ruffles, recently recorded original songs at Abbey Road Studios in London, and have performed for audiences of more than 3,000 people. Their first single has been released, with more music coming.

Tiffany: We really live for our kids. After spending years building other businesses and helping other people grow their brands, we decided it was time to focus more on our family, our brand, and the next generation. Our middle daughter is also interested in architecture, so it's exciting to think about what the future could hold.

You also launched the iDesign Lab podcast. Tell us about it.

Scott: We launched iDesign Lab about a year and a half ago, and we were surprised by how quickly it grew. It has consistently ranked among the top Arts podcasts on Apple Podcasts worldwide and currently sits at number four. It isn't really an interior-design podcast. We talk with fascinating people from many different industries about creativity, success, how they think, and how they build things.

Tiffany: That's the philosophy behind iDesign Lab. Design is everywhere. It's your home, career, family, lifestyle, the way you dress, travel, and even what you put on your plate. Everything we surround ourselves with reflects choices we make.

How has social media changed interior design?

Scott: Platforms like Pinterest and Instagram have made inspiration available to almost everyone. People can discover an idea, save an image, find a product, and start imagining their own home. But there's a difference between finding inspiration and knowing how to bring an entire project together. When you're making a significant investment in your home, experience, creativity, relationships, and execution still matter.

Tiffany: People also want their homes to feel personal. We're not trying to create homes that simply look like a Pinterest picture. We learn about the person behind the project and create something that feels uniquely theirs.

How do you make each TW Interiors project personal?

Tiffany: Most of our projects are full remodels. We can gut kitchens and bathrooms, move walls, change layouts, rethink the flow, and give an existing home an entirely new life. We also work on new construction.

Scott: What fascinates me is Tiffany's ability to understand the person behind the project. She learns how clients live, what they love, their history, personality, and what makes their home special. We have clients who are now on their third or fourth home with Tiffany. They don't simply hire someone to decorate; they trust her to understand them and create a home that feels like theirs.





Photographed by Chad Baumer Photography & The Branded Boss Lady

What has been one of your biggest challenges?

Tiffany: One of the biggest challenges is getting clients to trust the process enough to let go. Interior design is about the big picture. A room isn't just a sofa or a beautiful piece of art. It's how the rug, lighting, furniture, drapery, architecture, and small details work together. Sometimes you can't see how everything will come together until it's finished. We're hired for our experience and vision, so trust is very important. Interestingly, those clients often end up being the happiest when they finally see everything come together.

Is there a particular project you're especially proud of?

Tiffany: There have been many. What makes them special isn't just the finished design, but the relationships I've built with clients and the opportunity to create something unexpected. I love projects with personality and those unexpected "wow" moments, but a home should never feel like a showroom. Even when a project is dramatic, it should feel warm, comfortable, and inviting. Anyone can create something beautiful in a photograph. The real achievement is creating a home that looks incredible, feels personal, and makes the people who live there genuinely happy.

What is the vision for TW Interiors going forward?

Tiffany: Our vision is to continue growing as a business, as individuals, and as a family. Family will always be our priority, and we hope TW Interiors can eventually continue into the next generation. We're also exploring our own projects, product lines, and new ways to bring the TW Interiors aesthetic to more people. We're excited about the continued growth of iDesign Lab as well.

Scott: We want to create something our family can be proud of something that reflects our values and creativity. I've spent much of my career building companies and moving on to the next challenge. This feels different. We're building something we hope can outlast us. If one day our daughters or grandchildren are talking about TW Interiors and saying, "This is something our family built," that would be the ultimate success.



Before we wrap up, what would you like readers to know about iDesign Lab?

Scott: We're always looking for fascinating people with great stories. We don't only want to talk to interior designers. Some of our best conversations have been with people from completely different industries because everyone has a different perspective on creativity and success.

Tiffany: That goes back to our belief that design is everywhere. You can design your home, career, family, lifestyle, and ultimately your life. Every decision you make helps shape the life you're creating.

Scott: And personally, one of the things Tiffany and I are most proud of right now is our kids. Watching The Ruffles grow from three sisters making music together into a real band has been incredible. They've recorded at Abbey Road, performed for thousands, written their own music, and released their first single. We're incredibly proud of them.

Tiffany: At the end of the day, that's what everything comes back to for us, creating something meaningful, working together, supporting our family, and continuing to move forward. We're designing homes, building businesses, creating music, raising our children, and building a life together. And we're still excited about what comes next.



AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MOLLIE SUAREZ

Founder of Westshore Diamond

Kindly tell us about yourself and Westshore Diamond.

I'm the founder and president of Westshore Diamond Company, which I started in 2011. I started the company as a way to offer more services to clients in Tampa after working as a jewelry appraiser. Now, I'm able to offer a wider range of services under the WestshoreDiamond name. We work primarily by appointment and face-to-face, and I have employees who work in the same way. We are women-owned and women-operated, and for me, it's really about building long-term relationships through jewelry. I love that part of the business.

You entered the jewelry industry at a very young age. What first drew you to diamonds, gemstones and gemology?

Jewelry was actually my very first job as a young adult, so I didn't really have a lot to compare it to. But it fit my personality right away. I got to use my creativity, be a people person, build relationships and work in sales all day. It also worked for me at that stage of my life because I had a child young and was working and taking care of her on my own. A career in jewelry, especially working at a jewelry store, gave me the stability to support myself and my daughter. I was always asking questions. I became fascinated by gemstones and their value. I wanted to understand why certain stores had different pricing, why gemstones from different regions could have different values, and what actually determined the value of a stone.

The jeweler I was working with exposed me to gemology and explained that I could become a professional in the industry by becoming a gemologist. Around that same time, the best school in the world for what I wanted to study happened to be very close to where I had just moved. To me, that felt like a sign from God that I was going in the right direction. I decided to trust where my career was going and take things one step at a time. That has always been my approach, and it has continued to lead me in the right direction.



Over the years, I've been able to support my family, work in many different areas of the industry and experience a lot of different environments. Eventually, in my early thirties, I started Westshore Diamond.

Before opening Westshore Diamond, you had already experienced different sides of the jewelry industry. What kind of experience did you want your clients to have when working with you?

The traditional jewelry store is very old school. A lot of them are family-owned businesses where one generation inherits the store from the previous generation, and there isn't always a lot that changes.

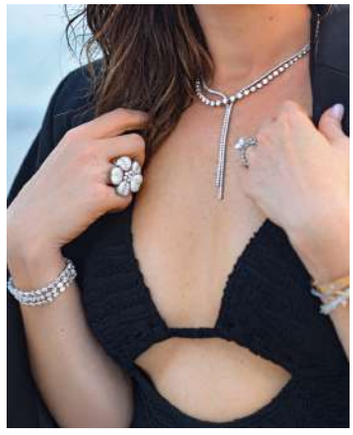
For me, it wasn't too difficult to create a different experience because there really weren't that many people working by appointment, especially when I started. Initially, I wanted to work this way because I wanted to be able to make my own schedule. I had three children at the time, and I had always wanted to be a stay-at-home mom. That didn't work out for me, so this was the next best thing. I could create my own schedule while still building a career. I also didn't want to have 100 clients in a week. I would rather work with 10 or 20 clients at the most. That gives me the opportunity to really focus on the person sitting in front of me. I consider myself a woman's jeweler. That may sound funny because jewelry is often associated with women, but a lot of the time, women aren't the ones who initially come in when someone wants to purchase a major gift. If I meet a gentleman first, I explain to him that I really want to meet his wife, girlfriend or partner. It's important for me to build that relationship because I want to understand what her jewelry dreams are and how I can help make them come true. That takes time. It takes getting to know someone and allowing them to open up. Jewelry is personal, and there's a lot of emotion attached to it. I want that to be respected and recognized. For me, it's not about selling the biggest or most expensive thing. It's about the connection and putting meaning behind each gift. The people who find me are usually people who value those things. You have to be comfortable with connecting and building a relationship if you want to work with me.



You specialize in custom jewelry and sourcing diamonds based on each client's needs. What makes your personalized approach different from traditional jewelry shopping?

I take a lot of time with the client. Sometimes they come in with pieces they don't like, inherited jewelry they don't know what to do with, or they simply don't know what they want because they've only seen very basic things through whatever algorithm they've been looking at online. So I take a moment to educate them about what they're actually looking at. I want them to understand where the value comes from. I approach it as an appraiser first, and I think that helps build trust. Once I educate someone and they understand the language of gemology, the grading and the reasons behind pricing, they don't forget it. Suddenly, they can enter this mysterious world of diamonds and feel much more confident. I also don't like my clients walking around with something that everyone else has. I've seen jewelry for so many years that I know what makes something unique, what makes it high quality and what makes the manufacturing exceptional. I want everyone to have the finest.









WESTSHORE DIAMOND
Exclusive Interview With Mollie Suarez

I help you discover what you like, what works for you, and what reflects your personality, and from there, we can create pieces that truly become your signature. I do a lot of custom work, and I love working with colored stones, different shapes, and unique combinations and stacks. I can create almost anything. You can bring me a picture of something you love, and I can create it for you. But what I really enjoy is looking at the person, understanding their style, and using my expertise to determine what I think would suit them best. That's where the creative process becomes really exciting.

That doesn't mean you have to overspend. It means you have to trust the person who is looking at all of the fine details. People sometimes think, "It's just a ring," but it isn't just a ring. It's the prongs, how the diamond is set, whether it sits low or high, how it sits around your finger and even the size of your finger. There is a science to sizing something correctly. I fuss over all of those details so the client doesn't have to. They can enjoy the experience without feeling stressed, because jewelry can involve a lot of money and it's a big decision.

For someone discovering Westshore Diamond for the first time, how would you describe your signature pieces?

I would say I offer a signature experience more than anything else. It's about listening to the person and using my experience and creativity to create something that feels special and completely individual to them. The process is very personalized.

You've experienced major personal and professional challenges throughout your career. What have those experiences taught you about independence, resilience and being a woman in business?

When you're a small-business owner, it can sometimes feel like you're on an island. There's a lot that falls on you, and you have to find strength within yourself to make decisions, keep learning, navigate challenges, and find a way through them. My faith has certainly been the foundation of everything. When I started, I told myself I wasn't going to stress about the future. I was going to take one step at a time. If that step lit up and I knew where to go, I would take it. Then I would look for the next step.

I wasn't going to spend so much time worrying about what was ahead, and that mindset has worked for me. There's also a very human side to it. I think part of my drive came from wanting to prove to myself that I could create the life I wanted. I don't like making excuses. I believe there's no reason why we can't work toward creating the life we want. We have resources, we have opportunities, and when I want something, I'm going to figure out how to make it happen. I wasn't waiting for someone else to do it for me. I was going to figure out how to build the life I wanted for myself and my family. That drive has carried me throughout my career. I'm comfortable doing things on my own, and I think there's something incredibly powerful about knowing that you can trust yourself to figure things out.

As Westshore Diamond reaches 15 years, what are you most proud of?

I'm proud that I kept going. When you look at the statistics around small businesses and women-owned businesses, you hear that making it to three years is something to celebrate, and five years can already be significant. So reaching 15 years is incredibly meaningful to me. As I've gotten older and spoken with more entrepreneurs, I've also realized just how many people experience imposter syndrome. I understand that now, and it has given me a different perspective on my own journey. I also recognize that I'm in a unique position to influence and encourage younger women. I'm proud of the story and the journey I have. I didn't always have a perfect plan. Sometimes my plans changed completely, but I kept moving forward, figured things out on my own, and ultimately built a successful business. That gives me something meaningful to share with the next generation. I mentor high school girls through my youth group and church, and they're around 14 to 18 years old. That is such a precious and formative age. If I had simply followed a traditional career path, I don't think I would have as much to offer them. I'm proud that I can share my journey, including the unexpected turns, and show them what is possible.

Creating Quality Client Experience With Studio 54

Daniela SALVADOR

Tell us a little about yourself and the story behind Studio 54 Aesthetics.

My name is Daniela Salvador, although most people know me as Dani. I'm the owner of Studio 54 Aesthetics in Las Vegas, where I specialize in advanced skincare, acne treatments, lash lifts, and lash extensions. I actually started my business during the middle of the pandemic. That's really when everything began to blossom for me. Before entering the beauty industry, I had what many people would consider a traditional career path. I had recently graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and was working a full time office job. At the time, I thought I had everything figured out. Then the pandemic happened. I lost my job, and for the first time, I had the opportunity to truly reflect on what I wanted my future to look like. I realized that I wanted to pursue something completely different, something I genuinely loved and something that brought me happiness. My office job simply wasn't fulfilling, and deep down, I knew I was never meant to spend my life working in a corporate environment. I always felt like I was meant for something more. During the pandemic, I decided to go back to school to earn my esthetician license. After that, I became a lash artist and spent about five years building my expertise. Eventually, I realized I wanted to offer even more to my clients, so I returned to school once again to earn my advanced esthetician license. Today, I offer everything from lash extensions and corrective skincare to Korean lash lifts, which is the newest addition to my service menu and something that has been growing incredibly fast. That journey is really what Studio 54 Aesthetics is all about.

You initially built your business as a lash artist before expanding into advanced skincare. What inspired you to continue growing your expertise instead of staying within one specialty?

I've always believed that learning never stops, especially when you're in the beauty industry and you're building your own business. Once I became an established lash artist, I realized there were so many other ways I could help people feel confident. That realization led me to pursue advanced aesthetics, and eventually I became an acne specialist. That's when everything shifted for me. I discovered that helping someone feel confident in their own skin brings a completely different kind of fulfillment. Lash extensions can absolutely make someone feel beautiful, but helping a client transform their skin and regain confidence from the inside out is incredibly rewarding. That experience made me realize I wanted to offer more than just traditional lash services. I wanted to become a well rounded esthetician who could truly help clients feel their best in multiple ways. And that's what continues to motivate me today.

Today, you're known as one of the go to professionals for lash lifts in Las Vegas. What do you think has helped your business stand out in such a competitive beauty industry?

I think what really sets me apart is my commitment to education and customization. I don't believe in taking a one size fits all approach because every client is different. Every lash lift I perform is customized to that person's natural lashes, eye shape, and desired results. No two clients are exactly alike, so I don't believe their services should be either. I'm constantly investing in education and refining my techniques because this industry is always evolving. There is always something new to learn, and I think it's important to stay ahead rather than becoming comfortable. Another thing that's very important to me is prioritizing the health of my clients' natural lashes. I'm never interested in chasing dramatic results if it comes at the expense of the long term health of their lashes. I believe my clients appreciate knowing they're working with someone who genuinely cares about both the immediate outcome and their long term results. That trust has been a huge part of building my business.

How long does a lash lift typically last?

One of the reasons lash lifts have become so popular is because they're incredibly low maintenance. A Korean lash lift typically lasts anywhere from six to eight weeks, which is a long time compared to many other beauty services. Clients love that they can wake up every morning with beautifully lifted lashes without having to worry about daily maintenance. It's really the complete opposite of lash extensions in terms of upkeep, and that's one of the biggest reasons so many people are choosing them.

Social media has clearly played a major role in your growth. How have platforms like Instagram and TikTok helped you build trust, attract clients, and grow Studio 54 Aesthetics?

I honestly think one of my greatest strengths is my personality. I'm naturally very outgoing, and I try to let that shine through everything I post online. I want people to feel like they already know me before they ever walk through my door. When someone books an appointment, I want them to already feel comfortable because they've watched my videos, learned from my educational content, and seen who I am beyond just the services I offer. I think people really appreciate authenticity. I post before and after photos, but I also create educational videos, behind the scenes content, client reactions, and everyday moments inside the studio. I want people to see what it's actually like to visit Studio 54 Aesthetics. I simply create the kind of content that I would want to watch myself. I think that transparency helps people feel comfortable, builds trust, and gets them excited to come in for their appointment

> "MORE THAN ANYTHING, I HOPE EVERY CLIENT LEAVES STUDIO 54 AESTHETICS FEELING MORE CONFIDENT THAN WHEN THEY ARRIVED. "


mixi
SKINCARE

Every entrepreneur faces moments of uncertainty. Looking back at your journey, what has been one of the biggest lessons you've learned while building your business from the ground up?

I think one of the biggest lessons I've learned is that success doesn't happen overnight. It's built through consistency, patience, and showing up every single day, especially on the days when nobody is watching. One of the best pieces of advice I ever received was, "Nobody is going to talk about your business except you." That really stuck with me because it's true. As a business owner, you have to be your biggest advocate. You have to promote yourself, believe in your work, and consistently remind people that your business exists because no one else is going to do that for you. Sometimes people see my videos online and assume I've always been fully booked and successful, but they don't see what happened behind the scenes. For the first three years of my business, I still had a part time job because my business alone wasn't enough to support me. That's something many people don't talk about. They often only see the finished product and not the years of hard work that came before it. Another lesson I learned is just how many roles you have to take on as a business owner. You're the CEO. You're the marketing director. You're the customer service representative. You have to learn about bookkeeping, taxes, scheduling, inventory, branding, social media, and so many other responsibilities that no one really prepares you for. There are so many hats you have to wear, and a lot of those lessons you simply learn through experience. Looking back, it wasn't easy, but every challenge taught me something valuable, and I'm proud of how far I've come.

Looking ahead, what is your vision for Studio 54 Aesthetics, and what do you hope every client feels after experiencing your services?

My vision is to continue growing Studio 54 Aesthetics into a trusted destination for results driven skincare and natural lash enhancements. I never want to stop learning. Continuing my education and expanding my services is something I'm incredibly passionate about because I always want to offer my clients the very best experience possible. One of my biggest long term goals is to launch my own product line.

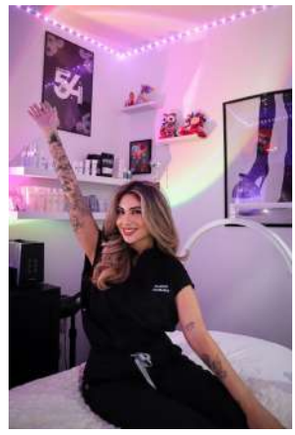
That's something I've dreamed about for a long time. I would love to create products that people can use at home and eventually make them available to clients all over the world. Being able to see someone using a product that I personally developed would be an incredible milestone. More than anything, though, I hope every client leaves Studio 54 Aesthetics feeling more confident than when they arrived. Confidence has such a powerful ripple effect. When people feel good about themselves, it changes the way they carry themselves, interact with others, and move through life. Being able to play even a small part in that transformation is the most rewarding part of what I do.

For readers who would love to experience Studio 54 Aesthetics, where can they book your services?

Clients can book directly through my online booking system, and they can also connect with Studio 54 Aesthetics on Instagram and TikTok. Those platforms are where I share educational content, behind the scenes moments, examples of my work, and everything clients need to know before booking an appointment. I love using social media as a way to educate people while also giving them a genuine look at who I am and what they can expect when they visit the studio.



When someone books an appointment, I want them to already feel comfortable because they've watched my videos, learned from my educational content, and seen who I am beyond just the services I offer.



My vision is to continue growing Studio 54 Aesthetics into a trusted destination for results driven skincare and natural lash enhancements. I never want to stop learning.

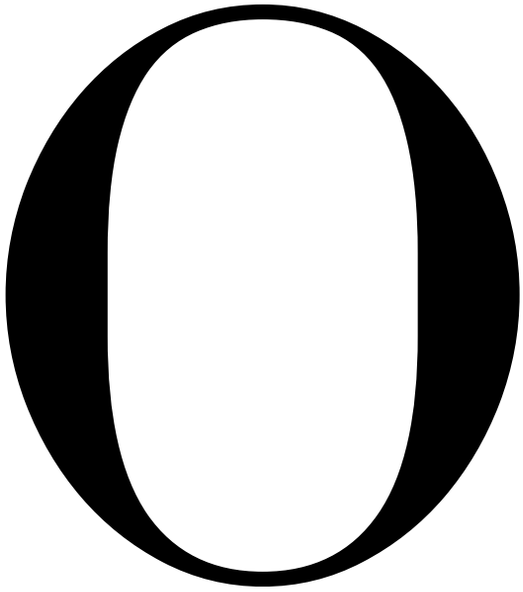
"I'm never interested in chasing dramatic results if it comes at the expense of the long term health of their lashes. I believe my clients appreciate knowing they're working with someone who genuinely cares about both the immediate outcome and their long term results. That trust has been a huge part of building my business. "





Gabriella Espinoza

Founder of GEHAUS Design Studio



Kindly tell us about yourself and Gehaus Design Studio.

I'm Gabriella, the founder and principal designer of GEHAUS Design Studio, a boutique interior design studio here in Miami. We work across interior design and interior architecture, including renovations, material selection, lighting, architectural design as it relates to the interior environment, floor plans, space planning, new construction, furniture, and styling. We can help with the entire project, from the initial concept to the final details of the space. When a project requires licensed architectural services, permitting, or signed and sealed drawings, we collaborate and coordinate with licensed architects, general contractors, and the appropriate professionals. I really love being involved in the whole process because it allows me to see the project come together from beginning to end.

What first drew you to interior design?

I started working in interior design through my sister-in-law, who had her own company many years ago. I worked with her for many years here in Miami, and that's where I learned so much about creating and designing spaces. Eventually, she moved away from Miami, and I stayed here and continued working on my own. At first, it was very small. Then a friend asked me to help with a commercial project. From there, more opportunities came through people I knew, and eventually I began working with people I didn't know as well. It all happened very organically. Little by little, I realized that I needed to create a professional structure around what I was doing. That's how GEHAUS came to life. It wasn't a situation where I woke up one morning and decided, "I'm going to create this big company." It happened step by step.

Your approach is described as timeless, structured, and intentional. What does that mean to you?

For me, every project is completely personal. When I say timeless, I don't mean that I don't follow trends. Of course, I follow trends, and I like to know what is happening in design. But I don't want every project to look like a magazine from one particular year. I don't want someone to look at a space and immediately think, "Oh, this was designed in 2026 because everything was white and brown." I want every client to see their own personality reflected in the space. They hire me because they like my eye and my style, but they also want to create a space that feels like their own and brings their ideas to life. Everyone has a different lifestyle, taste, and set of needs. That's why I describe my approach as effortless and timeless.

How do you balance your signature style with what each client wants?

