

Welcome to Wonderland

When it comes to the rules of engagement, Chicago-based RED 7 SALON ~~essed~~ didn't get the memo.

Talking to RED 7 SALON Co-owner Jason Hall is like tumbling through Alice's looking glass. "In addition to having previous careers in Web design, advertising and public relations—which are obviously beneficial to our company—I have a theater background," smiles Hall. "At RED 7 SALON, we put on a daily production. We teach our staff that the moment they walk onto the floor, they need to be 'on.' I also constantly question and monitor our daily operations from a theatrical POV: 'What are we creating?' 'What experiences are we providing for our audience?' 'Are we telling our story in such a way that they embrace what we say?'"

"We're the Cheers of the salon world and we want to keep it that way."



RED 7 SALON's *All Dolled Up* collection speaks volumes about its irrepressible personality.

Images: Art Director: Lesly Morales; Photographer: Jean Sweet; Hairstylists: Ashley Jensen, Elle Perrone, Lesly Morales; Haircolorists: Ivy Stefko, Adrian Hanlon, Elle Perrone, Ashley Jensen; Makeup Artist: Ivy Stefko; *All Dolled Up* models: Monika Tamowski, Liz Harvey and Megan Graveline

"In terms of touch and sight, I often compare our salon to the automotive industry."



David Kafer, Co-owner and Master Stylist

While Hall's mind is reasonable and logical, it definitely resides on a different plane. His take on appealing to the five senses? "In terms of touch and sight, I often compare our salon to the automotive industry," Hall relates. "Successful car companies have mastered the art and science of creating just the right amount of sensory stimulation. Feeling good in an enclosed environment has a lot to do with how things feel, the way the instruments are laid out and the use of color. Besides using these touchstones to help guide our salons, I think of RED 7 SALON as a Volkswagen, which immediately brings adjectives to mind, such as friendly and innovative."



Jason Hall, Co-owner and Managing Director

"What about our sense of hearing?" we ask. "Think about the music industry and all the different types of music that make it so enduring," Hall immediately replies. "Always playing one genre of music is boring—especially crazy white noise. We play jazz, Broadway, classical, techno, rock, gospel, folk, and country, and we're constantly updating our playlists. If clients aren't big talkers, they have something interesting to listen to; if they are big talkers, music is a great subject. Constantly stimulating clients' sense of hearing is in line with our overall brand, which is a conglomeration of compelling elements that are separate, yet

important to the complete experience we provide.

"This is where *American Idol* comes in," Hall says, as we find ourselves leaning forward and becoming more deeply involved in his way of thinking. "We don't hire people based on a specific look or style, nor do we churn out cookie-cutter stylists to reinforce a monotone brand—which guarantees obsolescence, by the way. As new stylists go through our training program, we not only help them develop their personal brand, but also actively look for ways to showcase their uniqueness. I like to think that our approach is similar to America's favorite talent show: new stylists start out rough around



Chicago: 3200 square-feet, 16 chairs, facial waxing station and skincare cabin

Speed Chat

Tell us a about your partner, David Kafer.

David, who has a strong background in Sassoon cutting and principles, is our artistic leader. He's constantly inspiring our staff to learn new techniques and perfect their foundational skills. David does all of our technical mentoring, trend education and oversees our incredible 16-month assistant/apprenticeship program.

How long have you been in business? How many locations?

We've just celebrated our 10th anniversary. We opened our first salon in Chicago; our second location is in Evanston.

Why did you name your business RED 7 SALON?

David and I both love the color red; seven is our lucky number.

What retail products do you carry?

We've carried Aveda since the very beginning. We also retail Bumble & bumble, which attracts a style-conscious, urban personality. Our newest brand is Kevin Murphy. It's a high-performance brand with a cool factor that's off the charts.

What are the core values of your customer service program?

- We want to always be kind. It sounds simple, but it's not.
- We provide comfort in a comfortable atmosphere.
- We go beyond offering a good service; we deliver a wonderful experience.
- We accept everyone for who they are.



Chicago



Chicago



Evanston: 2800 square-feet, 16 chairs, facial waxing station and skincare cabin

“As new stylists go through our training program, we not only help them develop their personal brand, but also actively look for ways to showcase their uniqueness.”

the edges, but over a period of months, most become polished, marketable brands.

“Hiring is also a very personal process for us. We're the *Cheers* of the salon world and we want to keep it that way. Our goal is to have strong relationships with all of our clients. We would never hire anyone that we wouldn't want to go to dinner with. We would also never hire anyone that places a big priority on the amount of walk-ins we generate. While both RED 7 SALON locations have a nice traffic flow, it isn't nearly as important as being passionate about creating lasting relationships. This is how careers are built and success is earned.”
(Red7Salon.com)



Chicago