

2/11/2011 6:51:00 PM

Style Cuts

Boardroom Salon franchise continues expansion with Plano opening

By Gail Bennison

Long gone are the days when macho men shunned hair salons. Haircutting is a \$59 billion industry and men's grooming is the fastest-growing segment of that industry. Men care how they look, and looking great makes a man feel better about himself, says Bruce Schultz, co-founder of The Boardroom Salon for Men.



He and his wife Heather Schultz founded The Boardroom in 2004.

The fifth Boardroom Salon in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and the second in Collin County opened Jan.13 in Plano's Lakeside Market Shopping Center. The salon has locations in Allen, Dallas, Highland Village, Southlake and Winston-Salem, N.C.

The Plano store is a joint-venture between Schultz and longtime Southlake client, Justin Hulin, who has 75 percent interest as a franchisee.

Hulin describes The Boardroom as a great place for men that appreciate the finer things in life.

"I am excited and extremely pleased to be opening our first salon in Plano," he said. "It has long been a target market for me personally and I look forward to becoming a valuable business addition to the community as well as The Boardroom business team. Bruce has been an integral part of getting this location off the ground and making this fantastic opportunity a reality."

This is not your grandfather's barber shop for sure, but the community feel is there. And so is the rich, old world charm. The Boardroom is reminiscent of a 1920s country club. Think F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby* minus the bootleg whiskey and the white billowing curtains. Gentlemen clients at The Boardroom are surrounded by detailed dark wood paneling, plush masculine leather chairs, and a relaxing lounge. They can enjoy a cold beer or other comforting libation and play pool or chess before or after they are treated to the myriad of services in a first-class spa/salon setting.

The Boardroom offers haircuts, hot lather shaves, facials, massages, hand and foot grooming, coloring and body waxing.

Schultz says that men like to get into a routine about where they get their grooming services, and if you have a place that is cool enough with outstanding client service you've

got a good chance of winning that client and keeping him for the rest of his haircutting days.

"When my wife and I moved to Southlake we were looking for a good place to get my hair cut," he said. "We thought, 'What would be a good place to go to?' We came up with a 1920s country club environment that's timeless. Our tagline is 'The ultimate relaxing experience for men.' We have a simple, clean business model."

"We wanted a team that's very professional and very well trained," Schultz added. "Our focus is making sure our client has a great experience and great services and a relief from the hustle and bustle of everyday life."

Doug Curtis, interim CEO of the AT&T Performing Arts Center in Dallas, has been a twice-monthly customer of The Boardroom Salon for Men in Allen for a little over a year. His teenage son, Jake, is also a regular customer.

Curtis says it's worth it to spend a little extra money to be treated well.

"Obviously I don't need a haircut every two weeks. This is much more than going to get a haircut," Curtis says. "It's a great way to relieve stress and a good way to sort of lose yourself for a couple of hours and forget about the problems you might have in the world. This is a one-stop shop. The only thing that could make it better is if Bruce would include a car wash and a cigar area."

The Boardroom is a happy place with a lot of energy, Schultz says.

"Our staff is happy and the clients feel that. It's like Cheers where everybody knows your name. Our clients look forward to coming in and are confident they will get the best grooming experience possible."

Bruce and Heather started their first store in Southlake with the idea they would open two or three and then let other people pursue the American dream just like they did, transitioning from the corporate world to having control over their financial destiny in business ownership. They started franchising in 2008.

The business for the most part has been recession-proof, Schultz says.

"Most of our clients want to keep looking good and have that relaxation," he said. "Instead of coming in every three weeks for a haircut they might come in every four weeks when economic times get tough. But even clients who are seeking a career change need to look good."