I love contemporary design, and I've always loved Nordic design because it is clean, elegant, and timeless without being too minimalist. I try to find a balance. When a client hires me, they hire me because they like my eye, but my design approach has to adapt to the person I'm designing for. It's not about making every house look like my house. My eye and aesthetic are part of the process, but they should never take away from the client's identity. I want to use my design experience to guide them while creating something that feels thoughtful, cohesive, and personal.

What types of projects and services can clients experience with Gehaus?

We work on many different types of projects. We can help with private homes, renovations, new construction, interior architecture, space planning, floor plans, material selection, lighting, furniture, and styling. For commercial projects, we can also help with renovations, space planning, materials, and the overall design process. When a project requires licensed architectural services, permitting, or signed and sealed drawings, we coordinate with the appropriate licensed professionals. Sometimes a client may only need help choosing materials, while another may need us to manage the entire design of a home or commercial space. We can work across the full scope of a project, depending on what the client needs.

Every client has a different personality and lifestyle. How do you turn that into a space that feels personal?

I think every person who hires me does so because they like my eye, but I still have to bring their own style to life. I cannot just make the house my style. I need to understand their needs, what they like, what they don't like, how they live, and how they want to feel in the space. That is the most important thing. My designs should feel effortless, but behind that effortless look is a lot of work. There are many decisions, details, and hours that go into creating a space. I just want the final result to feel beautiful and easy.

What does the design process look like for someone working with Gehaus?

It depends on the project. If it's something simple, like decoration or selecting materials, it can be a shorter process. But an entire project can take anywhere from several months to six, eight, or even ten months. It's a commitment.

> EVERYONE HAS A DIFFERENT LIFESTYLE, TASTE, AND SET OF NEEDS. THAT'S WHY I DESCRIBE MY APPROACH AS EFFORTLESS AND TIMELESS. ❞



Sometimes a client may only need help choosing materials, while another may need us to manage the entire design of a home or commercial space. We can work across the full scope of a project, depending on what the client needs.

What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about starting something new?

Don't be afraid to start. You don't have to have everything ready, and you don't need the perfect plan or the perfect moment. Surround yourself with good professionals and good people who can support you. Every decision you make, and even every mistake, is going to help you grow and become more confident. One day, you'll look back and say, "Wow, I did all of that." But you have to start. Don't wait until everything is perfect because life is not like that. You have to jump into the roller coaster and learn as you go. That's how you build confidence.

Finally, what would you like people to know about Gehaus Design Studio?

I want people to know that we are here to help. You don't have to have everything figured out before you contact us. Sometimes people are afraid to reach out because they think they're not ready, but we can help guide you through the process. Maybe you're thinking about renovating, building a new home, redesigning your space, or simply changing the decoration. You can come to us with an idea, even if it isn't completely clear yet. We can talk about what you want, what you like, how you live, and what you want the space to feel like. Then we can help you create it. You can find us through our website and social media. If you're thinking about making a change, don't be afraid to take the first step.



You become very involved with your clients and their families, so trust and communication are really important. It is a long process, and it requires a lot of patience. But when the project is finished and the client loves the result, it makes the entire journey worthwhile. Many times, you even build relationships that continue beyond the project and become friendships.

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"I LOVE CONTEMPORARY DESIGN, AND I'VE ALWAYS LOVED NORDIC DESIGN BECAUSE IT IS CLEAN, ELEGANT, AND TIMELESS WITHOUT BEING TOO MINIMALIST."

What has building your own studio taught you?

It has taught me that you cannot do everything by yourself. When you have your own business, it's not only about design. There's marketing, accounting, communication, clients, vendors, and so many things happening behind the scenes. Sometimes I used to spend hours on one room because I wanted every detail to be perfect. Now I have a team that can help with those things, and I love that. I believe you should never be afraid to surround yourself with people who are smarter than you.

They complement you. I know that I'm the leader and the person leading the design, but I don't want to be the kind of boss who thinks everything has to be done my way. I want to be part of a team and give everyone the opportunity to shine in their own way. I need them, and they need me. That's the beautiful thing about building a small business: you surround yourself with smart people, and everybody brings something different.







THE LORD'S ELIXIR

Kindly tell us about yourself and The Lord's Elixir.

My name is Immanuel Miranda. I'm a young perfumer and the founder of The Lord's Elixir. I've been fascinated by fragrance since I was around 11 years old. I was always searching for my signature scent, which led me to buying and studying a wide range of niche and designer fragrances. Over time, I became very interested in understanding fragrance on a deeper level, how scent can affect the brain, influence attraction and conversation, and shape first impressions. I'm a firm believer in the power of a first impression, and I think fragrance can communicate something about you without you having to say a word. The Lord's Elixir is where my faith and passion for fragrance come together. The idea is inspired by Galatians 5:22, which speaks about the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. My goal is to create fragrances that are unique, memorable, and have a deeper meaning behind them.

You discovered your love for fragrance at just 11. What do you remember about that beginning?

My dad introduced me to fragrance. One day, he picked me up after jiu-jitsu and showed me a fragrance. He asked me to smell it and tell him what I thought, and I remember thinking, "Wow, that smells really good." He started teaching me about fragrance and how it could affect the way people remember you. That experience really stayed with me. I became fascinated with the idea that a fragrance could influence someone's impression of you. From there, I started looking for my own signature scent, something that could speak for me without me having to say anything. I also began noticing how different notes could connect with different personalities and moods. That was really the beginning of my obsession with fragrance.

How did your early experiences with fragrance shape the perfumer you are today?

My dad was one of my biggest supporters when it came to fragrance. We would regularly go to the mall and smell new fragrances, and those experiences became memories for me. Over time, fragrance became more than just something that smelled good. Every bottle became connected to a memory, a person, a place, or a moment. That's one of the reasons fragrance became so important to me. Even today, I like matching my fragrance with what I'm wearing. For example, if I'm wearing a burgundy linen shirt, white linen pants, and loafers, I might choose something with bourbon vanilla because of the playful feeling it gives. I think about fragrance almost like another part of an outfit. It becomes part of how you present yourself.

What made you want to move from collecting fragrances to actually creating them?

After years of studying fragrance and experiencing how different scents affected people, I started thinking about how I could create something myself. I wanted to bridge the gap between fragrance and first impressions. For me, fragrance can influence how people perceive you. Something fresh and minimal can make you feel clean and confident without trying too hard, while something sweeter and more playful can create a completely different feeling. Vanilla, for example, can feel warm, inviting, and enjoyable. It became interesting to me how different scents can shape the way people experience you. That made me want to create fragrances that do more than simply smell good.

What inspired the concept behind The Lord's Elixir?

The Lord's Elixir came from my faith. The idea was to take the fruits of the Spirit and translate those qualities into fragrance. I wanted each scent to represent something deeper. For example, when I think about peace, I imagine white linen curtains with a cool breeze coming through. I imagine feeling comfortable, safe, and relaxed, with something warm and comforting in the background. That is the feeling I wanted to create with the fragrance called Peace. I used white musk for softness and powderiness, along with elements that remind me of the sea, fresh air, and an uplifting feeling. There are citrus notes, basil, mandarin, and other elements that help create that atmosphere. For me, peace is airy. It feels like a breeze. That is how I approach each fragrance. I think about the quality first, and then I ask myself, "What does this feeling smell like?"

What do you believe makes a fragrance memorable?

There are a lot of things that can make a fragrance memorable, but for me, quality is very important. The Lord's Elixir uses four main components: distilled water, perfumer's alcohol, an organic solvent, and high-quality perfumer's oils. I want people to have a great experience when they wear my fragrances, but I also want there to be meaning behind what I create. Each scent has a purpose and is connected to a deeper idea rather than simply being a name or a concept. For me, that combination of quality, intention, and meaning is what makes The Lord's Elixir special.


PEACE
THE
Lord's Elixir
Eau De Parfum
cactus bloom . cotton . white musk . leather . lime .



Where can people currently find The Lord's Elixir?

Right now, people can purchase The Lord's Elixir fragrances through our website. The brand is still small, so I'm very hands-on. If someone is in the Miami area, I'll sometimes deliver the fragrance myself. I know that as the business grows, I won't always be able to do that, but right now, that personal connection is very important to me. I don't want The Lord's Elixir to feel like a business where you simply place an order and never know who made it. I want people to be able to connect with me and feel like they're part of the journey. I also want to remember the people who supported me from the beginning. As the brand grows, I'd love to offer those early supporters special experiences, custom scents, and other benefits as a way of showing my appreciation.

What do you hope to build with The Lord's Elixir?

There are nine fruits of the Spirit, so I have a lot of work ahead of me. Right now, I have Peace, Self-Control, and Love available, and they've been received really well. My goal is to eventually create a complete collection inspired by all nine fruits of the Spirit, with each fragrance having its own identity and bringing that quality to life. I want people to smell the fragrances and say, "I can't believe this came from you." People sometimes expect something different because I'm young, but when they actually experience the fragrances, they're often surprised by the quality. That reaction motivates me and makes me want to keep creating.

> "MY GOAL IS TO EVENTUALLY CREATE A COMPLETE COLLECTION INSPIRED BY ALL NINE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, WITH EACH FRAGRANCE HAVING ITS OWN IDENTITY AND BRINGING THAT QUALITY TO LIFE."
>
> *-Immanuel Miranda*
> *Founder of The Lord's Elixir*

Who have been some of the people who have helped you along the way?

My family has been a huge part of my journey. My mom and my older sister have supported me throughout the process and helped with the business side, especially marketing and building the website. They're also very honest with me. If something isn't good, they'll tell me. Sometimes you need people who are willing to say, "This needs more work." That kind of criticism helps me improve and pushes me to keep getting better. I've also had mentors, Ana Mota, Rasha, and Luis, in the fragrance industry who have given me opportunities to learn and develop my skills. They've taught me about perfumery and shared their knowledge with me, and I'm very grateful for that. I really appreciate people who are willing to help someone young grow and share what they know. Those relationships have meant a lot to me throughout this journey.

Finally, what would you like to say to someone reading this who has an idea but is afraid to start?

Start. You don't have to know everything, and you don't have to have everything figured out. I definitely didn't know everything when I started. You have to be willing to learn and make mistakes. Find people who can teach you, find people who will support you, and keep improving. Sometimes you just have to take that first step and trust that you'll learn along the way. For me, I believe God opened doors that I never expected. So I would tell anyone with a dream: don't be afraid to go after it. You may not have all the answers right now, but that doesn't mean you're not capable of building something meaningful. Keep learning, keep working, and keep your purpose at the center.



Lilin Alba: I was born and raised in New York City and come from a Dominican background. Before starting my business, I worked in the corporate world as a Chase banker. I grew very quickly in that environment, but I started to see how easy it was to get trapped in the corporate lifestyle. I saw people much older than me still chasing the next position or achievement without feeling fulfilled. It made me ask myself, *Do I want that to be my life?* Beauty had always been my passion, but growing up, my family wanted me to pursue a more traditional career such as law, medicine, or banking. I went to college and entered the corporate world, but I still wasn't happy. Eventually, my family saw that and encouraged me to pursue what I truly wanted. My husband was also incredibly supportive. He encouraged me to leave my job and go to school. I initially thought I wanted to focus on makeup, but once I started studying aesthetics, I discovered skincare and hair removal. That's when I realized I had found the direction I wanted to take.

You started your business during the pandemic. What was that experience like?

Starting during COVID was challenging, but it also gave me an opportunity. My husband and I moved into our own apartment during the pandemic, and he encouraged me to start taking clients from home. I had never imagined myself working out of my living room, but he believed in me. Our apartment had two separate entrances, which allowed me to create a small workspace while keeping our personal space separate. I started with word of mouth, and the business grew very quickly. I still have screenshots from that time. The same week we moved in, my schedule was completely booked. Every appointment slot was filled. It was a huge leap of faith. I trusted God, trusted the process, and kept moving forward. Eventually, I went from working out of an apartment to having my own professional space.

Why did you choose sugaring as your specialty?

Sugaring was actually an unexpected discovery. I was in school when another student introduced me to it. I saw someone demonstrating the technique and immediately became curious. Unfortunately, sugaring wasn't really taught in my school. I wanted to learn more, so I started researching courses. There weren't many options available, but eventually I found a class on Long Island. The class wasn't what I expected, but it introduced me to the technique and motivated me to learn more on my own. What really attracted me to sugaring was that it can be a great option for people with sensitive skin. My mom has eczema and has had reactions to traditional waxing, so I understood personally how important it was to have hair-removal options that could accommodate different skin needs. I also like doing things that challenge me. When I saw that there wasn't much education or awareness around sugaring, I thought, *I'm going to learn this.* That curiosity eventually became my specialty.

What do you think makes sugaring different from traditional waxing?

Technique, preparation, and the professional performing the service all make a difference. People don't talk enough about how important it is to prepare your skin before hair removal. Proper preparation can improve your results and make the experience more comfortable. I also don't believe in promising completely painless hair removal. Every hair-removal method can cause some level of discomfort. It's about using the proper technique, preparing the skin, and understanding the client's individual needs.

THE JOURNEY

An exclusive interview

Alba Aesthetics has grown largely through word of mouth. What has helped you build such a loyal clientele?

I believe it's honesty. I've worked in sales, so I understand how clients can feel when they think they're being sold something instead of being treated like a person. Hair removal is also a very personal service, so I always try to remember that I'm dealing with a person, not a transaction. I treat my clients the way I would want to be treated. If someone doesn't need a service, I won't recommend it just to make more money. If their skin isn't in the right condition for a treatment, I'll tell them. I once had a young woman come in for a Brazilian service, and she was in a lot of pain. When I asked her why she wanted the service, she told me she was doing it because she felt it was expected of her by someone she was dating. I stopped the service. I told her that she didn't have to do something to her body for someone else. If she ever wanted the service for herself, she could come back. That experience reinforced something I strongly believe: your clients should be able to trust you. I treat every client like a family member. If they need something, I'll tell them. If they don't need something, I'll tell them that too. I also believe education is extremely important. Consumers have access to so much information today, so I want to make sure my clients understand what they're doing and why. When you lead with education, the sales will follow.

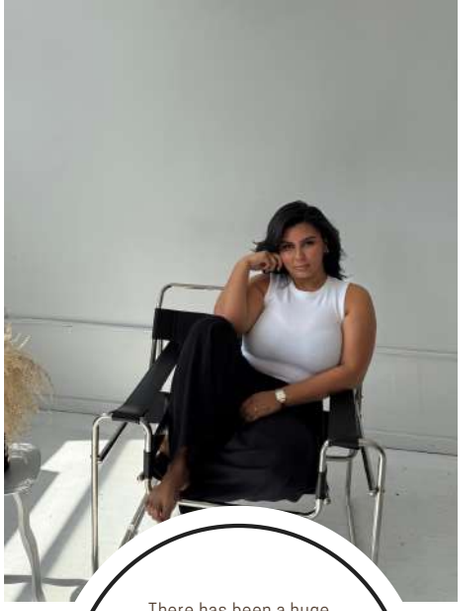
How have you expanded your services while staying true to your specialty?

Sugaring was my primary service when I started. As I listened to my clients, I began noticing other concerns related to hair removal, including hyperpigmentation and ingrown hairs. I started asking myself how I could help them with those concerns as well. That led me to introduce additional skincare services and treatments that complement hair removal. I don't want to become a business that offers every beauty service just to be a one-stop shop. My specialty is skin and hair removal, so everything I add needs to support that. For example, I offer treatments that can help improve the skin on the face and body, which connects directly to the needs of my hair-removal clients. I want people to know exactly what I'm known for.

"EVERY HAIR-REMOVAL METHOD CAN CAUSE SOME LEVEL OF DISCOMFORT. IT'S ABOUT USING THE PROPER TECHNIQUE, PREPARING THE SKIN, AND UNDERSTANDING THE CLIENT'S INDIVIDUAL NEEDS."

Why is specialization important to you?

I don't believe you can be excellent at everything. If you're offering 20 different services, you're dividing your attention across 20 different areas. As professionals, we also have to continue our education, and there is only so much information one person can master at a time. I'd rather specialize and provide excellent service than offer everything and sacrifice quality.



There has been a huge increase in new estheticians entering the industry, and I want to help make sure they're receiving the right education. I want to do my part to help estheticians become better professionals for themselves, their businesses, and their clients.



I want my clients to know exactly who I am and what I do. Some of them have me saved in their phones as their "sugar girl" or their "skin girl." I like that. If you want to create a salon where different professionals specialize in different services, that's different. But as an individual professional, I believe there is value in having a clear specialty.

You also teach sugaring and business to other estheticians. What inspired you to become an educator?

My own experience with sugaring education inspired me. When I first discovered sugaring, there weren't many comprehensive training programs available. A lot of the education I found was connected to specific brands or businesses, so you were often taught one particular method. I wanted to create something more comprehensive. My training is a two-day program that includes hands-on practice with models, different sugaring techniques, different sugar textures, and a complete kit. But I don't just want to teach the technique. I want to teach people how to turn the skill into a business. We're in business to make money. We have bills to pay. That's why my training also covers launching your services, creating content, communicating with clients, and establishing the foundation of your business. I created a student toolkit that includes client scripts, content guidance, forms, and a seven-day launch plan. Students also receive follow-up support after the training. I don't want someone to leave my class thinking, I learned so much, but now what? I want them to leave knowing exactly what to do next.

What is your vision for the future of Alba Aesthetics?

My vision has changed a lot over the years. At one point, I wanted a large salon, a big team, and a storefront. Now, I realize that's not necessarily what I want. I'm comfortable with Alba Aesthetics being more focused on me as the specialist. I want to continue working with clients a few days a week while dedicating more time to education. There has been a huge increase in new estheticians entering the industry, and I want to help make sure they're receiving the right education. I want to do my part to help estheticians become better professionals for themselves, their businesses, and their clients. At this point, I really want to put my energy into teaching.

What final message would you like to leave with our readers?

Let go and trust God. That's the best advice I can give. Try to do something good every day and become one percent better.

"I WANT MY CLIENTS TO KNOW EXACTLY WHO I AM AND WHAT I DO. SOME OF THEM HAVE ME SAVED IN THEIR PHONES AS THEIR "SUGAR GIRL" OR THEIR "SKIN GIRL." I LIKE THAT."

-Lilin Alba
Founder of Alba Aesthetics

KATIE RUFFINO

Holistic Health Practioner

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

My name is Katie. I am a board certified physician associate, holistic health and life coach, NLP Master Practitioner and Trainer. NLP stands for Neuro-Linguistic Programming. My background is in medicine, particularly the functional and regenerative side, with a more holistic approach to care. I have always been passionate about helping people. From a young age, I was curious about what was happening inside the body. Why do people get sick? How does the body work? And how can we help people heal? It started with curiosity, but also with a deep desire to serve and help others. When I began working in the medical field, I realized that healing was about more than just the physical body. It was also more than medications and procedures. I wanted to understand the deeper reasons behind why people experience certain health challenges. That led me to explore mindset and how our thoughts affect our physical health, as well as energy and stored emotions from significant emotional experiences in our past. From there, I became a yoga teacher, retreat host, NLP Master Practitioner and Trainer as well as studied transcendental meditation and other somatic practices. I also love food and have had a cooking show called Katie in the Kitchen, where I interview people and cook with them.

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YOU STARTED YOUR CAREER IN REGENERATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO MOVE FROM THE TRADITIONAL HEALTHCARE ROUTE INTO THE HOLISTIC COACHING WORK YOU DO TODAY?

I realized that the work I was doing sometimes felt like a Band-Aid solution. It felt like I was helping someone maintain where they were at with their health, rather than actually helping them thrive and remove the things that were contributing to their health challenges. I wanted to help people in a way that was more preventative and focused on nourishing the mind, body and spirit. Then I discovered functional medicine and regenerative medicine. I saw the potential in looking at root causes and understanding a person as a whole rather than simply saying, “You have these symptoms, so here is the diagnosis, medication or procedure.” That approach didn't fully make sense to me. I felt there was something more I was meant to learn so I could help people in a different, more creative way that also combined all my gifts.

YOU OFTEN TALK ABOUT HOW PEOPLE CAN KNOW WHAT THEY SHOULD DO FOR THEIR HEALTH BUT STILL STRUGGLE TO FOLLOW THROUGH. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT HAPPENS?

Information alone doesn't create transformation. Someone can know all the right things and still not take action. They can be incredibly educated and still struggle to do the things they know are best for their health. Someone might consciously value their health, but unconsciously have patterns or beliefs that are preventing them from moving forward. For example, they might believe, “I'm not worthy,” “I'm not enough,” “I don't deserve love,” or even “I don't deserve to be healthy.” Identity is also a big piece when it comes to health. When someone receives a diagnosis, they can start identifying with that disease. They might start saying, “I am a diabetic person,” or “I am a cardiac patient.” Separating the person from the thing they are experiencing can be really powerful. The condition is something they are experiencing. It is not who they are.

HOW HAS YOUR OWN RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD INFLUENCED THE WORK YOU DO WITH CLIENTS TODAY?

My own health journey started with food. Once I started learning about food as medicine and how certain foods could potentially cause harm, I wanted to learn everything I could. Initially, learning how powerfully food can affect health felt empowering. I felt like I had more autonomy and choice. But over time, trying to eat perfectly created pressure, rigidity and disordered eating patterns. I eventually realized that food wasn't the problem anymore. The deeper issue was how hard I was being on myself and this need to do everything perfectly. There were also people pleasing and a need for control. I had a lot of stress in my life because I was in school and then was working in a clinic. Food became something I used to feel safe and secure. Healing began when I stopped treating my body like something I needed to control or get right. I started asking myself, “What does my body actually need?” I also started releasing some of those unconscious patterns and developing better ways to cope with stress instead of automatically going to the pantry whenever I felt emotional.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REMOVE SHAME FROM OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD?

Food is something that is supposed to nourish us. It is how we survive, and it is something we interact with every day. Why not approach it in a way that is supportive instead of full of judgment and guilt? We don't need to approach food or eating with shame.

YOU DESCRIBE FOOD AS FEEDBACK. WHAT CAN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD TEACH US ABOUT OURSELVES, OUR EMOTIONS AND OUR SELF WORTH?

