



Mike and Nicky Riccio with their team

Pictures: CELIA BARTLETT PHOTOGRAPHY

Delight as award-winning salon reopens

Great to see the salon open again! How's it been so far?

It's been amazing to feel the love from everyone returning since lockdown. It is clear we really have missed each other deeply. The only sad thing is we can't give each other a big hug!

Some clients have felt a little trepidation with the new strict protocol in place, but as soon as our highly trained team guide them through the initial steps, everyone becomes relaxed and very grateful for the safety, levels of hygiene and comfort of our environment. The overriding feedback we are getting is that clients are feeling 'very safe and relaxed'. This allows us to carry out our high-quality service. Saffron Walden BID have been very helpful with advice, signage, hand sanitiser and more.

Have you seen any bad 'at home' haircuts or colouring?

We do have a strict code of client confidentiality, so we definitely can't spill the beans! But seriously,

As M Riccio Hair Design in Market Hill, Saffron Walden reopens, owner Mike Riccio tells us about the joy of being back and the salon's new Covid-19 safety measures

apart from the odd short, asymmetric fringe, nothing that we couldn't put right. We have been so impressed with our clients that have not touched their hair at all!

Tell us a bit about the new safety measures at the salon

We spent many hours researching the environment we wanted to create for our clients and our team to work in. So after taking on board advice from experts, we put in place our Covid-19 commitment policy which goes above and

beyond government guidelines. Among the measures are: rearranging the salon space to adhere to social distancing guidelines, every surface cleaned regularly, disposable gowns and towels used at all times, and visors and masks worn by staff when necessary on the salon floor. To see the whole policy visit the home page of our website.

How has coronavirus impacted your business?

We are generally prepared for most eventualities but coronavirus has been completely unprecedented! Never in my 35 years as a salon owner have I experienced anything even close to this pandemic.

We were very grateful for the government help in the form of a rates grant, which covered our rent when we were closed, the furlough scheme, and the business interruption loan, which allowed us to buy safety attire and equipment. The safety measures will have an impact on our profitability, but we are committed to ensuring the livelihoods of the whole team, while not compromising our high level of service.

What did the salon do to keep staff's spirits up during lockdown?

We have an extremely close-knit team and held weekly zoom chats, including our regular 'Friday Club' beverages catch-up and quizzes, along with pretty much daily conversations on our group chat to see how everyone was feeling and what they were up to. The team's hunger for learning



The salon's pretty garden

continued so we arranged online education sessions, to help the team to keep their knowledge and expertise right up to date. They also had a mindfulness session to prepare for coming back to work.

What makes your salon stand out from the crowd?

We believe the combination of experience and youth makes for a perfect team. We have a vigorous recruitment policy where we only employ people who can bring their own individuality but are able to work within a close team. Rightly or wrongly - we live and breathe hairdressing! We don't settle for anything less than perfection. We are very proud to be a multi award-winning salon and are also

the only salon in the area to hold The Good Salon Guide 5 Star rating.

If you still need convincing, head over to our testimonial page on our website, where we have over 600 client reviews on our testimonial page, or check out our 100 per cent Google review rating.

M Riccio Hair Design at Gibson House, 13 Market Hill, Saffron Walden, is a completely single and independent salon situated up the Hill, next door to Market House Wine Bar and opposite the Kings Arms Pub.

You can find the salon on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and at mricciohairdesign.co.uk. You can also call 01799 796300.



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