

INFEATURE



Kinky Curly STRAIGHT

With a name like Kinky Curly Straight, there is no mistaking this Adelaide salon for anything other than a perfect place to tease and tame the tresses of any client, regardless of hair type.

Located in a wide open street in Adelaide's fashionable Steyne neighbourhood, this eye-catching salon has clients that come from all walks of life. But what its name doesn't hint at is just how green this salon is.

KCS's up-market reputation is the result of a fabulous award-winning design, a dedication to fashion- fabulous hairstyling and a luxurious service that tops all the competition. But behind all that gorgeousness is a commitment to the environment that really is making a difference. Last year, the salon produced just four tonnes of carbon, the same amount emitted by an average coal power plant in just 36 seconds and less than an average car in a year.

"We agreed when we opened the salon last year that thinking 'green' and being 'sustainable' would be at the core of our business. In every decision we made from fitting out the salon to the products we stock to the service we provide, we considered exactly how sustainable it would be for the environment and for us," said Uros Mikic, owner and creative director. "For instance, we were the first Adelaide salon to discard cotton towels and buy into Easydry," he said.

Working with his lovely wife, Mojca, who looks after the business-side, Uros has refused to compromise on that commitment or on his hairdressing. Within months of opening, the KCS team

has won Best New Salon Design at the 2013 Australian Hair Fashion Awards and made it to the final in the Salon Design category at the 2013 Schwarzkopf Professional Hair Expo Awards. Uros was also named finalist in the 2013 American Crew Face Off competition and finalist in Men's Hairdresser of the Year at the 2013 Australian Hair Fashion Awards.

This same determination to excel has fed into Uros and Mojca's promise to be as near carbon neutral as possible. Everything in their gorgeous salon with its wooden floors, bespoke furniture, custom-designed illustrations and eye-catching mural is eco-friendly.

"Sustainability is about looking after the planet so you have an environment in which your business and your team can thrive," adds Mojca. "It doesn't need to mean greater investment or higher costs. Take Easydry. It is a much better, more luxurious service for our clients and for the planet. But it doesn't cost more than buying towels or paying for the washing machine and dryer to be on constantly."

With 15 years' experience, working in salons in Italy, Britain and New Zealand before coming to Australia, the duo, originally from Slovenia, set about investigating the carbon element of all salon design and management.

The first move was to tie up with a green energy supplier. They found a carbon neutral one in the guise of Momentum Energy, owned by Hydro Tasmania, which generates energy from a river system that has been powering Tasmania for nearly 100 years. Burning energy without creating a carbon footprint is pretty amazing, but KCS has done it.

Next up for consideration was water consumption. Cutting out cotton towels

in favour of Easydry definitely helped save water, but any salon is a heavy user and with a busy clientele, KCS was at risk of pouring this precious stuff down the drain.

"We installed Eco Heads, which save 40 per cent of water and have a three-way filtering system that removes chlorine, rust, sand and sediments," says Uros. "So with those and Easydry, we use a fraction of the water used in an average salon," he said.

Now a Red Carpet salon like KCS needs the support of a glamorous manufacturer, but it's not difficult to be glamorous and green in Australia. Uros signed up with KEVIN.MURPHY, and has since become a KM ambassador. The salon has also brought in Refoil, the recycled aluminium foil brand that has got everyone comparing their balls.

"We scrunch our used colour tubes up with our Refoil so we have big balls which we sell to metal recyclers and donate the money to the Cancer Council," adds Mojca. "In fact, we recycle everything from our bottles to paper. Even our coffee and hair is sent to the local community gardens for compost. But we are looking at other uses for cut hair. Along with some other eco salons, we are working on creating hair booms, which are made of old hair secured in a roll and used to clean up oil spills at sea," Uros said.

The result of all this is the incredibly low carbon output, just four tonnes last year as measured by an independent company, which the Mikics offset with a payment to a carbon offset program that re-invests in researching sustainable solutions for businesses. The clients of KCS have no allusions as to what their salon stands for. There is the obvious one of catering for all client hair types and producing any beautiful look desired, but they also know and love that KCS is possibly one of Australia's most sustainable salons. **IN**