Our eating patterns can reveal how we respond to stress, emotions, pressure and uncertainty. Restriction may reveal fear, control or a desire to feel good enough. Emotional eating may be an attempt to create comfort, relief or safety in the body when we don't feel those things in the moment. Constantly searching for the perfect diet can also reveal that we've stopped trusting our own bodies. Shame after eating can reflect a larger pattern of self judgment. The important thing I want people to understand is that food is not a moral measure of whether we are good or bad. Somewhere along the way, diet culture and society labeled foods as “good” or “bad,” and then we started attaching those labels to ourselves. Every food decision can start feeling like a high stakes assessment of who we are, and that can lead us down a slippery slope. If we allow ourselves to acknowledge the foods we desire, it can actually teach us something about honoring what we want in other areas of our lives too, whether that's our careers, relationships, personal development or creativity. It's about allowing ourselves to simply be.

What are some signs that someone may need help with their relationship with food or the mindset behind it?

After working with patients/clients for years, I've developed a sense of who's struggling vs not. It often shows up in their body language and it being incongruent with their words. I can often sense whether someone is being honest with themselves and with me. Are they overly anxious for no apparent reason? Are they trying to prove to me that they're doing everything right? And where else in their life are they trying to prove that to other people? Some people, though, are completely honest and simply say, "I'm struggling. Help." Other signs can include a binge and restrict cycle or feeling like you can't control yourself around food. There can also be physical symptoms such as gut issues, indigestion and irregular bowel movements. Sometimes people are rushing around and don't even slow down to sit and eat. When our nervous system can't relax, it can affect how we digest our food.

You mentioned that food is an important part of your work, but you're not necessarily telling people what to eat. How would you describe that philosophy?

Food is really an entry point into the inner world that someone lives in. I'm not here to tell people what to eat. I'm interested in understanding how someone interacts with themselves and the world around them. Food can reveal so much about how we deal with pressure, control, emotions, stress and self worth. That's why someone doesn't necessarily need to have an issue with food to benefit from this work. They might have a deeper issue with themselves, and food is simply where that pattern becomes visible.

You use NLP and other approaches to help people identify and shift limiting beliefs. What does working with you look like for someone who feels stuck?

We first have a call to understand what they need help with and what area of their life they want to improve. That could be physical health, relationships, career, personal development, spirituality or family. Once I understand the main issue, we begin with a breakthrough session, which I call an Identity Calibration experience. It's an intensive session split into two four hour segments where we go deep into what's happening psychologically and within the unconscious mind. We look at the patterns someone has been running, the strategies they've been using and what the deeper issue is. We uncover the core belief about themselves that, once released, allows many of the other presenting problems to soften. From there, we use mental and emotional release work and other NLP modalities. After that, we move into coaching. I help clients align with who they actually want to be, what they want to do and what they want to have in their lives. I help them set goals, take action and keep them accountable.



Why is the initial process so intensive?

I genuinely care about every client I work with. I want to give people the time and space to feel seen, heard and cared for. You can't always do that in a simple one hour office visit. The longer initial process gives us the opportunity to ask the right questions and uncover what is actually happening. We go deeper and create shifts more effectively and efficiently in those 8 hours than most talk therapy dances around for years.. Once some of that baggage is out of the way, it becomes much easier for people to take action because you're removing resistance. That's why the breakthrough session is a requirement for anyone who wants to work with me one on one.

Your goal is to help people become empowered leaders of their own lives. What do you hope someone walks away with after working with you?

I want anyone I work with to have greater self trust, less second guessing and less self doubt. I want her to own who she is and quiet some of the negative self-talk and internal resistance that has been keeping her from doing what she wants to do in the world. I also want her to have a clearer understanding of who she is and what she values. Confidence is a big part of it too. I want her to be able to walk into any room and simply be herself. That can also lead to attracting the right people and opportunities into her life in a genuine way rather than a performative way. I also want to give her practical tools she can use independently. I don't want her to become dependent on me. I want her to have an empowered process she can continue using on her own. And, of course, self compassion and self love.

Who do you primarily work with?

I can work with almost anyone in different areas of their life, but I primarily work with high achieving, high performing women who are tired of treating themselves like the last person on their list. These are women who are often running businesses, leading teams, taking care of families and showing up for everyone else. They need to realize that they have to care for themselves too. It's like the airplane analogy: you have to put your own oxygen mask on first before you can help someone else. My work is about helping these women own who they are without feeling guilty for taking care of themselves and changing that relationship with themselves.

How quickly can someone expect to see a shift when working with you?

One of my favorite parts about this work is that when someone shifts at the unconscious level and is ready to make a change, the shift can happen very quickly. After the Breakthrough Identity Calibration session, clients often feel like a new person. Not because they've become someone else, but because they are more of who they've always been at the core. They have simply let go of layers of what's been holding them back or clouding the way they saw themselves. I've had clients finish a breakthrough session and say, "Oh my gosh, I didn't realize it was that easy to let go of years of suffering." The external changes in their lives take time because they require action. but can also shift quickly because the resistance to action is gone. The way they view themselves and the world, though, shifts the quickest.

How can readers book your services?

My website, www.sunnysidekt.com is the best place to start. There is a "Book a Call" link where you can schedule a call to explore working with me and see if we're the right fit. My website also has my course and other offerings. Instagram is my main social media platform, and that's where I share my offerings, travels and the different things I'm working on.

Any final message you would like to leave with our readers?

There is nothing wrong with you. You don't need to be fixed. You may simply need to release some of the things that have been holding you back and learn to see yourself differently. You already have so much wisdom within you. My role is to help you reconnect with that wisdom, remove the resistance and empower you to make the best decisions for your own life. Ultimately, I want you to know that you can become the best guide, compass and healer for themselves.





An Exclusive Interview

With Anastasiia, Founder of Boha Flowers

Kindly tell us about yourself as well as BOHA flowers

Hi everyone! My name is Anastasiia, I'm 29 years old, and I moved to Miami three years ago. Before Miami, I lived in Poland with my boyfriend, Artem. We actually moved there together just one month before Russia invaded my home country, Ukraine, on February 24, 2022, and the war started. So our plans changed completely, and eventually life brought Artem and me here to Miami. For almost three years now, I've been working as a nail artist at NailsTouch. And it's actually funny because nails really run in my family. My mom is one of the top nail artists in Ukraine, and my aunt, her sister, owns a luxury salon here and is also a well-known nail artist in Miami. But somehow, I never really found myself in this industry. And this year, at the end of May, I suddenly felt this really strong desire to finally start my own floral business. I had some personal savings, and I just thought, "It's either now or never." During my time in Miami, people who knew that flowers were my passion would often ask me to make bouquets or arrangements for birthdays, gifts, or special occasions. I always received so many compliments, and people kept asking me, "Why don't you start your own flower business?" And at some point, that question really stayed in my head. I started asking myself the same thing, why not? So one of my close friends and I started looking for flower wholesalers, décor stores, and everything I would need to get started. And I began creating everything from home. At first, everything was new. When it's your own business, every decision depends on you, and that can be a little scary. But I think I've always had this adventurous side that helps me take risks and just go for things. I created the Instagram page, my boyfriend built the entire website and helped with advertising, and together we started developing the style and identity of the brand. And people responded really well to it. That's how BOHA Flowers started, although at first, it was actually called Meet Your Flowers. The name was pretty spontaneous. I liked it, I wanted to start, and I didn't want to spend months waiting for everything to be perfect.

Then one evening, my boyfriend came up with the name BOHA. What I loved about it was that when you see it written in English letters, it looks like the Ukrainian word "BOHA," which means "she." I immediately fell in love with the idea, but I kept thinking about it for a few weeks. I was worried about how people on Instagram would react, because changing the name meant changing everything, the branding, social media, business cards, flyers... But I couldn't let the idea go. So one day, BOHA officially appeared everywhere. And somehow, the moment I changed it, everything just felt right.

What was happening in your life when you first decided to turn your love for flowers into a business, and what made you believe it could become something bigger?

My first experience working with flowers was about 12 years ago, when I was still a student. One summer, I started working at a flower shop, and that's when I first realized how much I loved working with flowers. After that, I worked at different flower shops in my hometown and tried so many different things, traditional arrangements, bouquets with sweets, fruit, even meat. And as modern floristry started becoming more popular, I started learning more, experimenting, and slowly developing my own style. Later, I was invited to work at a new floral studio that was still preparing to open. The owner trusted me and gave me a lot of creative freedom. I was choosing flowers, packaging and décor, helping with the floral display, and of course creating my own bouquets and arrangements. And I absolutely loved it. I was completely into it. I could create, experiment, try new ideas, and people really loved what we were making.

The studio was growing, and everything was going really well. A few years later, I had to leave that job because of some unexpected circumstances. But by that time, I already knew exactly what I wanted. I knew that one day I wanted to open my own floral studio, create my own style, and build something that was truly mine. And eventually, that dream became BOHA Flowers.

Flowers can carry so much emotion and meaning. What do you personally want someone to feel when they receive a BOHA arrangement?

First of all, the comment I hear most often about my arrangements is, "Wow, I've never seen anything like this before." And honestly, that's one of the biggest compliments for me. Because that's exactly what I want people to feel when they see or receive something from BOHA, surprise, excitement, that "wow" feeling. There are so many amazing floral studios here in Miami creating beautiful bouquets and incredible events, so I realized that simply making something beautiful isn't enough for me. I want to create something unexpected and different. That's why BOHA arrangements are not just about flowers. They're about unusual shapes, interesting flowers, exotic elements, and combinations you don't see every day. I want every arrangement to feel like something new, something you want to look at a little longer.



> AT BOHA FLOWERS, WE FOCUS ON CUSTOM FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS, BOUQUETS, EVENTS, AND FLORAL SUBSCRIPTIONS. I WOULD SAY OUR CUSTOM ARRANGEMENTS ARE DEFINITELY ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR THINGS.





What have you learned about running a floral business that you never expected when you first started?

Honestly, I've learned that running a floral business is not easy at all. Flowers are a perishable product, so if you don't have enough orders, eventually some of them simply have to be thrown away. And that's something you have to be prepared for. But the biggest surprise for me was realizing that I can't do everything by myself! I wasn't prepared for how much actually happens behind the scenes, managing social media, buying and receiving flowers, organizing the whole workflow, accounting, marketing... There are so many things that have nothing to do with actually making arrangements. Thankfully, Artem took over most of the technical side and marketing, which helped me a lot. And now, especially in the world of social media, I realize how important it is to constantly stay visible. It's not enough to just create an arrangement and send it out for delivery. You also have to film it, edit the content, post it, communicate with people, get feedback, and then do it all over again with the next one. It's a lot of work, and that's actually how I realized I needed a team. BOHA is still a very young studio, so right now there are only four of us, but even with a team, there's always something to do. And the funny part is that talking to my clients and actually creating the arrangements are probably the easiest and definitely my favorite parts of the job.

What can clients find at BOHA Flowers? What types of arrangements or floral services have become especially popular with your clients?

At BOHA Flowers, we focus on custom floral arrangements, bouquets, events, and floral subscriptions. I would say our custom arrangements are definitely one of the most popular things. People often discover us through Instagram, see one of our designs and message us saying, "I want something like this!" Sometimes they want us to recreate a specific arrangement, and sometimes they just give me a general idea and let me create something completely new.

Events are another important part of BOHA. We create floral designs for different celebrations and spaces, and I personally visit the location beforehand so we can plan everything properly and make sure the final result creates that wow effect we always talk about. We also offer floral subscriptions, which is a part of the business I really love. Right now, we work with several salons and residential buildings that receive fresh floral arrangements from us, usually twice a month. It gives us the opportunity to build long-term relationships with our clients while constantly creating something new for their spaces.

When you're creating something for a specific person, how do you take their occasion, personality, or vision and translate that into the final design?

Every BOHA Flowers client communicates directly with me. To understand their vision better, I usually ask them to send me a few photos of flowers or arrangements they like, and then I ask a few key questions. That gives me an idea of what they're imagining, even if they can't fully explain it in words. The process also depends on the type of order. For example, if I'm creating an arrangement for an interior, I'll ask for a photo of the space whenever possible. That way, I can choose the colors, flowers, vase, and overall style to make sure the arrangement really belongs in that space.

For events, it can be a little different. Sometimes clients know exactly what they want, and sometimes they have absolutely no idea, and that's totally okay. In that case, I usually prepare three to five different concepts or directions for them. We choose what they connect with the most, and then we start building the final design from there. For me, it's really about understanding the client first and then using my creativity to turn their ideas into something that feels personal and special.

If someone wants to order flowers or learn more about BOHA Flowers, what's the best way to connect with you and place an order?

I'll leave my contact information, website and Instagram so you can include them in the article. And of course, you can always reach out to me directly. I'll be happy to help you choose exactly what you're looking for, even if you're not quite sure what you want yet. Together, we'll find the right idea and create something truly special just for you.

THE JOURNEY

An exclusive interview

Kindly tell us a little about yourself and aglowskinco.

I am Danielle. I am a licensed esthetician and will be five years in the industry this December. I was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest. I have always had a heart for serving others. Being able to translate that into my work and take care of my clients by going more than skin deep is really what I am all about.

You originally planned to work in pediatric nursing before discovering your passion for skincare. What inspired that career change, and how did your own skincare journey influence the path you are on today?

I have always had a servant's heart. All I want to do is care for others, and I have been that way my whole life. With pediatrics, I have a heart for kids and wanted to help children, but I eventually came to terms with the fact that pediatrics is not always sunshine and rainbows. At the same time, I was struggling with my own skin and needed to find a way to blend those struggles with science and the medical solutions that initially drew me to nursing. While struggling with my own skin, my personal esthetician really pushed me toward pursuing esthetics school. At the time, I had no desire to make it into a career. I was strictly doing it to get answers for myself and my own skin. By the end of that experience, I realized that my firsthand experience with acne and allowing it to take over my life for more than six years had actually become a superpower. Now, I will implement that experience into my practice. Of course, I still struggle with imposter syndrome because my skin is not perfect, and there is a lot of self doubt sometimes. But at the end of the day, my experience will always continue to be a superpower for me.

You specialize in helping clients with acne, rosacea, and other skin concerns through a holistic approach. Why is it important to treat both the inside and outside of the body when it comes to healthy skin?

We see all the time that skin is like a magnifying glass into the body. It sounds silly, but it really is true. The longer I have worked with clients with acne and rosacea, the more obvious it has become that it is not just an external problem. A lot of it has to do with the food and drinks you are consuming. The gut skin axis is a very real thing, and you cannot ignore that if you want clients to have long term success. Something I got into this last year was nervous system regulation. Are we living in a state of fight or flight? How is that affecting your digestive system and your sleep? It really is all connected internally. When we allow internal issues to build up over time, they can show up externally, which is where treatments come in. Finding a balance between both is like finding the missing puzzle piece. I love the challenge with each guest because everyone is so different. Externally, we are not just looking at barrier health and barrier reinforcement. We are also looking at their inflammatory response and what that may be telling us about their lifestyle habits. It would be ignorant to ignore the fact that healthy skin has to do with both the inside and outside of the body.

Many of your clients say your treatments leave them feeling relaxed and refreshed, not just physically but emotionally as well. How do you create that experience for every client?

At this point in my career, I truly think it is a me thing, and I say that very humbly. It starts with the trust I build with them on social media before they even meet me. When they come in, we already feel like we know each other. Every touch is intentional, and I am very mindful about the way I speak to them. I remember how people spoke to me when my skin was not at its best. Words are not something you take lightly or forget easily. I am very intentional with our in person moments, whether we are in the treatment room or having a consultation. I am also very intentional about what I share on social media and what I am trying to convey. I want to bring my clients a level of peace and understanding. I am constantly encouraging them. They will probably receive 400 compliments in one appointment. Skin is so intimate. It is a very vulnerable space, and it is my duty to make my clients feel safe and comfortable. I pull from my own past experiences to create that environment.

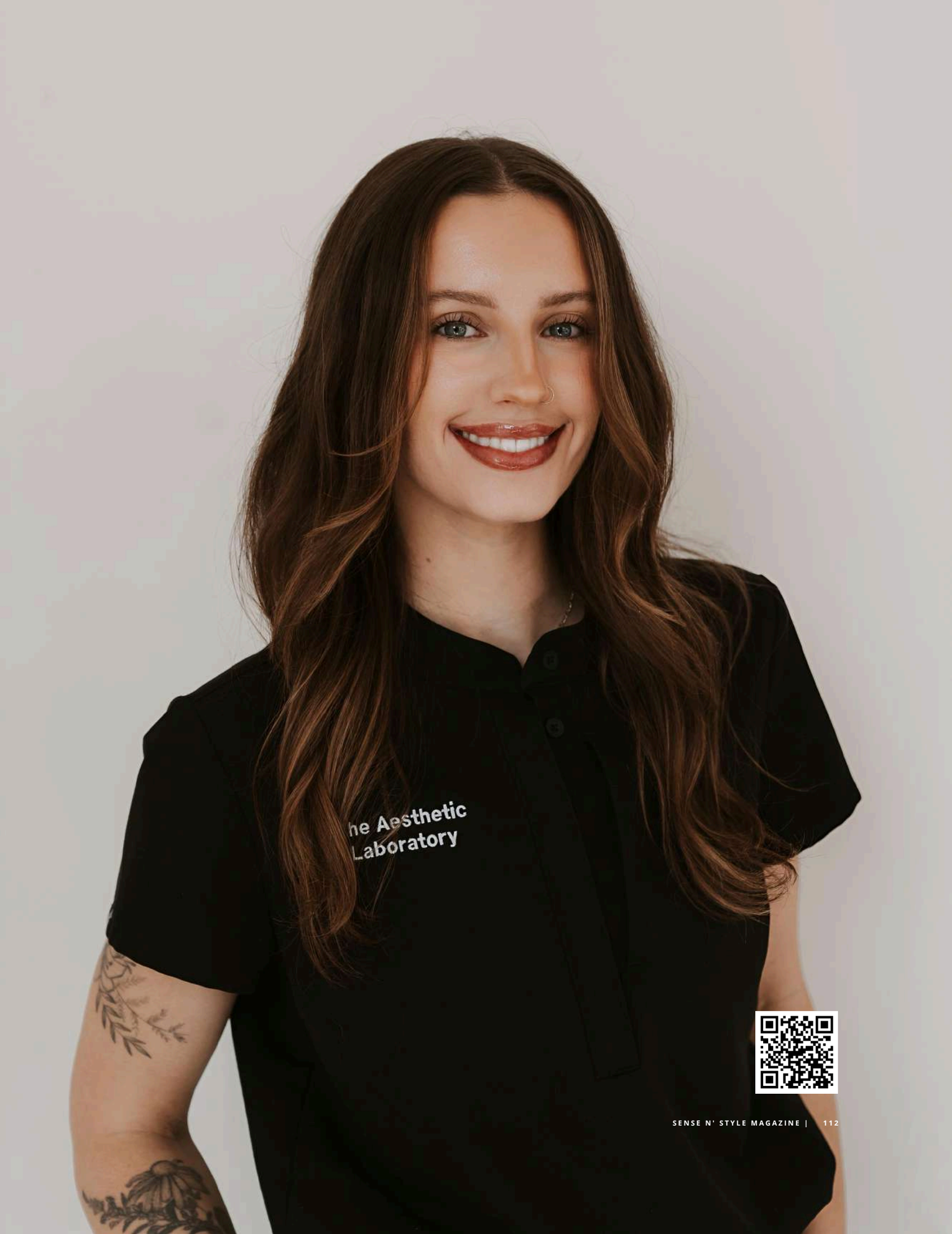


"We offer a wide variety of services. Acne treatments are, of course, my bread and butter, but I always bring in a component of relaxation so that clients not only feel like their skin is healing and changing, but their bodies and minds do as well. "

-DANIELLE BROWN

Can you take us through some of your services and signature treatments?

We offer a wide variety of services. Acne treatments are, of course, my bread and butter, but I always bring in a component of relaxation so that clients not only feel like their skin is healing and changing, but their bodies and minds do as well. We offer a lot of HydraFacial services, which are popular no matter where you are. They provide beautiful hydration and are almost like a pore vacuum on crack for your skin.


he Aesthetic
Laboratory

I have cleared clients within a few months, while other clients have taken as long as a year. There is a lot of trust involved, and that is why I am their partner throughout the process.

We also have custom facial options, which I always recommend for first time or newer guests. This allows me to learn their skin and gives me free range during the appointment to do whatever their skin is presenting without them having to pay extra. My favorite service is our advanced exfoliating facial. It is 90 minutes, which is a long time, but everything is very slow and drawn out. It is honestly one of the most relaxing treatments for the nervous system. There are also lymphatic massage techniques incorporated into the treatment. It is beautiful to have a wide variety of services and be able to guide guests between them based on how their skin changes as we work together.

You have continued investing in advanced education and have become a certified acne specialist. Why is ongoing learning so important in the skincare industry?

Just like the medical field, the skincare industry is always changing. There are always new studies being done, new products, and new ingredients. It is honestly a disservice to your clients to get behind in that area. If there is a new modality or treatment that comes out and you are too scared to pursue it because it might change what you already know, that could be the difference between helping a client long term and only helping them temporarily. That is a really important area for me. I always want to continue learning. When I first started in the industry, I was virtually 18. I spent a lot of years surrounded by women who were double, if not triple, my age. When I was 18, that was intimidating. I would wonder, "How do they know so much? Where did they learn that?" But it was also inspiring because I knew that I could get there too. Those experienced estheticians pushed me toward wanting to learn more. I have stayed hungry for education and change. You have to stay a sponge. You just have to

For someone visiting you for the first time, what can they expect from the experience, and what do you hope they leave feeling?

They will absolutely leave feeling excited and encouraged. During consultations, we sit down and talk about lifestyle, habits, budget, and the end goal.

We also discuss what is realistic and what is not. I am always going to keep it real with my clients in a way that is gentle and kind, of course. I want them to leave feeling excited that they are finally on the right path. I always say that you are in the right place if you are done looking for quick fixes. I can be that long term skin journey encouragement, if you will. I want them to leave excited and ready to start.

What is a realistic timeline for someone dealing with acne, and when can they expect to start seeing results?

