



Written by,
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Felice

SALON • SPA

TAKES AVEDA UPTOWN

The Uptown Centre in Victoria is British Columbia's hottest new commercial development. Marketed to a mix of national and boutique tenants, and recognized as the largest LEED Gold Certified project in Canada, the multi-building complex embodies the sustainable luxury that is rapidly becoming the defining characteristic of upscale consumer preferences.

For Felice Iorio, owner of Victoria's already well known Felice Salon and Spa, the decision to accept an invitation to be part of Uptown came naturally. So did turning to a company he knew he could trust – International Design Concepts – for what would be their third partnership in sixteen years. "That kind of a relationship," notes IDC creative team head Michael Effler, "is very special ... He knew he could trust us to bring that surprise and 'Wow' factor." After working so well together on previous projects, Effler notes, "Felice said, 'surprise me', because he knew we'd exceed his expectations, and bring him a unique competitive edge."



Walking through the front door today, there is a strong first impact. Directly in front of the entrance, a multi-part chandelier spirals downward in a cascade of light to a single pedestal – the launch-pad – where the newest Aveda products are showcased. Bold ceiling accents, dramatic soffits, and powerful lighting give the room a multi-dimensional feel, drawing the eye to the complete array of Aveda products along the walls. Under a broad archway sits the semi-circular front-desk, a bold, nine-foot panel of smoked, recycled glass rising behind it, gently changing colors, bearing Felice's logo in shining copper. At that moment, every visitor knows he or she has arrived in a special place.

This feeling persists as the guest moves into a cozy waiting area. An Aveda tea bar awaits, also featuring Cappucino – an expression of owner Iorio's proud Italian heritage. Waiting chairs are each paired with an individual LCD screen, inviting guests to learn about special services in the salon and spa and providing a low-key marketing opportunity.

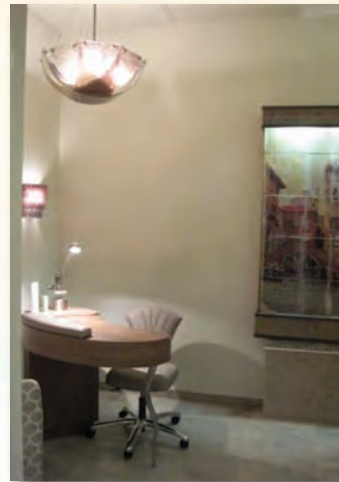




Michael Effler

As guests leave the front of the store, they move through a vaulted archway, onto a walkway defined by a gently curved hanging cloud, running between stylists' stations. The space to each side is artfully divided by pannels of smoked, recycled glass, gently curved in opposition to give the feeling of width. At the walkway's midpoint another chandelier spirals down from a dramatic ceiling well, drawing attention to the focal point of the entire finishing area – an Italian-inspired fountain.

Finally, the guest arrives at the spa. Ten feet tall, and made of etched glass with a long, brushed nickel handle, its door opens into another dimension of service. Creating a sense of arrival, the tumbling liquid of a Venetian frescoe water feature creates a gentle curtain of ambiance that fills the entire spa. To the left is a special waiting area for spa guests. To the right, sliding, rain-glass privacy doors open to an intimately spacious



treatment center, where a domed ceiling and an elegant chandelier cast a warm light, and custom casework artfully conceals revenue-multiplying infrastructure. Toward the rear of the Spa area, a custom manicure station and a unique couples' pedicure lounge are each arranged in their own private niche.

It's no secret that Aveda was one of the first companies to move into the organic market, and it comes as no surprise that Felice's Aveda concept should be invited to join a development like Uptown. Nonetheless, Iorio's dedication to quality combines with industry-leader IDC's decades of design experience to create a space that leaves an impression. Even after dark, the new Felice Salon and Spa stands out, its gently-lit logo wall subtly inviting even night-time passers-by, letting everyone know that this is one business that's here to stay. ■

Photography by: Shelly Hiebert



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