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CARDIFF LIFE AWARDS 2019

Simon Constantinou

Helen Rouse, director and marketing manager of the barbershop and hair and beauty salon Simon Constantinou, on why her dad is her business hero, and shares a few top hair trends for 2020

HAIR & BEAUTY WINNER

Congratulations on scooping a Cardiff Life Award! How did it feel to win?
Well, the bubbles were certainly flowing on the night – it felt like a dream! The Award now sits proudly at the front of our salon in the reception area.

What prompted you to enter the Awards? Have you done similar before?
Until 2018 we had only ever entered industry-specific awards, and have won world, European and British competitions. In 2018 we won the Wellness, Health & Beauty Business Growth Wales Award, and we realised that we do have something quite special in an ever-expanding hair and beauty market. So, giving it our best shot, this is why we thought we'd go for Cardiff Life Awards 2019.

Tell us a little about the company – what is its background?
My grandfather, Odysseas, migrated from Cyprus and opened his first salon in the 1960s. He worked hard to uphold a reputation for quality and style and he went on to compete professionally. Then as his sons grew up, they also took on the same work ethic and creative flare at these hairdressing competitions.

It's a real family business then?
Yes, some of the following generation of grandchildren went on to successfully compete too – including Dody who now works alongside his uncle, Simon. You'll spot lots of Constantinou's hairdressers in and around Cardiff, but Simon now runs the O.Constantinou & Sons Salon on Crwys Road.

When was the salon established?
Simon established the Brothers Constantinou Salon with his brother, Tino in 1980, and was joined by his

brother Stavros in the 1990s. He eventually returned back to his roots in the O.Constantinou & Sons in 2014.

Do you think this family aspect is what helped secure the win?
I think what we have is a 'salon family' and we have a community feel. We are inclusive and friendly whilst maintaining our professional standards. We are constantly inspired by trends and changes in the industry – we never want to stop learning.

"WINNING THE CARDIFF LIFE AWARD HAS MADE OUR NAME HEARD ABOVE THE NOISE"

What is your own professional and career background?
I come from a fashion design background, and I use my graphic and creative skills daily. And hairdressing is trend-led – just like fashion. I manage our social media accounts and website and put together all the graphic artwork. I'm lucky to be provided with photos of original and amazing work from our stylists and beautician and this is the foundation of the online story we create.

And the paperwork?
I've had to learn the business end of the salon – and there is a huge amount of paperwork that goes into the running of a salon, no matter how small the salon is.

Is there someone in business that you admire and try learn from?
Okay, this may sound cheesy, but yes, I am always learning from my dad, Simon. With more than 40 years of running a hairdressing business, he has so much knowledge in hairdressing – such as hair colouring, competing, the sensitive field of wigs and toupees, and product ranges – but also in book-keeping, customer care and staff management.

What are the best tools for growth in your industry?

Marketing has changed so much over recent years, and I made it my job to get our name out there on every social platform available. Instagram, Facebook and Google local search are now our biggest sources for new clients. And, of course, winning the prestigious Cardiff Life Award has certainly made our name heard above the noise of a crowded marketplace.

How does being based in Cardiff benefit the work you do?
We love Cardiff. It is an amazingly diverse city, with these wonderful pockets of culture, community and the university population. We love Cathays because of all its up and coming restaurants, bars and shops. There are wonderful local art movements and events which add to the creativity of the area.

Do clients travel to see you?
Yes! We have noticed that more and more people are willing to travel further afield to visit us, with two recent clients coming from Portsmouth and Jersey.

What is the number one hair request at the moment?
Hair colouring is one of our biggest services that we offer, with the most requested being balayage hair colour. This is a time consuming, hand-painted hair colouring process that is totally bespoke to suit the individual skin tone, but provides the client with a natural, low-maintenance look.

Any moment you have been particularly proud of?
Earlier this year, our stylist and wig fitter Maggie raised a wonderful amount for The Little Princess Trust by running the Anglesey Half Marathon – we are so proud of her dedication to the cause. We were also especially proud to receive the Little Princess Trust Gold Crown Award for supplying and fitting wigs for children who have lost their hair through a diagnosis of cancer or alopecia.

For more: O.Constantinou & Sons, 99 Crwys Road, Cathays, Cardiff CF24 4NF. tel: 029 2046 1191; www.simonconstantinou.com

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