With acne, there can be up to 90 days of congestion within the pore. We can anticipate about 90 days of purging and things coming out. I always say that if we are doing treatments, it can take anywhere from three to four months. Without treatments and without consistently supporting the skin, clearing acne long term through a holistic approach can take longer, sometimes six months to even a year in some cases. Not all acne is the same, and not everyone's skin is the same. There is a lot of trust, trial, and error involved. I have cleared clients within a few months, while other clients have taken as long as a year. There is a lot of trust involved, and that is why I am their partner throughout the process.

Where can people book your services?

You can find me online and on Instagram at @aglowskin.co. That is the best way to get in touch with me personally. I also work under The Aesthetic Laboratory, which was founded by my sweet friend Taylor. We work together every day to create the most comfortable atmosphere possible. When you walk in, you should feel safe. We are always elevating the level of care we provide. I also offer virtual services now and am actively expanding that. No matter where someone is in the country, they have an option to work with me. Obviously, it would not be an in person treatment, but we can still work together and I can still be a skincare coach for them.



Danielle Brown

Founder of aglowskinco



Kindly tell us about yourself as well as Miami Suncare

My name is Martin Mehnert, and I am one of the partners at Miami Sun Care. I was born in Munich, Germany, and began my hospitality career at a Forbes Five-Star luxury hotel before transferring to its sister property, the Turnberry Isle Resort in Miami. Over the next three decades, I worked across sales, marketing, revenue management, and hotel operations, eventually serving as General Manager for both independent hotels and Hilton-branded properties, where I oversaw openings, operations, and guest experience. After a long career in hospitality, I wanted to take that experience into building something of my own a brand that reflects the lifestyle, energy, and sunshine of Florida. That led me to Miami Sun Care. Nibu Naturals is the ingredient philosophy behind our formulations: clean, simple, and effective. Everything we create is built on that foundation.

Can you tell us the story behind Miami Sun Care and how you became involved with the brand?

Miami Sun was truly born on the beach. The brand started years ago when three teenagers were out on Miami Beach with their surfboards and sunscreen and noticed something surprising every sun-care product they were using came from somewhere else. For a place called the Sunshine State, Florida didn't have its own sun-care line. That simple question, "why not?" became the spark that started the brand. They trademarked Miami Sun and launched the first product, a natural, chemical-free lip balm. From there, the vision expanded. The original idea behind Miami Sun was always to create a full sun-care line, especially sun lotions, but every brand has to start somewhere. Lip balm became the first step because it allowed the brand to enter the market quickly while the larger sun-care line continued development. What began as a beachside spark has now grown into a national brand with new products actively in development. And once our sun-care products become available, we will be vertically expanding into a sports apparel line and other outdoor lifestyle merchandise. Miami Sun has always been more than sunscreen, it's a full lifestyle brand inspired by life under the Florida sun. I became involved much later, after spending more than 30 years in hospitality. When I learned the story and saw the potential behind Miami Sun, I knew I wanted to be part of it. The mission resonated with me: creating premium, natural sun-care products that are affordable, accessible, and proudly Floridian. Today, as a partner, I help carry that original vision forward.

Miami Sun Care focuses on sun protection, which is essential in places like Miami. What makes your products different from traditional sunscreens on the market?

Traditional sunscreens often feel heavy, sticky, or overly chemical. We wanted the opposite. Miami Sun Care products are designed to feel light, clean, and nourishing, something you want to wear every day. Our formulations use premium natural ingredients, including our signature ghee-based blend and high-end carrier oils that hydrate and protect without the greasy feel. And when our sun-care line launches, it will include a full range of products, from 100% natural sun oils to mineral-based sun protection, as well as after-sun care and moisturizers. Because sun protection itself cannot be "all natural," our SPF products will be formulated with mineral UV filters: zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. These offer clean, gentle, and effective protection without relying on the chemical sunscreen ingredients found in many traditional formulas. We focus on simplicity, clean ingredients, and a Miami-inspired feel: bright, modern, and effortless.



Many people are now more conscious about what they put on their skin. How does Miami Sun Care approach clean, safe, and effective ingredients?

Clean ingredients are at the core of our brand. We take a very intentional approach to formulation, focusing on ingredients that are clean, effective, and genuinely beneficial for the skin. Our 100% natural lip balms are made with ingredients so clean you'll recognize every single one, ghee, avocado oil, coconut oil, shea butter, beeswax, jojoba oil, and vitamin E. It's basically a skincare recipe your grandmother would approve of… but we still recommend keeping it on your lips, not your salad. Our philosophy is simple: every ingredient has a purpose. We avoid unnecessary additives and focus on nourishing, skin-supportive components that align with our commitment to safe, effective sun care.

Who is the ideal Miami Sun Care customer, and how do your products fit into their daily routine?

Miami Sun Care is truly for everyone. Our 100% natural lip balms are made for daily use by all ages, men, women, and children, because they're gentle, nourishing, and made with clean, skin-friendly ingredients. They fit effortlessly into any routine, whether someone is heading to work, school, the beach, or simply wants healthier, better-feeling lips throughout the day. As we expand into our full sun-care line, that same philosophy will carry through. Our future sun-tan lotions, oils, after-sun products, and moisturizers are being developed with the goal of creating sun-care that feels good, performs well, and is truly made for everyone.

As the brand continues to grow, what are your goals for Miami Sun Care in the next few years?

Our goal is to continue expanding Miami Sun Care in a thoughtful and sustainable way. We are already in retail, both in the United States and internationally, including online in Chile through Lider.cl, and the next step is to grow our product line through our current and future U.S. retail distributors and relationships. We're also focused on expanding our online presence so customers can access Miami Sun wherever they are.

"TRADITIONAL SUNSCREENS OFTEN FEEL HEAVY, STICKY, OR OVERLY CHEMICAL. WE WANTED THE OPPOSITE. MIAMI SUN CARE PRODUCTS ARE DESIGNED TO FEEL LIGHT, CLEAN, AND NOURISHING, SOMETHING YOU WANT TO WEAR EVERY DAY. "

Looking ahead, we plan to grow throughout South America, Europe, and the Asian market, bringing the Miami lifestyle to customers around the world. As we introduce new sun-care and after-sun products, our focus remains the same: creating clean, effective, Miami-inspired products that people trust and enjoy. Long term, we aim to establish Miami Sun as a leading sun-care brand recognized both nationally and internationally.

Where can people purchase Miami Sun Care from?

Miami Sun Care products are available at the NewLink stores throughout Miami International Airport, at Breeza Beachwear locations nationwide, at local service stations and convenience stores and selected supermarkets throughout South Florida, and at the service stations along the Florida Turnpike statewide. Customers can also shop online through Amazon, Walmart.com, Lider.cl in Chile, and directly through our website at www.MiamiSunCare.com.

Any final words for readers?

Miami Sun Care was built with community in mind. We're proud to represent Florida, its culture, its energy, and its year-round sunshine. Every product we create is inspired by the way people actually live here: outdoors, active, and always in the sun. Miami Sun is more than a product line, it's a lifestyle brand. It reflects the spirit of Miami itself: vibrant, warm, diverse, and full of life. Our goal is to bring that feeling to every customer, whether they're on the beach, traveling, or simply going about their day. When someone picks up a Miami Sun product, we want them to feel a little bit of that Miami sunshine, no matter where they are in the world. Our mission is simple: make sun-care that people trust, enjoy, and feel connected to.





"OUR FORMULATIONS USE PREMIUM NATURAL INGREDIENTS, INCLUDING OUR SIGNATURE GHEE-BASED BLEND AND HIGH-END CARRIER OILS THAT HYDRATE AND PROTECT WITHOUT THE GREASY FEEL. "



Yeah, you, can get quality service with

SKNHAVEN BY NINA GONZALEZ

I'm 23 years old, born and raised in Miami. My family is Cuban, and I have two sisters. My family has always been a huge support system for me. From the beginning, they've encouraged me to pursue what I want and have always believed in me.

THE JOURNEY

An exclusive interview

Kindly tell us about yourself and SKHAVEN

I'm 23 years old, born and raised in Miami. My family is Cuban, and I have two sisters. My family has always been a huge support system for me. From the beginning, they've encouraged me to pursue what I want and have always believed in me. SKHAVEN started taking shape when I was in high school. I began taking classes and exploring different areas of the beauty industry, including brows and skincare. After graduating from aesthetics school, I realized that I really wanted to focus on skin. I became passionate about learning about different skin types, how to treat different concerns, and how to help people who are struggling with their skin. A lot of people come in feeling frustrated about acne or other concerns, and I wanted to be educated enough to understand their skin and create treatments that actually help.

When did your interest in skincare begin?

I was about 12 when I really started getting into skincare. I would go to CVS or Walgreens and look at all the different products. I remember Clean & Clear was really popular, and I would recommend it to my friends. I've always been interested in skincare, makeup, and beauty. Growing up with two sisters and a very girly family, I was constantly surrounded by those things. After high school, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I tried college for a semester because my parents wanted me to have that traditional college experience, but I wasn't happy. One of my friends suggested that I go to aesthetics school because I had always loved beauty. At the time, becoming an Esthetician wasn't something I heard much about, so I never really considered it as a career.

So once I started researching schools, everything clicked. I toured a school and immediately knew that I wanted to pursue it.

What was your journey like from aesthetics school to eventually starting SKHAVEN?

It was definitely challenging. While I was in aesthetics school, I was also working as a server. I would go to school during the day, work from the afternoon until late at night, and then have to wake up early the next morning for school. I was 18 or 19, so I was juggling a lot, but I genuinely loved aesthetics school. I loved learning, meeting other women in the industry, and working with my instructor. After graduating, finding my first job was difficult because I didn't have much experience working on clients. A lot of med spas wanted someone with experience, so I faced quite a few rejections before eventually working at two different med spas. Those experiences taught me a lot about what I did and didn't want to do. I noticed that some places treated every client with essentially the same facial. I didn't agree with that approach. I believe every person deserves a customized treatment based on their skin, concerns, and goals. That became something I really wanted to bring into SKHAVEN



Even if they don't see dramatic results immediately, I want them to understand that skincare is a process. You have to trust the process and be consistent. One of the treatments I'm especially proud of is Nina's Matcha Ritual. I researched the benefits of matcha and wanted to explore how I could incorporate it into a facial. The treatment is designed to clarify and smooth the skin, while helping reduce the appearance of redness and supporting acne-prone skin.

"One of the treatments I'm especially proud of is Nina's Matcha Ritual. I researched the benefits of matcha and wanted to explore how I could incorporate it into a facial. The treatment is designed to clarify and smooth the skin, while helping reduce the appearance of redness and supporting acne-prone skin. "

-NINA GONZALEZ
FOUNDER OF SKNHAVEN

I also incorporate a lip infusion with hyaluronic acid during the treatment. It's something I created because I wanted to offer an experience that felt both relaxing and results-driven.

What is one of the biggest lessons you've learned about skincare?

Don't believe everything you see online. There are so many influencers and celebrities launching skincare lines, and people automatically trust the products because they love the person behind the brand. But that doesn't necessarily mean the product is right for their skin.

What do you want clients to feel when they leave SKHAVEN?

I want everyone to leave feeling better than when they came in. People are dealing with stress from work, family, and everyday life, so I want their experience to give them a moment to relax and feel good about themselves. Of course, I want them to feel more confident in their skin.

Nina Gonzalez

Founder of Sknhaven





An Exclusive Interview

Education is a huge part of skincare. I want my clients and I to be on the same page so they feel confident and can trust that we're working toward the same goal.

What are you most excited to introduce next at SKHAVEN?

I want to continue developing and promoting Nina's Matcha Ritual because I think there's so much more to explore when it comes to the connection between skincare and overall wellness. I'm also very passionate about helping people with acne-prone skin. Acne can really affect someone's confidence, and I want to help people feel better about their skin while actually addressing the concern. I'm continuing to research medical-grade skincare products and work with brands that can support those results. Not every product is going to work for everyone, so I want to make sure I'm recommending things that are actually worth my clients' time and money. Ultimately, I want people to come to SKHAVEN knowing they can trust me. I want it to be a place where they feel comfortable, confident, and cared for.

What is the best way for someone to book with you?

The best way is through my Instagram. I have a Linktree where clients can book appointments, schedule consultations, and choose from different treatment options, including first-time appointments. It's also a great way to stay connected with me and see what I'm working on.

What do you think people get wrong when choosing skincare products?

I think people often choose products based on popularity instead of what their skin actually needs. I always recommend finding a licensed Esthetician who takes the time to understand your skin and create a treatment plan for you. You shouldn't feel like you're going into a treatment room and having someone randomly put products on your face. You should understand what you're treating, why you're treating it, and what the goal is. Education is a huge part of skincare. I want my clients and I to be on the same page so they feel confident and can trust that we're working toward the same goal.

What would you like readers to know about the future of SKHAVEN?

I have a lot more coming. Ideas are always coming to me about how I can improve myself and make SKHAVEN better. There are always new ways to grow. I'm working on more services and different treatments that are both relaxing and results-driven. I want there to be something for everyone while continuing to focus on what I do best.



> FOR ME, IT'S ALL ABOUT CLEAN INGREDIENTS, SUSTAINABILITY, MINIMAL EFFORT, AND NATURAL BEAUTY.
>
> *-Merrin Schnabel*
> *Founder of Madge Beauty*

To begin, tell us a little about yourself and Madge Beauty.

I'm Merrin Schnabel, founder and CEO of Madge Beauty. In full transparency, I'm a serial entrepreneur. Over the years, I've had multiple businesses and built a background across coaching, public speaking, media commentary, modeling, acting, and social media. I've always loved beauty, aesthetics, and anything visually pleasing. That passion honestly comes from my family, especially my mother and grandmother, who always emphasized the importance of taking care of yourself and feeling good in your own skin. For years, I knew I wanted to create a product, but I didn't know exactly what that product was. I sat with the idea for a long time because I didn't want to force it. Then one day, I had this lightbulb moment. I've always loved lip gloss and clean beauty, but I couldn't find products that gave me that effortless glow without looking overly done. So I created my own. Madge Beauty was built around the idea of clean, effortless beauty, products that make you feel confident, glowy, and put together in minutes. I'm also a mum to two beautiful boys and a wife, and honestly, being a mother is my number one role. But as women, we play so many roles, and I wanted to create products that worked with our busy lifestyles instead of against them. That's really where Madge was born.

You've had such a dynamic career across media, modeling, and entrepreneurship. What inspired the transition into beauty?

Honestly, beauty has always naturally aligned with who I am. Between my modeling background, media work, and just genuinely loving aesthetics and skincare, beauty felt like a very organic direction for me. I'm also a huge advocate for that "clean girl" makeup look. At the same time, the entrepreneur in me was always looking for the next thing I could build and create. I knew I wanted to use my platform to empower women and create products that helped women feel beautiful, confident, and comfortable in their own skin. So Madge became that intersection of beauty, confidence, entrepreneurship, and empowerment.

You mentioned being a mother while also juggling multiple businesses and projects. How do you balance everything?

Balance is honestly something you have to consciously practice every single day. For me, I look at life through four pillars: self, family, home, and work. I've realized that if one of those pillars is receiving too much energy while another is neglected, that's when I start to feel overwhelmed or unbalanced. Self was actually the hardest lesson for me because, initially, I felt guilty prioritizing myself. I thought it was selfish. But now I understand that if I'm not pouring into myself, I can't properly pour into my children, my marriage, my business, or anything else. So now, whenever I feel overwhelmed, I pause and ask myself: Which pillar is out of harmony right now? Awareness is everything. Sometimes women try to do everything all at once, and it becomes mentally exhausting.

But when you break things down, prioritize what truly needs attention, and give yourself grace, it becomes much more manageable. I'm also a big believer in baby steps. You don't have to fix everything overnight. Balance is a practice.

Madge Beauty was inspired by your personal beauty journey and family influence. How did those early experiences shape the vision behind the brand?

From a very young age, I always knew I wanted to do something big in life. I've never been someone who plays small. Watching my mother and grandmother take care of themselves, whether it was putting on lipstick or simply doing small things that made them feel confident, really stayed with me. I saw how beauty could empower women emotionally, not just physically. At the same time, I personally gravitated toward natural beauty rather than heavy glam. I wanted to create products that enhanced women instead of masking them. Everything about Madge happened very organically because it aligned so deeply with who I already was. I genuinely believe we all have certain desires placed on our hearts for a reason, and Madge felt like one of those things that was always meant to happen.

Madge Beauty is rooted in the "clean girl" aesthetic and effortless beauty. What does that philosophy mean to you?

For me, it's all about clean ingredients, sustainability, minimal effort, and natural beauty. I wanted products that were multi-use, easy to apply, and realistic for modern women who are busy and time-poor. We don't always have 30 minutes to sit in front of a mirror doing full glam. Madge is really about that "makeup, no makeup" look. For example, our Lip & Cheek Tint can be used on your lips, cheeks, and eyes. Our primers are designed to give you that healthy glow instantly without needing layers of makeup. The products are effortless, minimal, and designed to help women feel confident in their natural beauty.


Taylor
Lip Oil
Madge.
Sabrina
Lip Oil
Madge.
Charli
Lip Oil
Madge.







MADGE BEAUTY BY MERRIN

Why was simplifying beauty routines so important to you when creating the products?

Because life moves so fast now. Whether you're a mother, entrepreneur, student, or working professional, everyone is busy. People don't necessarily have time for complicated beauty routines anymore. I took that into consideration while creating Madge. I wanted products that were quick, practical, and multi-functional while still delivering beautiful results. And honestly, I think women are moving more toward natural beauty now anyway. There's something so powerful about feeling confident with minimal makeup and healthy-looking skin.

Madge Beauty has grown incredibly fast in a short amount of time. What do you believe contributed to that rapid success?

We actually turn two this July, which still feels surreal. I honestly believe the biggest driving force has been passion, discipline, and experience. I've spent years working across industries, building businesses, networking, learning from mistakes, and understanding branding and marketing. So when I launched Madge, I already understood what needed to happen behind the scenes for a brand to grow. From the beginning, I knew brand awareness was going to be key. We focused heavily on visibility, marketing, networking, and strategic partnerships early on. I'm also very well connected through years of working in media and business, and I utilized those networks intentionally. But more than anything, I think you have to go into business fearlessly. You can't play small. You have to believe in your vision before anyone else does.

At its core, Madge Beauty is about confidence and empowerment. What impact do you hope the brand continues to have on women?

I want women to feel bold, confident, empowered, and comfortable in their own skin. I want Madge to always feel like a community, not just a beauty brand. I want women to put on our products and have what I call a "Madge Moment," where they genuinely feel good about themselves. That confidence and self-belief is everything.

Where can people currently purchase Madge Beauty products?

We're available online worldwide through our e-commerce platform, and we also ship globally. We're incredibly grateful to now be stocked in retailers like Free People and Anthropologie in the US, which has been such an exciting milestone for us. And our retail expansion continues to grow every day.

Upcoming Projects: Merrin's New Podcast Beyond beauty and entrepreneurship, Merrin is now preparing to launch her highly anticipated podcast, a platform centered around bold moves, confidence, entrepreneurship, motherhood, and navigating modern womanhood.

Who would you say the podcast is for?

I want it to stay broad because I think so many people can relate to these conversations. Naturally, I think it'll attract women in business, mothers, entrepreneurs, and women trying to balance multiple responsibilities, because that's my world too. But overall, the energy of the podcast is really about confidence, boldness, growth, and becoming unstoppable. Anyone who resonates with that can take something valuable from it.

What can listeners expect from the podcast?

We've got some incredible guests lined up from both Australia and the US, which I'm very excited about. The conversations are going to be empowering, honest, and educational. I really want people to walk away with practical wisdom and inspiration they can actually apply to their lives. I also want to speak more openly about the realities of entrepreneurship. Social media often only shows the highlight reel, the success, the expansion, the exciting moments. But behind every successful business are sleepless nights, sacrifices, setbacks, pressure, and an incredible amount of hard work. I think those conversations need to happen more often because people deserve to see the real side of building something.

Finally, what advice would you give to women who want to start their own businesses or pursue their dreams?

Take the leap of faith. If you have a desire in your heart, it's there for a reason. Stop worrying about what people think, stop listening to fear, and stop talking yourself out of your potential. The moment you stop letting fear control your decisions and simply go for it, everything changes.
You learn along the way. You grow along the way. But you have to start. Madge is just getting started, and I'm incredibly grateful for every experience that led me here. Every challenge, every lesson, every risk, it all mattered And I truly believe there's room for women to have it all.

SUNNY FERGUSON

GLOW BAE AESTHETICS

To begin, you kindly tell us about yourself and GB Aesthetics?

GlowBae Aesthetics, or "GB Aesthetic" as I usually shorten it, officially opened in 2021. The main reason why I decided to open my own practice was because I wanted to create something more inclusive here in Miami, especially for people of color. Skin of color has always been something that resonated very deeply with me because earlier in my career, I was actually severely burned during a skin treatment by someone who didn't fully understand how to properly treat my skin type. That experience stayed with me. When I decided to open my own practice, I knew that inclusivity and education would be at the forefront of everything I do. And not just for skin of color, I'm also a member of the LGBTQ+ community, which is another huge part of why creating a safe and welcoming environment became so important to me. I want people to walk into GB Aesthetics and feel seen, understood, represented, and safe. I truly don't care how someone identifies, I want everyone to know they are welcome here. And beyond treating skin on the surface, I really believe there's an internal aspect to skin health and overall wellness. So I've built GB Aesthetics around creating a complete experience that focuses not only on external skin concerns, but also on the internal factors that contribute to healthy skin overall.

Could you also tell us more about your professional experience and journey within the beauty industry?

I've been in the beauty industry now for about 15 years, so I've had a lot of hands-on experience working with clients over the years. But honestly, my real specialty came from the continued education I pursued for myself. I'm huge on education. I'm constantly taking classes, certifications, trainings, at least three to four courses every year, because I never want to feel like I know everything. That mindset is extremely important to me. I also decided to go back to nursing school because I wanted to deepen my understanding of the human body and connect that knowledge directly into skin health and aesthetics. I truly believe education is what makes you a well-rounded provider. The industry evolves constantly, and if you're not continuing to learn, you're doing yourself, and your clients, a disservice.

You mentioned your own personal skin struggles earlier. How did those experiences eventually lead you into skincare and aesthetics?

