

We've taken chair rentals to the next level—actually several levels.

*-Michael McCaughey,
President of Salon Studios in Atlanta*

SALON OWNERSHIP: As Easy as Booth Rental

Photos & Text: Candace Lee

Every stylist dreams of the opportunity to afford to own and operate their own salon, but imagine this becoming a reality—tomorrow. Envision controlling everything from your own schedule, prices and products to your own methods of payment and temperature settings. Visualize decorating and playing music that reflects your own tastes, making the whole experience of going to work a lot more bearable. Sound like a dream? Well Michael McCaughey, president of Salon Studios in Atlanta, GA, has created a very practical way to take the next step from stylist to owner: the beauty mall.

“We’ve taken chair rentals to the next level—actually several levels,” said McCaughey. “We don’t really like to refer to it as booth or chair rental because we are so much more than that. But since it’s a fairly new idea, it’s the only terminology we can use to help people understand what we’re doing.”

Created for stylists who have outgrown booth rental, McCaughey rents private studios to individual stylists for the same price as typical chair rentals. Wanting to make salon ownership more “doable,” the studios (or “mini salons”) come fully furnished (personal sink, dryer and chair) and equipped with their own cable, Internet and phone (free of charge!), allowing stylists all the perks of owning a salon without the hassles. “We refer to our renters as salon owners because they really are and we wanted to help them get to the next level,” McCaughey said. “This way they can increase their income without the hassle of operating a full-blown salon, which can require bringing on employees to rent chairs because you have all that extra space. Our way allows stylists to rent the amount of space that they’ve wanted all along.”

Perhaps most appealing, each studio has its own locking door so you have the freedom to come in when you want and serve your customers how you please. “Basically we’ve gotten away from the traditional open salon environment where people work literally elbow to elbow because we’ve realized that it’s really difficult to service clientele in that type of setting. It’s usually very noisy and people have their own issues, like thinning hair, that they prefer to keep private.”

Embarking on their seventh year in business, Salon Studios boasts three locations in the Atlanta area, with its newest location conveniently located across from Perimeter



Mall. The remaining two locations (in Duluth and Roswell), each boast 30 to 40 studios with a front desk, concierge and on-site manager. While the mall is generally geared toward hair, it provides for both spa and skin services and permits walk-ins, which are distributed fairly among stylists.

The status of the economy and the reported unavailability of loans for the coming years make the need for this type of facility all the

more pragmatic. “This is a business that does not suffer when there’s an economy turndown. Hair grows where the economy is growing or not,” McCaughey said. “It’s a no-brainer. You can spend the same money and not have as much as control or you can spend the money and have your own place. It’s as simple as that.”

For more information on Salon Studios, visit www.salonstudios.com or call 770-993-5002.