

Sun Kissed Tanning

by John P. Ribner

The indoor tanning industry is an enjoyable one and there are so many positive things here for everyone to enjoy. For example, more and more people are following their dreams of becoming their own bosses by opening and operating tanning salons. Since these “newbies” continue to strengthen our industry, ist Magazine wishes to recognize them with this monthly “Welcome Wagon” series. We invite you, our loyal readers, to join us in giving them the friendly greeting they deserve!

Sun Kissed Tanning might be a small salon, but it’s a pretty big deal to many in and around Amherst, VA.

Sun Kissed Tanning is a salon that was practically built for Josie and Riley, the twin daughters of the salon’s owner, Kelly Mays. After working for years as a media consultant in the publishing industry, Kelly and her

husband found out they were expecting twins. Knowing she wouldn’t be able to bring her kids to work with her in a corporate setting, she desired a career that would accommodate her family. “We live in a rural area where not many childcare services are available,” said Kelly, “so I knew that whatever my job, I would have to bring our daughters with me. I’ve always been a tanner but the salon nearest to us was an hour way, so it got me thinking that opening a tanning salon closer to home would not only help me but also everyone else who was tired of driving so far to get tan. Plus, it would allow me to have our daughters with me every day.”

Kelly found an 800 square-foot building strategically located between Amherst and Nelson Counties. After purchasing it, her husband John Wright took two weeks to completely overhaul its interior and create the salon’s décor, which utilizes bright pinks, sunset oranges and other bright colors to create a festive atmosphere. He also added a playroom for Josie and Riley. “We opened last year on September 1,” Kelly said, “and although that was in the middle of the off-peak months, we were still very pleased with how the community responded to us being there.” There is one high school within a mile of the salon, which brings in a lot of cheerleaders and other students wanting a tan before dances, and Kelly also draws students from Sweet Briar College and many area businesses.

Location: Amherst, VA
Opened: September 2013
Owner: Kelly Mays
Tanning Units: 3 (Sollux and SunCapsule)
Staff: 1
Other Services: ... Sunless Tanning (Mystic Tan)
Lotions: Australian Gold, Norvell Sunless, Supre Tan and Swedish Beauty
Distributor Partner: Four Seasons Sales & Service

“They all seem to enjoy having a tanning salon so close,” she added.

The future looks as bright as their salon for the happy little family. “In the next four years, I could see us opening a second location in Nelson County,” Kelly said. “We’d like to extend our service into that area to help cut down on the drive time for our tanners from that county. I wouldn’t mind relocating our original store to a larger location that would allow us to expand, and we’re looking at some of the shopping centers around town.” Kelly also is considering adding mobile spray-tanning to her business model. Meanwhile, she enjoys having a fun career that also allows her to bring her young daughters to work with her each day. “I love what I do!” she added.

Thanks for helping us welcome Kelly Mays to the indoor tanning community. We look forward to meeting many more new faces and salon places in the months to come. Until then ... stay sunny! ■



Kelly Mays, Owner