I originally started in hair and makeup, and honestly, I still have a little love for that world. But over time, I realized I wanted to do something deeper and more transformative. What really shifted things for me was my own skin journey. I didn't really struggle with my skin growing up. It wasn't until my mid-20s that I started experiencing congestion, acne, pigmentation, all these changes that completely affected my confidence. And although I had already attended cosmetology school, the reality is that skincare was only a very small portion of the curriculum. A lot of people don't realize that. I remember getting my very first facial, and it completely changed my perspective. I was like, "Wow, this is empowering." It opened up a whole new world for me that I instantly fell in love with. That experience led me to fully transition into aesthetics because I realized how powerful skincare could be, not just physically, but emotionally too. I wanted to help people who felt lost and overwhelmed the same way I once did.

You've spoken openly about being severely burned during a treatment earlier in your career. How did that experience shape your passion for helping others?

That experience honestly changed everything for me. It was bittersweet because while it was traumatic, it also forced me to educate myself on a much deeper level. The person treating me didn't fully understand skin of color, and when the damage happened, I felt completely lost. I had to figure out how to heal my own skin. Going through that process made me realize that I never wanted other people to feel the way I felt, confused, unsupported, and unsure of what to do next. That became my purpose. I became deeply focused on understanding which treatments, ingredients, and protocols are actually safe and effective for skin of color because many treatments simply are not formulated or tested with melanated skin in mind. A lot of the clinical studies and skincare data available today still aren't heavily centered around people of color, and that's something the industry absolutely needs to improve. So for me, education became everything. I use my platform not only to treat clients, but to educate them and empower them throughout their skincare journey.

What eventually led you to officially open your own practice in 2021?

Over the years, I worked in different environments where I gained experience and learned a lot, but eventually I reached a point where I no longer felt aligned with certain spaces. I kept feeling like my clients weren't truly being supported the way they deserved to be. That honestly broke my heart. At first, I didn't even feel ready to open my own business.


face reality
Certificate of Completion for
GB AESTHETICS
SUNNY FERGUSON
Face Reality Acne Expert Certification
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My original plan was to finish nursing school first and then eventually open my practice later. But I reached a point where I knew I had to take the leap. I had to trust myself and move with faith. I couldn't continue allowing clients to feel unseen or uncomfortable in spaces that weren't built with them in mind. So I opened GB Aesthetics and committed myself to creating the kind of space I wish existed earlier in my own journey.

Starting a business is never easy. What would you say were some of the biggest challenges you faced as a business owner?

Sunny: One of the biggest lessons I learned is that being a great provider doesn't automatically make you a great business owner. I knew skincare. I knew how to treat clients. But running a business? That was an entirely different world. I didn't really have a strong blueprint or mentor guiding me through every aspect of business ownership, so a lot of things I had to learn the hard way. But honestly, I've learned to be okay with that. I started building a community around myself, finding mentors, attending webinars, taking business classes, hopping on calls with people who were already successful in this industry. And most importantly, I allowed myself to stay teachable. I'm still learning every single day, and I'm completely okay with that because growth never stops.

One thing you emphasize heavily is that skin transformation takes time. How do you educate your clients on the importance of consistency and realistic expectations?

Transparency is huge for me. I'm very honest with clients from the very first consultation because I think that sets the tone for the entire journey. A lot of people want immediate results, and I completely understand why, especially when skin concerns are affecting confidence. But real skin transformation takes time. One of the acne education programs I completed introduced the concept of the 12-week skin cycle, and once I started implementing that framework in my practice, I saw incredible improvements in both client expectations and actual results. I always remind my clients: I'm here with you every step of the way. There will be good days and difficult days, but consistency is everything. I become their cheerleader through the process. Sometimes that means checking in with a text message, hopping on a call, or simply reassuring them that healing is happening even when progress feels slow. That support system matters just as much as the treatments themselves.

What are clients typically saying about their experiences at GB Aesthetics?

Honestly, my clients mean everything to me. One thing I hear consistently is that people feel safe, welcomed, and genuinely cared for when they come into my studio. They tell me they feel like they're at home here. That makes me incredibly proud because that's exactly the experience I want to create. Of course, I want people to leave with healthier, more confident skin, but I also want them to leave feeling emotionally supported and valued as a person. I'm naturally very personable, and I truly care about every single client who walks through my doors.

Where is GB Aesthetics currently located?

We're located in Miami, in a little pocket between Wynwood and Downtown called the Entertainment and Arts District. It's kind of this perfect in-between area where people call it different things depending on where they're coming from, but it's honestly such a great location and I absolutely love it.

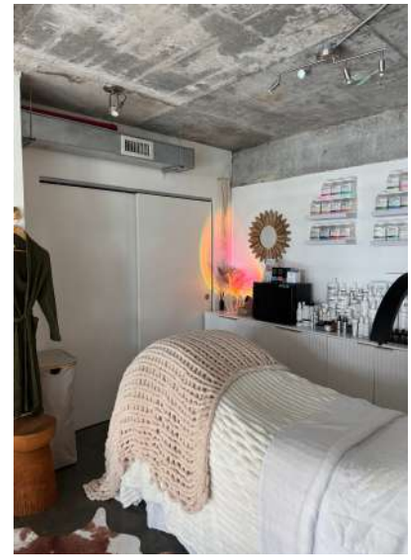
How can clients book services with you?

The easiest way is definitely through my booking site. I've made everything very simple and straightforward, especially for first-time clients. There are different options available whether someone wants an in-person consultation, a virtual consultation, or a consultation combined with treatment. And of course, if clients ever have questions, they can always reach out to me directly.

Finally, are there any closing words you'd love to share with our readers?

I think the biggest thing I want people to know is that representation and inclusivity truly matter. Creating a safe space for underrepresented communities, especially people of color and members of the LGBTQ+ community, will always remain one of the biggest priorities for me. I want GB Aesthetics to continue being known as one of the most inclusive beauty spaces in Miami, where everyone feels welcome, supported, and empowered in their skincare journey.







MY SECRET

HAIR GROWTH BY CARMEN SANCHEZ

An exclusive look into motherhood, success, and resillence. Carmen Sanchez shares about her journey on being a single mum and running a successful business

ABOUT THE FOUNDER!

I'm a hardworking woman and a business owner, and I decided to create my hair product because of my own experience. I started losing my hair because of stress, and this is how My Secret Hair Growth was born. I started creating my shampoo at home, in my kitchen, and then I sent it to a lab. This hair product is very personal and very important to me. I have been an esthetician for 20 years, but my hairline is only two years old. It started with one shampoo, and now I have 15 hair care products.

BEFORE CREATING YOUR HAIR LINE, YOU SPENT YEARS WORKING IN PLASTIC SURGERY AND BUILDING YOUR CAREER. WHAT LED YOU TO TAKE A DIFFERENT PATH?

I used to work for a plastic surgery practice for 10 years, and it was hard. Having a business and not being able to have the time between taking care of my son and having time for work was difficult. This is how everything started. I started working from home while still working with plastic surgery, and at the same time, I was going to school so I could learn more about skincare. It was important for me as a mom to be able to have time for my son. It wasn't easy, especially when you don't have family and when you are a single mom. But you need to believe in yourself and try.



WHAT WAS IT LIKE CREATING YOUR FIRST SHAMPOO FROM YOUR OWN KITCHEN?

It was not easy to do something you're not used to. My specialty is skincare, and I'm an esthetician, so creating a hair shampoo was a challenge. I started in the kitchen of my home and then brought the shampoo to a lab so other people could try it and see the difference. My hair shampoo is 100% natural. All of my ingredients are natural. They include things like coconut and rosemary, so everything smells natural, like rosemary and coconut. Now, from one shampoo, I have 15 hair care products.

WHAT INSPIRED THE INGREDIENTS AND THE PRODUCTS THEMSELVES?

When I started losing my hair, I went to the doctor and he told me there was nothing they could do. I went home depressed, and I started in my kitchen with all these ingredients. I made the shampoo, and it worked. A month later, I started seeing my hair growing. I was like, "Oh, finally, something is working." I decided to share this journey with more people. Even the hair you see on me right now is thanks to my hair product. I used to suffer from alopecia and I lost my hair. It was stressful and depressing because I'm in a business where I have to look good for my clients.

WHAT MAKES MY SECRET HAIR GROWTH DIFFERENT?

The benefit of this hair product is to help regrow your hair when somebody is losing their hair. It helps stop hair loss while also helping you have healthy, shiny hair. That is one of the reasons why natural ingredients are so important because I don't have chemicals in my hair products. For me, it's about creating something with my heart and with love. I believe that when you do something with your heart and with love, you can do anything you want.

YOU HAVE BUILT YOUR CAREER WHILE ALSO BEING A SINGLE MOM. WHAT HAS ENTREPRENEURSHIP TAUGHT YOU ABOUT BELIEVING IN YOURSELF?

It has taught me to believe in myself and never give up. Being a mother, working and building my business is not always easy, but every challenge makes me stronger and helps me keep going. Sometimes when you're a single mom, you think you are not going to be able to do something. But sometimes you have to make the effort and say, "If somebody else did it, why can't I?" Especially in my case, my son is autistic, and I say, "I have to try. I have to do it. If I don't do it, who else is going to do it for me? I have nothing to lose."





WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHER SINGLE MOTHERS WHO WANT TO START A BUSINESS?

I would tell them to believe in themselves and not be afraid to start. You don't have to wait for the perfect moment to start. Being a mother can be a motivation to follow your dreams and to do what you want to do. I know so many women who stay home and don't believe in themselves, thinking there is nothing there for them. But there are so many things you can do. You can work from home and you can do something. The most important thing is to do something.

YOUR STORY AS A MOTHER SEEMS TO BE A BIG PART OF WHY YOU BUILT YOUR BUSINESS. WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU?

This is the first time I've had an interview where somebody gave me the opportunity to talk about my situation as a mom. Being a mom, especially when you have a special needs child, is not easy. You don't have time for yourself. You want to do things, and sometimes you're not able to do them. This is why I decided that I have to do everything for my son. I want to be able to spend more time with him and give him a good quality of life. I wanted to be able to stay home and do what I have to do. That was very important to me.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR MY SECRET HAIR GROWTH?

I want my brand to be recognized around the world, to keep creating good quality products and to see myself on top of the business. In just two years, the hair line has done very well, and that makes me believe even more in what I'm doing. I believe in myself, and I know I'm going to make it.

YOU ARE ALSO STEPPING INTO THE FRAGRANCE WORLD WITH DELISHA JACOBS. TELL US ABOUT IT.

I have a new perfume called Delisha Jacobs. It is made in Italy, and I have a partner in Italy. We decided to work together to bring the perfume to the U.S. for the first time. It is a big challenge for me, but I believe in myself and I know I'm going to make it. The perfume was created five years ago, and now, for the first time, it is going to be available in the U.S. For me, perfume feels like elegance. It's not about how strong the perfume is. It has to be about the way you feel when you put your perfume on. I always wear perfume, but this one is something else. When you put it on, it's delicious.

WHERE CAN PEOPLE PURCHASE YOUR PRODUCTS?

People can purchase My Secret Hair Growth products through my website, social media, and directly at the spa. The perfume will be available online through the Dalisha Jacobs perfume website. The hair products and the perfume will have separate websites.

"YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE PERFECT MOMENT TO START. BEING A MOTHER CAN BE A MOTIVATION TO FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS AND TO DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO. "

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE READERS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR STORY?

The most important thing for me is being able to share my story as a businesswoman and as a mom. Being a mother while building a career is not always easy. You don't always have time for yourself, and sometimes you have to make sacrifices. That is why I decided I had to keep going. I wanted to build something meaningful while also creating a better quality of life for my family. I believe that when you do something with your heart and with love, you can do anything you want.



SOFIA NAIMI

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH FOUNDER OF S. NAIMI ADULT HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER, P.L.L.C.

Sofia: My name is Sofia Naimi, and I am a nurse practitioner in New York and the owner of my own aesthetic and wellness practice. My approach is centered around holistic care, where I look at each person as a whole and focus on enhancing health, beauty, and wellness from the inside out. My practice offers a range of services, including IV therapy, Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP), Platelet-Rich Fibrin (PRF), neurotoxins such as Botox, dermal fillers, Hydrafacials, and holistic weight management programs. While I offer a variety of aesthetic and wellness services, what matters most to me is providing personalized, individualized care. Ten people can walk through my doors with the same concern, but each person may have a completely different reason behind it. I want to understand the individual, not just treat the symptom or what we see on the surface. I want to understand their goals, their lifestyle, and what may be contributing to their concerns so we can create an approach that is right for them. At the heart of my practice is the belief that health and beauty are connected. My goal is not to change who someone is or make them look like someone else. They are already beautiful. My role is simply to enhance what is already there while helping them feel healthier, more confident, and more comfortable in their own skin.

YOU HAVE WORKED IN HEALTHCARE FOR OVER A DECADE. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO MOVE FROM NURSING INTO AESTHETIC MEDICINE AND EVENTUALLY START YOUR OWN COMPANY?

I have been in healthcare for over a decade, with much of my career focused on oncology and health coaching. During COVID, I experienced one of the hardest moments of my life when my grandfather passed away from COVID in front of me. At the same time, I was caring for cancer patients and witnessing so much loss of so many lives. Those experiences changed the way I viewed healthcare. They made me realize that healthcare has to be about more than treating disease once it happens. I became increasingly passionate about prevention and helping people take a more proactive role in their health and well-being. While genetics certainly play a role in our health, I also believe that the choices we make every day, how we eat, sleep, manage stress, move our bodies, and care for ourselves, can have a meaningful impact on how we feel and how we live.

While I was still working in the hospital, I started my own concierge IV therapy business in Manhattan. That was my first step toward creating the kind of practice I had always envisioned, one centered around wellness, education, prevention, and personalized care. From there, my journey naturally expanded into aesthetic medicine. I realized that I could bring together the different areas of healthcare that I am passionate about and look at beauty and wellness through a more comprehensive lens. Today, I have the opportunity to combine evidence-based medicine, wellness, and natural aesthetics to help people feel healthier, more confident, and more comfortable in their own skin. For me, it has never been about simply changing someone's appearance. It is about helping people feel good, take care of themselves, and become the best version of themselves, from the inside out.

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YOU COMBINE BEAUTY, WELLNESS, AND HOLISTIC CARE. WHAT DOES "BEAUTY FROM WITHIN" MEAN TO YOU?

For me, health is beauty. When you feel healthy, you often have more energy, feel more confident, and simply feel better in your own skin and body. That is why I truly believe that beauty starts from within. My background in oncology, health coaching, and research has shaped the way I see the body. I do not look at the body as separate parts. It is a whole system, and so many factors can work together to influence how we feel and the concerns we may have. That is also why education is such a huge part of my practice. I want my clients to understand their options and make informed decisions rather than simply following the latest trend. I combine my healthcare background with a holistic approach to help each person look at their individual goals, lifestyle, and overall well-being. To me, "beauty from within" is not about chasing perfection. It is about taking care of yourself, feeling good in your body, and enhancing what is already there. When you feel good from within, I believe that confidence can naturally shine on the outside.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY HAS BEEN ONE OF THE BIGGEST FACTORS BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF YOUR BUSINESS?

I would say one of the biggest factors behind the success of my business has been personalized care and genuinely seeing each client as a human being, not just as a patient or an appointment on my schedule. Throughout my career, whether I was working as a nurse in the hospital, in health coaching, or in research, I always believed in taking the time to connect with the person in front of me. I remind myself that this person is somebody's mother, father, daughter, son, or loved one. At the end of the day, we are all human, and I believe people deserve to feel seen, heard, and cared for. Sometimes, it is as simple as taking an extra few minutes to get to know someone. Maybe they want to tell me about their family, their dog, something they are passionate about, or something important happening in their life. I never want the experience to feel like, "Hi, how are you? Here is your treatment. Goodbye." I believe that human connection has helped me throughout my entire career and has become a big part of my practice. My goal is for clients to feel comfortable, understood, and truly cared for almost like they are at home when they are here.



AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

S. NAIMI ADULT HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER, P.L.L.C.

What treatments do your clients love the most, and what makes your approach different?

My clients enjoy a variety of treatments, but some of the most popular are Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP)/ Platelet-Rich Fibrin (PRF) treatments, IV therapy, neurotoxins, fillers, Hydrafacials, and our holistic weight management programs. What makes my approach different is that I look at each person as a whole. I believe the body has an incredible ability to heal, restore, and regenerate itself, and I believe in supporting the body rather than simply focusing on one concern in isolation. Whether we are addressing the skin, overall wellness, or weight management, I want to understand what may be happening beneath the surface, not just treat what we can see. Education is also a huge part of my practice. I want my clients to understand their bodies, make informed decisions, and choose what is healthy and appropriate for their individual needs rather than simply following the latest trend. For me, aesthetics is never separate from health. I believe that when you support your health from within, the beauty naturally follows.

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You mentioned that PRP is one of your most prominent services. Can you tell us a little more about it?

Platelet-Rich Plasma, or PRP, is one of the treatments I personally love because it uses the body's own natural components to support the healing and regenerative processes. We draw a small amount of the patient's own blood and process it in a centrifuge to separate and concentrate the platelet-rich plasma. The PRP can then be used in targeted areas where we want to support collagen production and tissue regeneration. Essentially, we are using components from a person's own body to support the body's natural ability to repair and regenerate. Education is also a very important part of the process. I always remind my clients that their overall health and lifestyle matter. PRP is not a magic solution where you come in for a treatment and expect it to do everything for you. Taking care of your body, maintaining good nutrition, and supporting your overall wellness can all play an important role in achieving the best possible outcome. It is a treatment I personally believe in and incorporate into my own wellness routine, and it is something I have also shared with my family and clients. I think that personal experience is one reason I am so passionate about educating people about it.

You built your business from a medical background rather than a traditional business background. What were some of the biggest challenges you faced as an entrepreneur?

Entrepreneurship is a completely different world. You are never really taught how to be an entrepreneur in school, especially not in nursing school. In healthcare, you are taught to follow a structure, follow protocols, and build a stable career.



There is a clear path in front of you. Entrepreneurship is almost the opposite. There is no guaranteed path, no syllabus to follow, and very little stability. For me, one of the biggest challenges was learning to become comfortable with uncertainty. You have to take risks without knowing whether they will work. You have to make decisions without having all the answers and create your own path instead of following one that has already been laid out for you. When something does not work in school, you can study harder, ask a professor for guidance, and move on to the next chapter. In entrepreneurship, when something does not work, there is no professor handing you the next chapter. You have to rewrite the syllabus yourself and keep going. Coming from a conventional job that offered structure and stability, entrepreneurship was a huge shift for me. But it also taught me resilience. Every challenge forced me to think differently, trust myself a little more, and keep building even when I was unsure of what the next step would look like. I am still learning every day, and I think that is what makes entrepreneurship both challenging and exciting. You never really have all the answers, you just learn, adapt, and continue moving forward.

Your personal journey as an immigrant and oldest daughter has clearly shaped you. How has your story influenced the entrepreneur you are today?

Being an immigrant, being a female, and being the oldest daughter in a family of six children came with a lot of responsibility from a very young age. My parents worked incredibly hard to provide the basics for our family. They worked minimum-wage jobs, and as the oldest, I naturally felt the need to step up and become a leader. I started working and financially providing for myself when I was 15 years old. From an early age, I became a problem solver, not just for myself, but often for my family as well. I learned how to figure things out without always having someone there to show me the way.

My parents gave us a roof over our heads, food, and always encouraged us to get an education, but there were still many things in life that I had to learn and navigate on my own. That experience shaped the way I approach entrepreneurship today. When I started my business, I did not have a roadmap, a mentor, an investor, or anyone telling me exactly what to do. At first, it was simply a small side project that I was passionate about. But I approached it the same way I had learned to approach life: figure it out, solve the problem in front of you, learn from what does not work, and keep moving forward. Growing up with those responsibilities gave me a level of independence and resilience that I carry into my business every day. I learned early on that you may not always know exactly what to do or have someone to guide you, but you can take the next step, learn along the way, and continue building from there.

As your company continues to grow, what is your vision for the brand?

My vision is to create a space where people feel genuinely seen, understood, and cared for. I want to bring together my experience in medicine, aesthetics, and holistic care to create something that goes beyond simply treating what we see on the outside. I want every person who walks through my doors to leave with a better understanding of their body, their health, and what is truly right for them. Education is a big part of that. I don't want people to feel like they are simply following the latest beauty trend. I want them to feel empowered to make informed decisions about their health and their appearance. As the practice grows, I want to stay true to what I believe in trust, education, personalized care, and results that feel natural and authentic to the individual. I want to create an experience where beauty and wellness are not treated as two separate things, but as part of the same journey. Ultimately, I want people to leave feeling healthier, more confident, and more connected to themselves. If someone walks out of my practice feeling like they have been truly listened to, learned something about their health, and feel a little more confident in their own skin, then that is the kind of impact I want to create.

Where can readers connect with you and book your services?

They can book through our website, innerbeautyglow.org, or call the number listed on our website. They can also find us on Instagram and TikTok at InnerBeautyGlow, where we share educational content, treatments, and updates. We are located in Dix Hills, Long Island, and we are excited to work with you and help you enhance your health, beauty, and wellness from the inside out.



DAYANA PORRUA

Founder of GICAM Scents

THE INSIDER'S LOOK: EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH FOUNDER

GICAM started from a very simple beginning. Tell us how it all started.

It started in a very simple way. I started selling fragrances in a car. I did everything. We went to the client's house, we did the refills, we did the whole process. Then I started seeing how every day, every client would recommend a friend or a relative. That feedback was a way of saying, *we are creating a need for our clients*. Seeing how that need could become part of more people's lives and more families was one of the reasons that made me keep going.

Where did the name GICAM come from?

The name has a much deeper meaning for me than any other commercial name. GICAM comes from my daughters, Gianna and Camila Martínez. I always tell my husband that, without ever imagining where we could get to, I wanted something that would personalize us. They have grown, and they have seen GICAM grow. I hope that tomorrow, when they grow up and look back, they will see how much we built and how everything started.



Photographed by Shay Walker Photography

You often describe fragrance as something connected to memories and emotions. Where does that personal connection to scent come from?

I always say that each fragrance is like music. It makes you go back to a moment, to a place, to a person. It transports you to a stage of your life. That is what I have tried to carry into my fragrances. From every trip we have taken, from places and experiences that my husband and I have lived, or experiences with our family and our daughters, I always try to bring something back. I don't only want you to smell good. I want you to feel good inside a space. That is what I always try to achieve.

GICAM has grown into much more than fragrances. What can customers find today?

Today, GICAM is much more than what we started with. I always say that we started with a diffuser and a fragrance, and today we already have different types of diffusers, looking for the needs of each space and each client. We have a wide selection of exclusive fragrances, but we have also been expanding into our body line with body oils, creams, body mists, scrubs and soaps.

The nice thing is that each person can choose a fragrance for their home, but they can also create a ritual and create a moment. More than selling a fragrance to a client, I want to sell them an experience around GICAM.

You also create personalized scent experiences for homes and businesses. How do you help someone find the right fragrance?

I always say that listening to the client is very important. I still do that part a lot. I meet with the client, I listen to what they want to achieve, and many times I consider it a challenge for me. Not every place has the same fragrance. I feel that a restaurant has one fragrance, a spa has another and a gym has another.

Sometimes I feel like I have that gift of entering a place and saying, I feel that this fragrance is for this place. I like to listen to the client, understand what they want to achieve and then find the fragrance that gives personality to the brand. It becomes an identity. Then, when they come back every month and tell me that their clients are asking, What fragrance do you have here? Why does it smell so good? That is one of the things I love to achieve.

GICAM is celebrating another anniversary this September. What makes you most proud when you look back?

One of the things that gives me the most pride is looking back and saying, *wow, look how much we have grown*. My husband has always been pushy every day. We now have our physical store, our online store, our team and so many clients who welcome us into their homes and businesses. We also have a van that allows us to provide service to our clients. But something that excites me the most is seeing clients who have been using our products for years. GICAM has become something they cannot miss. They take the fragrances with them when they travel, they have them in their cars and they use them in their homes. GICAM has become part of their routine, their home and their business. That excites me so much. I feel like we are still just starting. There is so much more to grow and expand.

What is your vision for GICAM as the brand continues to grow?

My vision has always been to build a brand that grows but does not lose the essence with which it was created. After each stage of growth, there is a lot of work. There are good days, difficult days and many moments where you are learning as you go. But when you really believe that you are building something and you are consistent, things start to take shape. For me, the most beautiful thing is still looking back and seeing how much we have grown without losing the essence of what we started with.



Photographed by Chad Baumer Photography & The Branded Boss Lady





By Dayana PORRUA

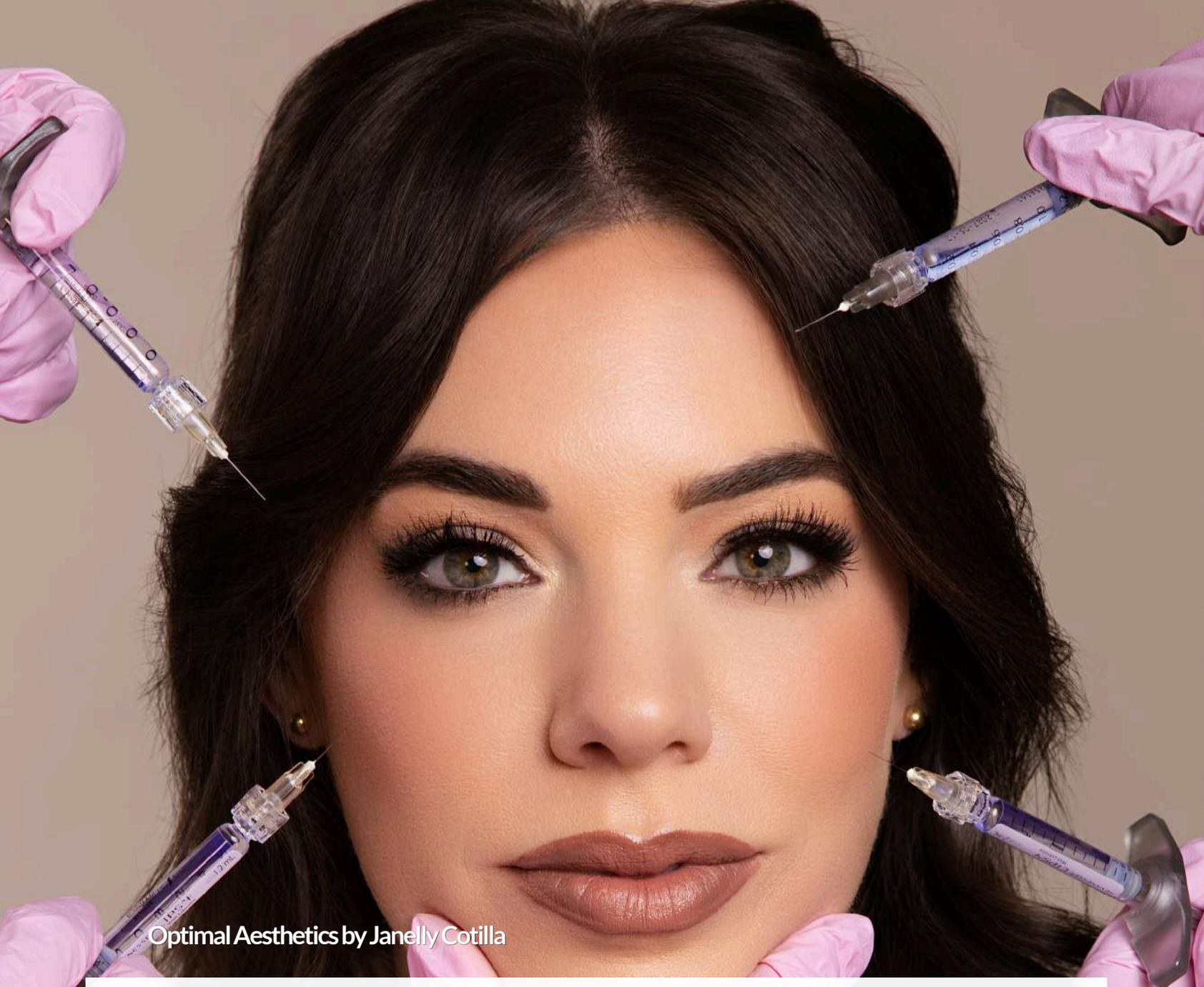
Where can readers discover GICAM?

Customers can find GICAM through our website, at our GICAM Scents boutique and through TikTok Shop. We are also continuing to expand and find new ways to bring GICAM to more people.

Finally, what would you say to someone who is starting with a small idea and wondering if it can really become something bigger?

Believe in what you are building and be consistent. When you start something small, you don't always know where it is going to take you. There are good days and difficult days, but you have to continue. When you really believe in what you are building, things start to take shape. I look back at where we started and where we are today, and I am proud of the growth. But at the same time, I feel that there is still so much more to do. The most important thing for me is to continue growing without ever losing the essence of GICAM.

" FOR ME, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING IS STILL LOOKING BACK AND SEEING HOW MUCH WE HAVE GROWN WITHOUT LOSING THE ESSENCE OF WHAT WE STARTED WITH."



Optimal Aesthetics by Janelly Cotilla

Kindly tell us about yourself and Optimal Aesthetics.

I always knew I wanted to work in healthcare from a very young age. I've always considered myself a caring person, so healthcare felt like a natural path for me. I initially started working at the front desk for a doctor who treated patients for addiction while also practicing primary care. Watching him work had a profound influence on me. He was incredibly dedicated to his patients and genuinely cared about their well-being. There were times when he would stay with patients until 10 o'clock at night because certain cases required additional attention. That experience taught me that medicine isn't just about the medicine itself. It's also about empathy and how you make people feel.

There's a phrase I've always carried with me: No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care. I learned that very early in my career, and it has stayed with me ever since. I eventually became a physician assistant and began working in primary care. One of my first positions after school was at a very busy clinic where I saw around 30 patients a day, Monday through Saturday. I was nervous at first because I was still building my experience, but over time, I developed strong relationships with my patients. They began specifically asking to see me, and that meant a lot.

It showed me that people were connecting not only with the medical care I provided, but with the way I cared for them as individuals. Eventually, I knew I wanted to build something of my own. That desire, along with everything I had learned throughout my career, ultimately led me to create Optimal Aesthetics.

THE GOAL IS TO CREATE GRADUAL, NATURAL LOOKING IMPROVEMENTS OVER TIME.

What inspired you to add aesthetics to your medical practice, and how has your primary-care background influenced the way you approach aesthetics?

I truly believe that the way you feel about your appearance can be part of your emotional well-being, and that emotional well-being can contribute to your physical well-being. When I first started offering aesthetics, it wasn't necessarily something I had planned from the beginning. When I opened my clinic, I faced some financial challenges and needed to find a service that patients could pay for directly while I continued working through the process of establishing my insurance contracts. That's how aesthetics became part of the practice. What was interesting was that many of my existing primary-care patients became my aesthetic clients because they already trusted me. Over time, I also began seeing aesthetic patients who eventually became primary-care patients. It really works both ways. When someone comes in for an aesthetic treatment, I'm still looking at the whole person. We talk about their health, their lifestyle, and what's happening in their lives. Sometimes, a conversation that begins with aesthetics can lead to an important medical discussion. That's one of the things I love most about having both sides of my practice. I'm able to combine my medical knowledge with aesthetics while making sure the patient's overall health and well-being are always part of the conversation.

Botox and microneedling are among the popular treatments at Optimal Aesthetics. What would you like first-time clients to understand about these treatments?

I think microneedling can be a great introduction to aesthetics for many patients. I often combine it with treatments such as PRP or other regenerative options, depending on the patient's individual needs. For some people, it can feel like a more comfortable starting point because they're not immediately beginning with an injectable treatment. I explain that microneedling creates controlled micro-injuries in the skin, which stimulates the body's natural healing and regeneration process. It can help improve the appearance and texture of the skin while supporting collagen production. I generally recommend a series of treatments rather than expecting one session to achieve everything. The goal is to create gradual, natural-looking improvements over time.

What I love about microneedling is that it can be appropriate for many different people when it's properly tailored to their individual needs. Once patients become comfortable with the process and understand how their skin responds, they may also feel more confident exploring other treatments. For me, the most important thing is making sure patients understand their options and feel comfortable with whatever treatment they choose.

Optimal Aesthetics offers several treatments, from facial balancing to laser hair removal. What makes your approach different from a traditional med spa?

I would say it's the medical foundation behind everything I do. For example, someone may come in wanting a full syringe of filler for their lips. Sometimes that may be appropriate, but sometimes it isn't. If you put too much filler into an area at once, you may not get the result the patient actually wants. Instead of creating height, you could end up pushing the lips forward. Sometimes doing less is better. I may recommend using less and allowing the tissue time to heal and adjust before deciding whether more is needed. A big part of my job is explaining why I do things the way I do. Patients sometimes come to me and say, "But another med spa does one milliliter," or "They didn't ask me to do this blood work." My response is that I'm not trying to operate like everyone else. I'm approaching it from a medical perspective. I want to make sure the treatment is appropriate and safe for the patient.

What has the journey of building Optimal Aesthetics taught you about yourself?

It has taught me that growth doesn't always feel comfortable. There have been difficult moments, especially in the beginning, but those experiences pushed me to become stronger, more confident, and more willing to trust myself. I've also learned that I don't have to do everything on my own. As a business owner, it can be easy to feel like you need to handle every single detail, but there comes a point when you have to recognize your strengths and understand when it's time to ask for help. Learning to delegate and surround myself with people who can support me in areas outside my expertise has made a big difference. The journey has taught me that building something meaningful isn't about doing everything yourself. It's about knowing what you bring to the table, being willing to grow, and recognizing when others can help you build something even stronger.

As you continue to grow Optimal Aesthetics and learn new treatments, what is your vision for the future of the practice?

I want to continue growing the aesthetics side of the practice, but I also genuinely love primary care. Taking care of my primary-care patients is still very important to me. One of the challenges with primary care is navigating insurance. There's a lot of work involved in getting things approved, even when you're doing it for the benefit of the patient. Despite those challenges, I still love the relationships I build with my primary-care patients and the opportunity to care for them over time. On the aesthetics side, I really enjoy training and continuing my education.

Every time I attend a training, I learn something new, and I get excited about bringing that knowledge back to my patients. Sometimes I even feel like I miss studying. Medicine is constantly evolving. There are always new techniques, technologies, and treatments emerging, and I want to continue learning and growing alongside them. Ultimately, my vision is to keep expanding my knowledge, developing the practice, and using everything I learn to provide the best possible care for my patients.

What advice would you give to other women who are building businesses while also managing family and other responsibilities?

Sometimes you need to take a step back and say, "I'm doing a good job." I think we can be so busy with everything that needs to get done that we forget to recognize how far we've come. You have to take things one day at a time. Give yourself permission to rest. Try to organize yourself, because sometimes it becomes "go, go, go," and you feel like you're everywhere at once. It's important to stop sometimes and realize how far you have come. And you also have to be willing to get uncomfortable. I've noticed that the times when I feel the most uncomfortable, nervous, or scared are often the times when I grow the most. If you always stay in your comfort zone and keep doing the same thing, nothing really changes. Sometimes you have to step outside your bubble, do something that scares you, and allow yourself to grow.


Janelly
Cotilla

TIJON KEY WEST

Exclusive Interview With Samantha Donohue, Founder of Tijon Key West

With Sense N' Style Magazine

Kindly tell us about yourself

I was first introduced to Tijon about six years ago, in 2020, when I was in St. Martin with my husband. At the time, I was an executive at L'Oréal, and my husband surprised me with a fragrance-making class. The class included everything I loved. It was about fragrance, and before L'Oréal, I actually had my own fragrance company called United Sense of America. Fragrance has always been something I loved. I jokingly told my husband, "When I'm ready to leave corporate, this is exactly the type of thing I would want to do."

A few years later, we had our daughter, and we realized that our corporate lives were not really giving us the lifestyle we wanted as parents. We wanted to do something entrepreneurial and raise our daughter differently. Because I had already experienced Tijon, I told my husband that I wanted to look into it. I contacted John, the founder, and asked if he would consider selling the St. Martin location. He wasn't interested in selling, but he had just started franchising. He told me that if I wanted to find my own location, he would help me set one up. At first, I was looking around the New York metropolitan area because that's where we lived. But my husband said, "We don't have to stay here. If we want to raise our daughter the way we want, let's find somewhere else." We had always visited Key West and loved the community. It had the three things we were looking for: community, diversity, and culture. Where we lived before, we had culture and diversity, but we didn't have the same sense of community.

Our goal was to do something we loved while raising a good human. When we compared commercial spaces in Key West with where we were living in New York, the costs were actually pretty similar. So we just took the leap. We sold our house in one weekend, packed up our home, our daughter, and our dog, and moved to Key West to make this dream a reality.

For someone discovering Tijon for the first time, how would you describe the experience?

Tijon is an experience where you create your own custom fragrance. What makes us different is that we are not just a fragrance bar. We are an actual fragrance lab. We have lab coats, beakers, pipettes, and a very science-focused setup, but we make it fun. We have more than 300 oils to choose from, so you can create something that is truly unique to you. A lot of fragrance-making places have pre-made fragrances that you blend together. With Tijon, you are working directly with individual oils and creating your own fragrance from the beginning. Your sense of smell is one of your strongest senses. So you are not just doing a fun activity. You are creating memories with whoever you came with, and then you get to take that memory home with you. Especially in destination locations like Miami and Key West, you can buy a shirt to remember your trip, but how much more special is it to create a fragrance that you can continue to wear and smell?

How long do Tijon fragrances typically last?

All of our fragrances are Eau de Parfum, which means they have a 25 percent oil concentration. That high oil concentration helps the fragrance last longer. We also offer a pure perfume upgrade with a 50 percent oil concentration, which gives you an even stronger fragrance.

Samantha, your journey from being a L'Oréal executive to becoming an entrepreneur is inspiring. What gave you the confidence to make that leap?

I am someone who would have more regrets over the things I don't do than the things I do. Luckily, my husband has a similar mindset. We both thought, "If it doesn't work, you can always go back to a corporate job." But you will never have the experience if you don't try. For me, I would rather try and fail than never try at all.

What is the Tijon class experience like?

We have three different classes. The first is our Express Class, which is about 30 minutes. You choose from our 40 most popular oils and 12 pre-blends, create your fragrance, test it on your skin, choose your favorite, and bottle it. Our most popular is the Mix & Match Class, which is 90 minutes. You get access to more than 300 oils and have more time to create your fragrance. Then we have our 101class which is up to three hours. This is for true fragrance lovers who want to create something very specific and really perfect their signature fragrance.





Tijon is an experience where you create your own custom fragrance. What makes us different is that we are not just a fragrance bar. We are an actual fragrance lab.

Do customers get to keep the fragrance they create?

Absolutely. You go through the entire process with us. We teach you how to build your fragrance, test it, and bottle it. One thing that makes Tijon different is that we keep every formula on file. So if you create something you love, you can always reorder it later. There is nothing worse than finding a fragrance you love and then never being able to find it again. We can also turn your fragrance into a lotion, body cream, body oil, or even a home and linen spray.

What makes the experience of creating your own signature fragrance so special?

We also get a lot of repeat customers. People sometimes come in feeling intimidated because they are not sure what they want. They might start with a shorter class and choose something safe. Then they come back and say, "Next time, I want to do the longer class," or, "I have always wanted a fragrance like this." They become more confident and really start enjoying the creative side of fragrance-making. One of my first customers was a young woman who was testing the different oils on her skin.

She smelled one of them and said, "This smells like my grandma." At first, you might think that is not necessarily a compliment, but she started tearing up. She said it reminded her of being at her grandmother's house and smelling all the flowers in her garden. She didn't care about any of the other fragrances anymore. That was the one she needed because it brought back such a strong memory. That is what makes fragrance so special.

Is Tijon an experience for everyone?

Absolutely. We have had customers as young as five or six years old, and we have had customers as old as 88. It is for families, individuals, fragrance lovers, and anyone who wants to try something creative. There is always someone there to guide you, so you are never just left on your own trying to figure everything out.

How do you give each location its own identity while staying true to the Tijon brand?

We do the same thing in Key West. We have four signature fragrances inspired by the area.
One is called Pilar, inspired by Ernest Hemingway's boat. It has notes of neroli, lemon, basil, vetiver, and musk. We also have Sunset Celebration, inspired by the famous sunset at Mallory Square. It has a brighter, more vibrant feeling with notes like black currant, orange blossom, lavender, and cedar. Boca Chica Breeze is our best seller and is inspired by the tropical environment around the Boca Chica naval base, and Cayo Hueso is the original name associated with Key West. That fragrance is deeper and richer, with oud, amber, citrus, cinnamon, and spice. The names and fragrances are connected to the history and personality of Key West. Our packaging is also created by local artist, Katlin Spain, so it has a very Key West feel. My store has a mural by Katlin with flamingos, chickens,pelicans, and bright colors. It feels like a relaxing beach setting. Miami has its own personality too. I would describe it as more Art Deco and Miami Vice-inspired.

Looking ahead, what excites you most about the future of Tijon? And what advice would you give to someone thinking about taking a leap into entrepreneurship?

I always say, just do it. You can always go back to what you were doing before. Personally, I regret the things I don't do more than the things I do. So try it. Even if you don't go all in right away, there are ways to start small. You can keep your current job while you begin building your business and figure out what works for you. There are a million different ways to try something, but I always say at least try.

How can people book a class or purchase a fragrance from Tijon?

You can find us on Instagram, and we share a lot of videos and information about what we do. You can also book through the Tijon website and choose the location you want to visit. You can find both Key West and Miami there. I always recommend checking our social media because it really shows the experience and tells the story of what we do.

DR. KACIAN BROWN

Pure Envy is about helping you become the version of yourself you have always wanted to be. We want to help with your anti aging goals, your skin, your weight, your glow and your overall radiance.

Kindly tell our readers a little about yourself?

I'm Dr. Kacian Brown, a board certified wound care specialist. That is where I spent most of my medical career until about four years ago, when I decided to go into private practice and open a med spa. That is where Pure Envy Med Spa was born. At Pure Envy, it is all about anti aging and self care. Our motto is simple: "Self care is not an option." Growing up, I was always very giving and focused on serving others. I rarely took care of myself. I was always making sure everybody else was okay: my mom, dad, sister, brother, even the dog and cat. Everything was taken care of, but there was never anything pouring back into me. I actually learned about self care as an adult. By my 30s, I realized that self care is not something you do when you have time. You actually have to make it a priority. You should probably do it first before you do anything else. That became the foundation of Pure Envy, and that has really been my journey.

We noticed the name Pure Envy Med Spa and wondered, why did you choose the name?

Oh, darling, because let me tell you something: you do want to be the envy! I believe in aging gracefully. There is absolutely nothing wrong with aging gracefully. But the real goal is that 20 years from now, you should look the same or even better. You do not need to look 20 years older. That is not a flex! Imagine 20 years from now, you look the same or better. That is the idea behind Pure Envy.

You need to be the envy. With the treatments we provide, you should get compliments. People should ask, "Oh my God, what is your skincare routine? What are you using? What have you done? You look so refreshed. You look so bright. You look amazing." That is the entire idea behind Pure Envy. And it is not just about the outside. We also take care of you from the inside through services like wellness treatments, weight loss, IV therapy and NAD. I always say, if you are over 30 and you are not looking into NAD, you have no idea what you may be missing. When you are low on energy, tired and groggy, you want to feel like yourself again. That is what we want to help with. When you wake up and look in the mirror, you should see the person you want to be. Pure Envy is about helping you become the version of yourself you have always wanted to be. We want to help with your anti aging goals, your skin, your weight, your glow and your overall radiance.

You always knew you wanted to become a doctor. You mentioned that you knew from the age of five. Could you tell us about growing up in Jamaica and eventually becoming a medical professional in the United States?

Growing up in Jamaica was very different, but I had an amazing childhood. It was absolutely wonderful. The school system in Jamaica is also a little more challenging than it is here. From the age of five, education was always very important to me. When I came to the United States, I actually found the education system easier. I was even placed ahead in a few grades, although they eventually had to hold me back because I was too young for certain grades. By the time I got to high school, I remember thinking, "This is old school." I never really had to do much homework or study. College was also very easy for me. I used to play this game where I would ask, "Tell me about a difficult class. I'll take it and pass it." I loved the challenge. I loved education, and I just loved school. When it came time for medical school, I was accepted to Meharry, but they wanted me to do a two year program. I was like, "Who, me? I'm from Jamaica. We don't do that!" So I respectfully declined and went to medical school in the Caribbean instead. I have always been a go getter. If one way did not work, I would find another way to make it happen. After medical school, I trained in New York and continued my education there. I trained at a hospital in Brooklyn, and eventually went into family practice because I wanted to help a variety of patients. I did not want to specialize at first. I wanted to do everything. Then I was introduced to wound care, and that became my specialty. I became board certified in wound care, and that was my focus for many years. A lot of people do not think about wound care because, honestly, it can be a little gross. But I love it because I can see the results from week to week. I am very results driven and results oriented.

So how did you transition from wound care into aesthetics?

A friend of mine once asked me, "Can you do my Botox?" And I was like, "What are you talking about?" She told me I could take a course, so I took a course in Botox and fillers. I initially did her Botox because she asked me to. Then she brought a friend, and that friend brought another friend. Before I knew it, I was doing Botox for all these people. Then I started doing fillers, and it just grew from there. But the real passion for aesthetics came from my mom. My mom had an accident. She slipped on a cube of ice, hit the back of her head and ended up having two brain surgeries. She had to start over with physical therapy and relearn how to walk and talk. When she became very ill, I noticed a huge change in her appearance. I remember looking at her and thinking, "Wait, how did you just age 20 years overnight?" Of course, I understood that illness had caused those changes, but it became a project for me. I started doing Botox, fillers, microneedling and PRP for my mom because I wanted to bring her glow back. Before she got sick, my mom was in her 60s and would attract 40 year old men! So I was like, "Wait a minute. I have your genes. I am not trying to go down that road. We are going to take care of this situation!" That is really where my passion came from. I saw what we could do with simple treatments and how much of a transformation was possible.



I wanted to bring those services to other people. I also started taking care of myself. At that point, I really did not do much self care. I was the person who would forget to take a vitamin because I was always saying, "I'll get to it." Then I realized, "I have those same genes. I need to do something for myself." So I started my own self care journey. I started doing IVs, Botox, fillers, PRP and other treatments. I also went on a weight loss journey and lost 40 pounds. I realized that if I want to give so much to everybody else, I have to be okay. I need my energy. I need to be able to function and actually help other people. I cannot do that if I am not taking care of myself. That has really been my journey with Pure Envy.

You spent years working in medicine and wound care before entering the aesthetic space. What do you think aesthetics offers that traditional medicine does not?

It helps prevent burnout. A lot of doctors and healthcare providers burn out very quickly. It is something that is not talked about enough. Some providers leave medicine altogether or develop a dislike for the profession because there is nothing pouring back into them. The aesthetic space can help prevent burnout. It keeps you going, and you are still helping people. It is just a different way of helping. We help people get up every morning and feel good about themselves when they look in the mirror. We give them energy and confidence to go out and do what they need to do. It is a different type of medicine.

I also think aesthetics can help with burnout for moms, dads and anyone with a stressful job. Think about your body as an engine. At the end of the day, you have to take care of your engine. If your engine runs out of oil, you do not have an engine anymore. You need your tune ups. You need your checkups. You need to take care of yourself. Traditional medicine often focuses on disease after it develops. I believe we should also focus on prevention. Why wait until you develop a disease? Why not decrease your stress, take care of yourself and focus on prevention? Stress is connected to so many health problems. If we can decrease stress and give something back to ourselves, maybe we can live longer and feel better while doing it.

Pure Envy was built around the idea that self care is not an option. What does that message mean to you, especially for women and healthcare professionals?

Self care is a priority. It is not an option. As I mentioned, I used to just go, go, go and take care of everybody and everything. Think about a teapot. If you keep pouring the water out and never put anything back in, eventually there is going to be nothing left to give. You are no good to anybody if you are not taking care of yourself. That is especially true for moms.

> I want people to come into Pure Envy and feel refreshed. I want them to feel like their most beautiful selves.

Moms are taking care of the house, cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, taking care of the kids, the dog, the plants and everything else. At the end of the day, they are exhausted. They go to bed, and nobody is pouring back into them. That is why you have to pour into yourself first. You need to take care of yourself so you can be all the roles you need to be and excel in those roles. That is why self care is not an option. You have to take care of yourself so you can be your best self.

From Botox and fillers to skin treatments, body contouring and wellness, Pure Envy offers a wide range of services. What are some of your favorite or best selling treatments, and what do you want clients to experience when they visit?

Listen, there should be no wrinkles right here at any point in time! I am a Botox fanatic. I am an anti aging fanatic. I believe that 20 years from now, I should look the same or better. I want to be able to turn on that selfie camera and say, "Yes! I look good today!" When it comes to my favorite treatment, I would have to say Botox and fillers because that is where my love for aesthetics started.

But I also have to mention Sculptra. Sculptra is a biostimulator that we inject into the face to stimulate collagen production, and I recommend it to many of my clients. I love it because it produces results. As an injector, I am very results driven. When something works, I get excited about it. I want to tell everyone, "Look at what we can do!"

Looking ahead, what is your vision for the future of Pure Envy, and what impact do you hope the brand has on the people you serve?

I want people to come into Pure Envy and feel refreshed. I want them to feel like their most beautiful selves. To me, everyone is beautiful, inside and out. All we are doing is bringing out your glow. We want to help you feel better, give you energy, reduce the appearance of wrinkles and help you become the most beautiful version of yourself. If we can help even one client feel better about themselves, look better and become their most beautiful version of themselves, then I feel that we have succeeded.



Adora K Beauty On A Building Quality Skincare Brand With Effective Products

Discover the story behind the creation of Adora K Beauty

Interview with Sense N' Style Magazine



Kindly tell us about yourselves and the story behind Adora & Bellis K Beauty.

Julie: Jin and I were both born and raised in Korea. We spent our childhood, school years, and university years there before moving to America. She got married in Korea and later moved here, while I graduated from university, moved to America, met my husband through church, and got married here. We've been close friends for many years. She's younger than me, so she calls me "Unni," which in Korean means older sister. It's a very warm and affectionate word. Growing up in Korea, skincare was never just about beauty, it was always part of a healthy lifestyle and self-care. That mindset stayed with us. We wanted to share that culture and knowledge with our community here in Orlando. That's why we started Adora & Bellis K Beauty. From the beginning, our goal was never simply to sell products. We wanted to create a place where people could truly learn about skincare, ask questions, and find products that genuinely fit their needs. Today, what makes us happiest is seeing customers return and tell us their skin has improved. Those moments remind us why we started.

Five years ago, Adora & Bellis K Beauty became one of the first dedicated Korean skincare stores in Florida. What inspired you to introduce K-beauty to Orlando?

Julie: Korean skincare is very unique because it comes from a long cultural history. Many years ago, people in Korea used flowers, herbs, roots, and natural ingredients for both healing and skincare. That traditional wisdom has shaped Korean beauty culture. Today, Korean skincare combines those traditions with advanced science and technology. That balance between tradition and innovation is something we deeply value. When we choose products for our store, we focus on quality, effectiveness, and the philosophy behind each brand, not just trends.

Jasmine: Accessibility was one of the biggest reasons we started. Before Adora, people interested in Korean skincare could mostly only buy products online. Even when products became more available, people still couldn't touch them, test them, or ask questions. We wanted to create a physical space where customers could experience the products firsthand, feel textures, test formulas, and get personalized recommendations. That's still one of the biggest reasons people choose us today. They know they're coming into a space where people genuinely care, use the products themselves, and can guide them with honesty and expertise.

As Korean-born founders, how has your cultural background influenced the products you carry and the experience you create?

Julie: Our Korean background shapes not only the products we choose, but the way we care for people. In Korea, there is a word "jeong"- a deep, quiet warmth that stays between people over time. That is what we try to bring into every interaction. To us, customers are never just customers. They are people we truly care for, like family. We believe beauty is not only about appearance, but about confidence, health, and learning to care for yourself with kindness. Everything we do comes from that belief. To share not just K-beauty, but warmth and sincerity.

Korean skincare has grown tremendously in popularity. What sets it apart, and why do customers continue to embrace it?

Jasmine: Korean skincare is incredibly innovative. You'll often hear people joke that "Korea is living in 2046," and honestly, that's how it feels sometimes because of how advanced the industry is. What makes Korean skincare special is that it's both gentle and effective. One thing I personally love is the flexibility. You're not forced into using one brand for everything. You can build a routine with a cleanser from one brand, toner from another, and serum from somewhere else. That freedom makes skincare feel much more personalized. It also focuses heavily on long-term skin health rather than just quick fixes. A lot of products elsewhere focus on covering problems temporarily. Korean skincare tends to work deeper by supporting skin health over time. For me personally, it completely changed my skin barrier. That's something Korean skincare has focused on for years, long before it became popular in other markets. And the affordability is another huge benefit. You can find products for $20 that perform just as well as luxury products costing far more.

Is there a hero product customers consistently come back for?

Jasmine: Absolutely, sunscreen. A lot of people in the U.S. avoid sunscreen because traditional formulas can feel heavy, smell medicinal, or leave a white cast. Korean sunscreens completely change that experience. They're lightweight, comfortable, and blend beautifully into the skin with no white cast. They feel more like skincare than sunscreen. That makes people actually want to wear SPF daily, which is so important, especially in Florida. We also carry really innovative formats like sun sticks and sun cushions, which make reapplying sunscreen much easier and more enjoyable. That's one of the things people love most about Korean beauty, it makes skincare practical, enjoyable, and effective.

WHEN WE CHOOSE PRODUCTS FOR OUR STORE, WE FOCUS ON QUALITY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND EACH BRAND, NOT JUST TRENDS.

-Adora K Beauty







Adora & Bellis K Beauty started as a small storefront and has grown into a trusted destination across Florida. What have been some of your biggest challenges and milestones?

Jasmine: Reaching five years is a huge milestone for us. We opened in 2021, during the middle of the pandemic, which was already a major challenge. Starting a new business during such an uncertain time wasn't easy. But we were able to bring something fresh and comforting to people during a difficult season. Today, we've grown from our original store into an expanded location with more products, more space, luxury skincare, and even clothing. That growth means a lot to us. One recent challenge has been import regulations and changing OTC guidelines, especially for sunscreen products. That created uncertainty for many customers who rely on specific Korean formulas. Our priority has been staying informed, adapting quickly, and making sure customers continue to have access to products they trust.

Julie: Another challenge has been counterfeit products. There are many fake products online, especially through third-party sellers. Sometimes the packaging looks almost identical, but the formula is completely different. That can be dangerous for skincare. We help customers identify authentic products and educate them on how to shop safely. Trust is very important to us.

Many customers travel long distances to visit your store because of the personalized guidance your team provides. Why is education such an important part of your business?

Julie: Because every skin type is different.When customers come in, we ask about their skin type, whether it's oily, dry, combination, or sensitive. We also ask about specific concerns like acne, pigmentation, irritation, or anti-aging.Because we study ingredients carefully, we can recommend products based on individual needs.For example, Cica (Centella Asiatica) is excellent for calming acne scars and soothing irritation. Tea tree works well for acne-prone skin. For anti-aging, ingredients like PDRN and collagen are very effective. We guide customers step by step so they understand what ingredients work best for them.

As Adora & Bellis K Beauty prepares for future expansion, what excites you most about what's ahead?

Jasmine: Accessibility. That has always been our main goal. We're seeing customers travel from very far away just to visit us, so we want to expand into more areas and make it easier for people to access us. We also want to continue sharing Korean skincare and Korean culture with even more communities. Our biggest value is community. People don't just shop with us, they build relationships with us. We have customers who have been with us since the beginning. Some visit every weekend. Some attend all our events. That connection means everything. We're also excited about hosting more events, reaching more cities, and creating more opportunities to connect with people. At the heart of it all, we love bringing people together to talk about skincare, beauty, and self-care. That's what makes this journey so rewarding.

Where can readers shop Adora & Bellis K Beauty?

Jasmine: You can visit us in person at our Orlando locations inside Lotte Market. And for customers across the U.S., you can shop online through our website. We're excited to continue serving our community both in-store and online.

> TODAY, WE'VE GROWN FROM OUR ORIGINAL STORE INTO AN EXPANDED LOCATION WITH MORE PRODUCTS, MORE SPACE, LUXURY SKINCARE, AND EVEN CLOTHING. THAT GROWTH MEANS A LOT TO US.



PALMS ELITE MEDSPA

Exclusive Interview With Samantha M. Smith

With Sense N' Style Magazine

Kindly tell us about yourself and Palms Elite Medical Spa.

I am a licensed Aesthetician and electrologist, with additional training in laser technology. I have always enjoyed learning, especially when it comes to skincare, so I have continued studying beyond school to better understand the skin, different skin and hair types, emerging technologies, and the changes within the aesthetics industry. That passion for learning has shaped my vision for Palms Elite Medical Spa. I wanted to create a space where the spa experience and the clinical side of aesthetics truly meet, a place where clients can receive advanced treatments while also enjoying a relaxing and comfortable environment. Whether we are performing skin tightening, microneedling, or laser treatments, comfort is an important part of the experience. We have spa beds with warmers, comfortable linens, music, and an environment designed to help clients feel at ease throughout their treatments. We also bring a clinical approach to our spa services. Our facials are targeted to the individual and designed to address specific skin concerns while supporting visible improvements in the skin. Our tagline, "Luxury Treatments, Elite Results," reflects what we aim to provide: a thoughtful combination of luxury, comfort, education, and effective treatments in one experience.

What inspired you to build your own business in the beauty and skincare industry?

I have a background in business, and I had always thought about what kind of business I wanted to build for myself. The medical spa industry stood out because it was something I genuinely enjoyed and could see myself being passionate about. Rather than rushing into it, I spent more than a year researching the industry, understanding the market, what clients were looking for, and where there were opportunities to create something meaningful and different. That research eventually led me to pursue aesthetics professionally. I went to school for aesthetics, continued my education, and opened Palms Elite Medical Spa in February. For me, it was important to build a business around something I genuinely enjoy. I wanted to create an environment where I could continue learning while helping people feel more confident and comfortable in their skin.

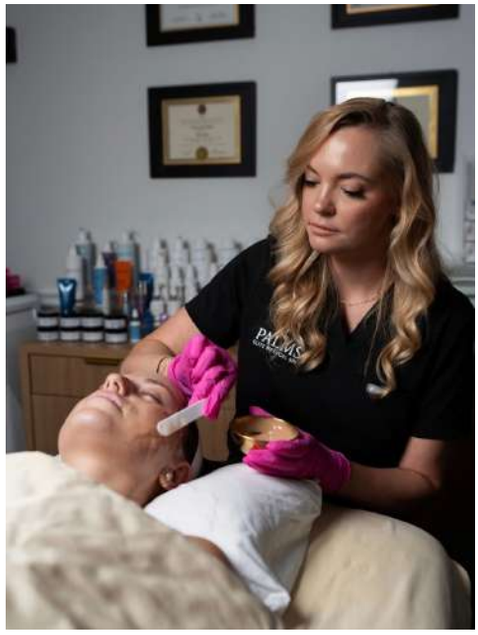
South Florida has a very competitive aesthetics market. How did you approach standing out?

South Florida is a highly competitive market when it comes to aesthetics, so from the beginning, I knew I wanted Palms Elite to offer something distinctive. Rather than simply following existing trends, I focused on bringing in advanced technology and treatments that aligned with my vision for the business and could offer clients another option for addressing their skincare goals.

One of the key decisions we made was investing in XERF, a structural skin-tightening device. When I was introduced to the technology, I took the time to review the available clinical information and look closely at the results. I was impressed by the technology and its potential, and I felt it was something I wanted to bring to Palms Elite. It was a significant investment, especially as a new business, but it was a decision I made through careful research and consideration. I believed in the technology and saw an opportunity to introduce something distinctive to our clients. XERF has since become an important part of our growth. It has helped generate interest in Palms Elite, introduce new clients to our services, and strengthen our focus on advanced skin-tightening treatments.

What treatments and services are currently available at Palms Elite Medical Spa?

XERF is currently our leading treatment. It is a structural skin-tightening treatment and has become an important part of what we offer at Palms Elite. We also offer microneedling with targeted serum treatments, including PDRN and peptide infusion, as well as nano infusion, chemical peels, and clinical facials.



"I WANT CLIENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE REASONING BEHIND A TREATMENT OR PRODUCT RECOMMENDATION RATHER THAN SIMPLY BEING TOLD WHAT TO USE."

-Samantha M. Smith, Founder of Palms Eliite Medspa



When people understand their skin and the purpose behind their treatment plan, they can make more informed decisions and stay consistent with their skincare.

We are also expanding our technology offerings with LaseMD Ultra for skin rejuvenation. For me, it is not about having an extensive menu of services. I want every treatment we offer to have a clear purpose and align with our overall approach of providing "Luxury Treatments, Elite Results."

Why have you chosen to focus so much on non-surgical and less invasive treatments?

As an Aesthetician and electrologist, I work within my scope of practice and alongside a medical director when appropriate for certain treatments involving technologies such as lasers and microneedling. I also believe that effective aesthetics does not always have to mean an aggressive approach. With continued education and research, we have a better understanding of how to support the skin while still working toward visible improvements. For example, with treatments such as microneedling, the goal is not simply to create more trauma to the skin. It is about using the treatment thoughtfully and appropriately for the individual. Depending on the treatment and the client's needs, we can work toward improving the appearance of fine lines, skin texture, firmness, and overall skin quality while respecting the skin's natural barrier. That balance is important to me. I want clients to have access to effective treatments while taking a thoughtful, individualized approach to their skin.

How important is continuing education to your work?

Education is one of the most important parts of working in aesthetics. The industry is constantly evolving, with new technologies, research, techniques, and approaches to treating the skin. I invest a lot of time in expanding my knowledge through conventions, classes, online courses, and training provided by the companies I work with. I am also currently studying for my national Aesthetician's license, so learning and improving my skills is an ongoing process. That commitment to education also extends to my clients.

Palms Elite MEDSPA

During treatments, I explain what I am doing, why I am doing it, and how it relates to their individual skin concerns. I want clients to understand the reasoning behind a treatment or product recommendation rather than simply being told what to use. For me, education is an important part of creating a more informed client experience. When people understand their skin and the purpose behind their treatment plan, they can make more informed decisions and stay consistent with their skincare.

What would you say to someone who is thinking about starting a business but is afraid to take that first step?

Research is important, but at some point, you have to take action. Study your market, understand your customers, and be clear about what you are offering and why it matters. At the same time, do not wait for everything to be perfect. There will always be some level of uncertainty when starting a business. You have to be willing to put yourself out there, learn from the experience, and adjust along the way. Marketing is also important because people cannot support a business they do not know exists. Do not be afraid to show up, talk about what you do, make the videos, build relationships, and let people get to know your business. Most importantly, believe in what you are building. Research can give you direction, but taking that first step is what turns an idea into something real.

What does the future look like for Palms Elite Medical Spa?

I want to continue learning, growing, and thoughtfully expanding the technology and treatments we offer our clients. Education will always be a major part of that. I want to stay current with developments in the industry and make informed decisions about the treatments we bring into the practice. At the same time, I want to preserve the personal experience that is at the heart of Palms Elite. As the business grows, it is important to me that every client still feels seen, understood, and genuinely cared for. Ultimately, I want Palms Elite to continue growing without losing what makes the experience personal: luxury treatments, real results, and an environment where clients feel comfortable and cared for.

What is the best way for new clients to book an appointment with Palms Elite Medical Spa?

Clients can book through our website, PalmsEliteMedicalSpa.com. We also accept bookings through Instagram. Clients can also call or text 561-327-3964 to schedule an appointment or ask questions about our treatments.

We create everyday bouquets, birthday and anniversary arrangements, weddings, events, custom designs, and floral subscriptions for hotels and buildings.





Vladyslava Stefanenko
Founder of Mammamia Flowers

KINDLY TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF AS WELL AS MAMMA MIA FLOWERS

My name is Vladyslava Stefanenko, and I am originally from Ukraine. Victoria, my co-founder and I, have been friends since first grade. We went to the same school in Ukraine and have been close ever since. When the war started, we moved to the United States. We first lived in New York and later moved to Miami. I have been working with flowers for more than 10 years, so flowers have always been a big part of my life. Mamma Mia Flowers is very personal to me. My daughter's name is Mia, and Victoria is her godmother, so that is how the name Mamma Mia came to life. We wanted to create a flower business that was not only about beautiful arrangements, but also about making people feel something when they receive them

WHAT FIRST DREW YOU TO FLOWERS, AND WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO TURN THAT PASSION INTO MAMMA MIA FLOWERS?

My love for flowers actually started with my grandmother. Whenever I visited her, I would ask if she needed medicine, fruit, or anything else, and she would always say, "No, just flowers. Flowers make me happy." I think she passed that love of flowers to me.

What I love most is seeing people's faces when they receive flowers. They immediately smile, and there is something very special about being part of those emotional moments. I have worked with flowers for more than 10 years, and over time I knew I wanted to have my own flower shop. Mamma Mia Flowers became a way for me to combine my experience, creativity, and love for making people happy.

STARTING A BUSINESS CAN BE A BIG LEAP. WHAT WAS THAT EARLY EXPERIENCE LIKE FOR YOU, AND WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ALONG THE WAY?

Starting a business in a new country was definitely challenging, especially because English is not my first language. When we decided to open the store, there were so many permits, documents, and things we had to figure out. But it also taught us that we can do much more than we thought.



One thing Victoria and I always say to each other is, “Say yes, and then figure it out.” We love challenges. Sometimes we agree to something before we even know exactly how we're going to make it happen, but we always find a way. Every day brings a new challenge. One day we are focused on flowers, another day marketing, and another day creating content. We have learned to keep going, stay creative, and make the process fun.

YOU’VE BUILT MAMMA MIA FLOWERS AROUND BEAUTIFUL, MODERN, AND PERSONALIZED DESIGNS. WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT YOU ABOUT CREATING FLOWERS THAT REALLY CONNECT WITH PEOPLE?

My experience in different places has taught me that everyone has a different taste. I started working with flowers in Ukraine, where I developed more of a European style. Then I worked in Brooklyn and Manhattan and worked on different events, including luxury events and charity dinners. Each experience taught me something different. I took everything I learned from those places and brought it into my own style. For me, flowers are not just about how they look. They are about the feeling behind them. When someone tells us the story behind why they are sending flowers, we want to understand that story and create something that feels personal. That is what makes flowers special.

WHAT CAN CUSTOMERS FIND AT MAMMA MIA FLOWERS, FROM EVERYDAY BOUQUETS TO WEDDINGS, EVENTS, AND CUSTOM ARRANGEMENTS?

We can do almost everything when it comes to flowers. We create everyday bouquets, birthday and anniversary arrangements, weddings, events, custom designs, and floral subscriptions for hotels and buildings. Weddings are especially special to me because there is so much emotion around them. Brides can be very nervous about every detail, so I always tell them, “Don't worry. We'll take care of the flowers.”



We also offer personalized arrangements. Our bouquets have names rather than simply being called something like “100 roses.” We like giving each arrangement its own personality. If someone wants something completely custom, we are happy to create it. They can tell us what they like, send us a photo for inspiration, or simply trust us to create something in our style.

WHEN SOMEONE COMES TO YOU WITH AN IDEA FOR AN ARRANGEMENT, HOW DO YOU TAKE THEIR PERSONALITY, OCCASION, OR VISION AND TURN IT INTO SOMETHING SPECIAL?

The first thing we do is ask questions. We want to know what the occasion is, whether it is a birthday, anniversary, first date, wedding, or something else. We ask about their preferred colors, flowers, and budget. The budget is important because it helps us create something beautiful without going beyond what the customer is comfortable spending. Sometimes people already have an idea and send us a picture. We can create something inspired by it, but we always bring our own style to the arrangement rather than simply copying it. Most importantly, we listen. We have even had customers come to us with very unusual requests. One customer wanted flowers for his girlfriend because her goldfish had passed away. The fish was named Pink Floyd, and although it was an unusual request, it was important to her. So we created something special. For us, if it matters to the customer, it matters to us.

FOR SOMEONE LOOKING TO ORDER FLOWERS, PLAN AN EVENT, OR CREATE A CUSTOM ARRANGEMENT, WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO CONNECT WITH MAMMA MIA FLOWERS?

We are very easy to reach. Customers can order through our website, call us, text us, reach us through WhatsApp, or message us on Instagram. Some people know exactly what they want and prefer to order online, and that is completely fine. Others have a lot of questions, especially if they are ordering flowers for the first time, and we are always happy to talk with them and help. We really believe in personal customer service. Sometimes we spend a lot of time talking with a customer just to understand what they are looking for. At the end of the day, we want people to feel happy with their flowers and with the experience of working with us.

THE JOURNEY

An exclusive interview



LYM FACE

By Valentina Mironova

LymFace Miami

BY VALENTINA MIRONOVA

For too long, sexual wellness was treated like something shameful or awkward, especially for women. I never agreed with that. Feeling good in your body is part of wellness.

Kindly tell us about yourself as well Face Gym Miami.

I originally began my journey in Russia, where I studied dentistry and spent years working closely with facial anatomy, muscles, and structure.

Very early on, I became fascinated by how deeply the face is connected to the rest of the body, not just aesthetically, but through tension, posture, circulation, stress, and overall wellness. Over time, I realized that many beauty treatments focused only on the surface of the skin, while often overlooking what was happening underneath. That curiosity eventually led me deeper into facial sculpting, deep tissue facial work, lymphatic-focused techniques, and advanced muscle-focused approaches to facial wellness. When I moved to the United States, I had to rebuild ys my career and identity from the beginning. As a single mother of three, it was both challenging and deeply motivating. That chapter of my life pushed me to create something meaningful, authentic, and entirely my own. What originally began as Face Gym Miami has now evolved into Lymface, a brand and philosophy centered around facial wellness, natural beauty, and the deeper connection between the face and the body. My goal has always been to create a more restorative and conscious approach to beauty, where people don't just focus on how they look, but also on how they feel. Today, through Lymface, we focus on facial sculpting, lymphatic facial work, deep tissue facial techniques, intraoral sculpting methods, tension release, and wellness-based skin rejuvenation designed to help clients feel naturally refreshed, lifted, and more connected to themselves. For me, this work has never been only about appearance, it's about confidence, balance, and helping people reconnect with their natural beauty in a more holistic way.

UNLIKE TRADITIONAL FACIALS, YOUR TREATMENTS FOCUS DEEPLY ON FACIAL MUSCLES, LYMPHATIC DRAINAGE, AND TENSION RELEASE. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO SPECIALIZE IN THIS MORE NATURAL AND HOLISTIC APPROACH TO BEAUTY AND FACIAL WELLNESS?

I think my background in dentistry and facial anatomy naturally changed the way I viewed the face. I never saw it as just skin. I became very interested in how muscles, tension, circulation, posture, stress, and even emotional patterns can affect the way a person looks and feels. Over the years, I noticed that many people were searching for beauty solutions while also feeling disconnected from their bodies, exhausted, stressed, or constantly tense. You can often see that tension reflected directly in the face, especially in the jaw, neck, forehead, and overall facial expression. That's what inspired me to move toward a more natural and holistic approach. I became fascinated by facial sculpting, lymphatic-focused techniques, deep tissue facial work, and intraoral methods because I saw how powerful these techniques could be, not only aesthetically, but also emotionally and physically. I also believe there's a growing shift happening in the beauty industry. More people today want results that still allow them to look like themselves, refreshed, healthy, rested, and naturally lifted rather than overdone. They want beauty that feels sustainable and connected to overall wellness. For me, this work is not about changing someone's face. It's about supporting the face naturally, improving how the skin and muscles function together, and helping people reconnect with themselves through touch, relaxation, and intentional care.

KINDLY WALK US THROUGH YOUR DIFFERENT SERVICES.

At Lymface, every service is designed around the understanding that the face reflects much more than just skin. Different clients come to us with different concerns, facial tension, puffiness, lack of definition, stress, fatigue, skin imbalance, or simply the desire to feel more refreshed and naturally lifted. One of our signature experiences focuses on lymphatic facial work designed to help reduce puffiness, support healthy circulation, and create a more sculpted and refreshed appearance. These treatments are especially popular for clients experiencing facial swelling, water retention, or signs of stress and fatigue. We also specialize in deeper facial muscle work and sculpting techniques, including intraoral facial sculpting methods, which focus on releasing chronic tension patterns in the face and jaw while naturally enhancing facial definition and balance.

At Lymface, every service is designed around the understanding that the face reflects much more than just skin.

Many clients are surprised by how connected facial tension can be to stress, posture, and overall wellbeing. In addition to manual techniques, we incorporate advanced skincare and wellness technologies such as facial cupping, microcurrent, LED light therapy, and customized skin rejuvenation protocols to create a more complete facial wellness experience. What makes Lymface unique is that every session is highly personalized. We don't believe in a one-size-fits-all approach. We look at the face holistically, considering muscle tension, circulation, skin condition, lifestyle, stress, and overall wellness. Our goal is not to change how someone looks, but to help them feel naturally refreshed, balanced, and confident in their own features.

Many clients come to you for concerns like puffiness, jaw tension, facial sculpting, and overall skin rejuvenation. What are some of the biggest transformations or reactions you've seen from clients after experiencing your treatments?

One of the most rewarding parts of this work is seeing how connected the physical and emotional transformation can be. Of course, clients often notice visible changes such as reduced puffiness, improved facial definition, softer tension in the jaw and forehead, more lifted contours, and healthier-looking skin. But very often, the deeper transformation goes beyond appearance. Many clients don't realize how much tension they've been carrying in their face until it's finally released. I've had people tell me they feel lighter, more relaxed, more rested, and sometimes even emotionally calmer after a session. The face holds so much stress from daily life, posture, work, emotional pressure, and nervous system overload, especially in areas like the jaw, neck, and temples. One of the most beautiful reactions for me is when someone looks in the mirror and says they still look like themselves, just fresher, softer, healthier, and more balanced.



That's always the goal. I'm not trying to change someone's features. I want to help restore what already exists naturally. Over time, many clients also become much more aware of how lifestyle, stress, sleep, breathing, and muscle tension affect the face. That awareness itself becomes part of the transformation. It shifts beauty from being something purely cosmetic into something more connected to overall wellbeing and self-care.

How would you describe the Face Gym Miami experience for someone visiting your studio for the very first time?

I would describe the Lymface experience as both restorative and deeply personalized. From the moment someone walks into the studio, my goal is for them to feel like they can finally slow down, exhale, and reconnect with themselves. Every face is different, so every session begins with understanding the client, not only their aesthetic goals, but also their lifestyle, stress levels, tension patterns, and overall wellbeing. Sometimes people come in thinking they only want facial sculpting or skin rejuvenation, but during the process they begin to realize how connected the face is to stress, posture, sleep, breathing, and daily habits.

The experience itself is designed to feel calming, intentional, and hands-on. We combine facial sculpting, lymphatic-focused techniques, deep tissue facial work, intraoral methods, skin rejuvenation, and wellness-based rituals in a way that feels both results-driven and deeply relaxing at the same time. I think what clients remember most is not only how they look afterward, but how they feel. Many people leave feeling lighter, softer, refreshed, and more connected to themselves. In today's world, where everything moves so fast, creating that kind of experience has become incredibly meaningful to me.

As Face Gym Miami continues to grow across South Florida, what are some future goals, upcoming services, or exciting projects you're currently working on, and where can readers book?

As the brand continues to evolve, my vision for Lymface is becoming much bigger than traditional beauty services. I'm deeply interested in the future of facial wellness and in helping people better understand the connection between facial tension, muscles, lifestyle, stress, and natural beauty.

One of the projects I'm especially excited about is The 50 Faces Project, an educational and visual exploration of how different facial patterns, habits, tension, lifestyle factors, and muscle dynamics can influence the way the face looks and functions over time. The project is designed to bring more awareness to the relationship between the face, the body, emotions, and overall wellbeing from a more holistic and structural perspective. I'm also continuing to expand our approach to advanced facial sculpting, lymphatic-focused work, deep tissue facial techniques, intraoral methods, and wellness-based skin rejuvenation. Long term, I would love for Lymface to grow not only as a studio, but as a recognizable philosophy and destination for facial wellness. At the same time, I'm passionate about creating experiences that still feel deeply personal and human, even as the brand grows. I never want clients to feel like they're receiving a routine service. I want them to feel seen, understood, and genuinely cared for. Readers can currently book appointments through our website and social media platforms, and we're excited to continue expanding throughout South Florida and beyond.

Any final words?

At its core, Lymface is about helping people reconnect with themselves in a more natural and conscious way. In today's world, beauty can often feel very fast, artificial, or disconnected from overall wellbeing. My goal has always been to create a space where beauty, wellness, touch, and human connection can exist together. I truly believe the face tells the story of how we live, our stress, habits, emotions, lifestyle, and even the way we carry ourselves through life. That belief became one of the inspirations behind The 50 Faces Project, which explores the deeper connection between facial patterns, lifestyle, wellness, and natural beauty.

Skin Alchemy BY VANESSA

REGISTERED NURSE AND FOUNDER

Kindly tell us about yourself as well as Skin Alchemy by Vanessa

My name is Vanessa Harris, and I am a registered nurse and the founder of Skin Alchemy by Vanessa. My journey has been anything but traditional. After dropping out of high school, I earned my GED and worked my way forward, first as a house cleaner and receptionist. Determined to build a better future for myself, I earned my medical assisting certification and later became a registered nurse. I began my healthcare career in medical dermatology, where my passion for skin health first took root. I later transitioned into hospital nursing, and today I work full-time in correctional healthcare, providing nursing care within a jail setting. Every stage of my journey has shaped the resilience, compassion, advocacy, and work ethic I bring to both nursing and aesthetic medicine. I launched Skin Alchemy by Vanessa in October as a space where medical knowledge, artistry, education, and genuine human connection could come together. I provide personalized aesthetic treatments with an emphasis on safety, natural-looking results, and helping each patient feel confident and comfortable in their own skin.

What inspired you to start Skin Alchemy by Vanessa and what did you want to do differently?

As much as I love the action, adrenaline, and intensity of working as a correctional nurse, the emotional demands of the job can sometimes leave me feeling burned out or questioning whether I am truly making a difference.

With my professional background in medical dermatology and my involvement in the Dermatology Nurses' Association, pursuing aesthetics felt like a natural extension of my nursing career. I took a leap of faith and began enrolling in aesthetic training courses. Before long, my friends and family began trusting me with their treatments, and I realized how much joy the work brought me. Aesthetics became the balance I needed alongside my intense nursing career. For some people, gardening, cooking, or creating art is therapeutic. Aesthetics became that creative and restorative outlet for me. It also gave me something positive to pour myself into during the emotional weight of years of fertility challenges and my current IVF journey. Helping someone feel more confident and comfortable in their own skin reminds me that I am making a difference in a completely different but equally meaningful way. I wanted to create the kind of practice I would personally want to visit. That meant longer appointments, honest education, evidence-based recommendations, and no pressure to purchase more than someone truly needs. I wanted patients to feel heard rather than rushed, cared for rather than sold to, and naturally enhanced rather than changed.

What do you believe most people get wrong about skincare?

I think most people overcomplicate skincare. We are constantly encouraged to use too many products, layer multiple active ingredients, and follow routines that are neither affordable nor realistic. Overusing the active ingredients found in over-the-counter products can disrupt the skin barrier, cause irritation, and ultimately do more harm than good. My background in medical dermatology helped build the foundation of my understanding of skin. During that time, I was also a member of the Dermatology Nurses' Association, which further strengthened my commitment to education and evidence-based care. The truth is, most of us were never taught healthy skincare practices. Instead, marketing and consumerism convince us to buy unnecessary products that promise the world. I do not recommend something simply because it is trending online. I focus on evidence-based practices and what each person's skin actually needs. The professional treatments I provide are designed to do much of the heavy lifting and deliver results that at-home products alone often cannot. Because I stay consistent with my own treatments, I can genuinely wash my face in the morning, apply moisturizer and SPF, and leave the house with healthy, glowing skin.

For most people, regular professional treatments paired with a simple daily routine and one effective, affordable prescription-strength product a few nights a week, when appropriate, can take their skin much further than a shelf full of trendy products.

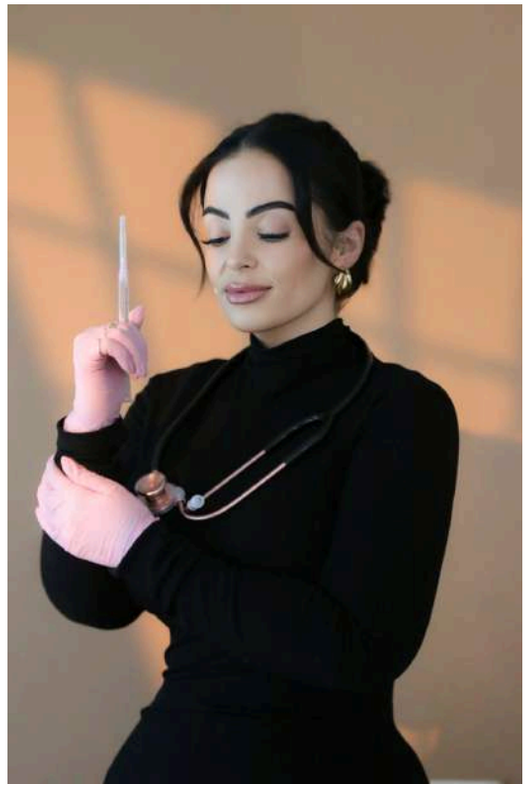
What services do you offer at Skin Alchemy by Vanessa and who are they best suited for?

At Skin Alchemy by Vanessa, I offer a range of personalized aesthetic treatments designed to help each patient look refreshed, balanced, and confident while still looking like themselves. My neuromodulator treatments use botulinum toxin type A, commonly referred to as a wrinkle relaxer, to temporarily relax targeted muscles. This can soften expression lines and help prevent them from becoming more deeply etched into the skin over time.

> MORE THAN ANYTHING, I WANT PEOPLE TO REMEMBER HOW SKIN ALCHEMY MADE THEM FEEL. I HOPE THEY REMEMBER IT AS A PLACE WHERE BEAUTY AND MEDICINE WERE PRACTICED RESPONSIBLY, WHERE THEY WERE TREATED LIKE FAMILY, AND WHERE EVERY DECISION WAS GUIDED BY CARE, ETHICS, AND LOVE. ”


Skin
Alchemy
BY VANESSA
REGISTERED NURSE AND FOUNDER

I offer upper face, full face, neck, masseter, trapezius, and hyperhidrosis treatments. These services may be suited for patients who want to soften wrinkles, create a more balanced appearance, reduce the appearance of large or bulky masseter muscles, refine the neck and shoulder profile, or reduce excessive sweating. I also offer PRF injections for the face and scalp. Facial PRF uses the patient's own natural growth factors to support collagen production and improve overall skin quality. Scalp PRF is a regenerative treatment for patients experiencing hair thinning who want to support healthier hair growth. Microneedling is available with or without PRP and is ideal for improving skin texture, acne scarring, enlarged pores, fine lines, and overall skin quality.



For patients seeking subtle enhancement or volume restoration, I offer lip filler and customized facial balancing with dermal filler. My goal is always to enhance someone's natural features, not change who they are. I also provide medically prescribed chemical peels and am an Advanced VI Peel Provider. These treatments can address concerns such as acne, discoloration, melasma, uneven tone, texture, and signs of aging. Every treatment plan begins with an individualized assessment because the best treatment is not necessarily the most popular one. It is the one that is safe, appropriate, and thoughtfully selected for that patient's unique needs and goals.

How do you make sure your clients feel confident and cared for when they choose Skin Alchemy by Vanessa?

I make sure my patients feel confident and cared for by giving them something that has become increasingly rare: time. I intentionally do not overbook, and my appointment times are longer than those of the average provider. A meaningful part of every visit is listening to the patient's concerns, understanding their history, and learning about the challenges they are facing. My role as a nurse is to be a patient advocate and educator, not to seek the maximum financial gain from each appointment. I use our time together to answer questions and give my patients the information they need to make their own confident and informed decisions. I also explain that no single service is a miracle treatment. Each treatment serves a different purpose, and they work together like ingredients in a recipe or pieces of a puzzle. The best results are usually created through a thoughtful, realistic, and sustainable plan. Honesty is one of the most important parts of my practice. I actually tell people no quite often. If I do not believe a treatment will benefit someone, if they do not meet the appropriate safety criteria, or if the risks outweigh the potential results, I will decline to treat them. I never upsell. In fact, I often recommend less because I only want my patients investing in treatments that are appropriate, healthy, and capable of supporting their long-term goals. For me, placing profit ahead of a patient's best interests would conflict with my ethics as a nurse. I also do not accept tips. These are medical procedures, and I am a nurse who is paid fairly for the care I provide. Aesthetic treatments can already be a significant expense, and I never want my patients to feel obligated to pay anything beyond the cost of their service. I encourage them to use the money they may have planned to tip me to help someone who is struggling financially or to buy a meal for someone who needs it. I genuinely love answering questions and helping people understand their options. Through that trust and open communication, I have built amazing relationships with my patients, and many of them have come to feel like family. At the same time, I understand that not every provider is the right fit for every patient. If someone has unrealistic expectations or our goals do not align, I am comfortable referring them to another provider or respectfully declining to continue their care. Protecting my patients and maintaining the integrity of my practice will always come before making a sale.

Where can people book your services and how can they get in touch with you?

Prospective patients can explore my work on Instagram at @skinalchemybyvanessa to learn more about my approach and see whether their personal goals align with my aesthetic style. Appointments can be booked directly at app.bookjune.com or skinalchemybyvanessa. For questions or booking assistance, I am also available by text on my business line at (669) 221-4164. Skin Alchemy by Vanessa is located in San Jose, California. I would also like to recognize the photographer behind all of the images featured here. The photographs were taken by Anaya Photography, a talented young Latina entrepreneur based in San Jose. Her work can be found on Instagram at @anaya_photographyy. Supporting other women and Latina-owned businesses is incredibly important to me, and I am proud to give her credit for capturing these images so beautifully.

What do you want people to remember about Skin Alchemy by Vanessa as the brand continues to grow

I want people to remember that Skin Alchemy was created with love. Every detail, from the atmosphere of the space to the time I reserve for each appointment, was intentionally designed to make every patient feel seen, valued, and cared for as the unique individual they are. Skin Alchemy by Vanessa is more than a place to receive an aesthetic treatment. It is a safe space built on mutual respect, honesty, trust, and genuine connection. I want my patients to know that they will always be listened to, educated, and treated with compassion. They will never be pressured into a service, made to feel as though they are not enough, or encouraged to change who they are. My purpose is to help people care for themselves, enhance what is already beautiful, and leave feeling more confident and empowered. As the brand continues to grow, I never want to lose the personal experience that made it special. I want to continue growing one meaningful appointment and one trusted relationship at a time. Success, to me, is not measured only by how many patients walk through my door. It is measured by how safe they feel while they are with me, how confident they feel when they leave, and whether they know they were cared for with integrity. More than anything, I want people to remember how Skin Alchemy made them feel. I hope they remember it as a place where beauty and medicine were practiced responsibly, where they were treated like family, and where every decision was guided by care, ethics, and love.

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Sense N' Style Magazine

Sometimes it can be difficult to articulate the power of style and fashion through words, but with the help of a great team, we hope this edition was able to show how powerful the fashion industry is becoming.

We hope you enjoyed the read!



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The New Fashion Experience











Our First Edition
The first edition of Sense N' Style was released in July 2020.



The Entrepreneurs Journey



Our Second Edition
The second edition of Sense N' Style was officially released in November 2020

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ABOUT US

SENSE N' STYLE MAGAZINE

Sense N' Style Magazine is a Fashion Magazine published in print & digital.

From the release of our first edition to date, we have worked with great minds to make our fashion magazine one of the best in the industry. With a team of experts boasting extensive experience in the field, our aim is to provide our readers with all the novelties of fashion easily accessible for them to learn current trends.

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