

# COMFORT ZONE

## FIBER HAIR SPA

Mary Peragin, who owns Fiber Hair Spa on Manhattan's Upper East Side, jokes that her biggest problem is not getting clients into the salon, it's getting them out. But with industry-appropriate, cult-favorite flicks like *Shampoo*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Hairspray* and *Moulin Rouge* playing on the plasma and complimentary Wi-Fi, cappuccinos and wine available, it's really no wonder clients don't want to leave. "Our reception area is minimalist, but it's Zenlike and relaxing," says Peragin, who was renting a chair in another salon before she decided to open her own. "It's designed to feel like a contemporary living room rather than a commercial space." Although you won't find facials or massages on the menu, Peragin says she opted to call the salon a "hair spa" to invoke its true mission: to maximize each client's visit so they leave feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. —C.W.



## Selling Experiences

Salons aren't just in the business of selling beauty services; they also sell their customers experiences. Nobody understands this more than Gordan Logan, president of Sports Clips, a salon franchise with a concept that's proven to be a slam dunk: It provides precision haircuts for men and boys in an exciting, sports-themed environment. There are 479 Sports Clips locations as of press time, but an average of three stores open nationwide each week. Each location shows sports on big-screen TVs in the lobby and has stadium-style seating in the waiting room, where magazines like *Backpacker* and *Bassmasters* are available. There are TVs in front of every chair showing games or ESPN News, and the walls are decorated with sports memorabilia. "You always have to think about ways you can enhance the client experience while differentiating your business," says Logan, who says pairing a great experience with quality service makes for a winning combination. With that in mind, Sports Clips offers neck-and-shoulder massages and steamed towel treatments with their high-quality haircuts. "A cute concept will not carry you," Logan says. "No matter what unique selling points you have, if you don't deliver a quality service, you won't be able to deliver on your goals." —C.W.



Sports Clips is on top of its game.

## SIGNATURE SERVICE

The ESPRESSO YOURSELF COFFEE TANNING FACIAL at Miami's RikRak Salon is a real pick-me-up for the face that leaves skin with a sun-kissed glow. The treatment includes exfoliation with espresso coffee bean grounds; extractions; a mask containing espresso coffee, finely ground espresso beans and a sugarcane solution; and a complimentary cappuccino. RikRak's co-owner Raquel Watters

admits that while the treatment is very popular, it may not appeal to everyone. "You have to be a coffee lover to enjoy it, which I am—that's why I came up with the idea," she says. —L.A.



## CHOOSING A CREDIT CARD VENDOR

Using credit card services wisely in your salon can be a challenge, according to Marc Mataya of ClieTrak Software, who says to consider the following points when evaluating a merchant account processor:

1. **Avoid showing a prospective agent your current sales figures.** Instead, have them give you a fixed rate above interchange rates, and an authorization fee amount. (Interchange rates are the base rates that all card processors must pay equally.)
2. **Ask for their surcharge rates for nonqualified transactions.** Nonqualified transactions cost about 1 to 1.5 percent more than qualified transactions because of added risk. If you have a high volume of sales transactions every month, look for a low authorization fee (around 15 cents per transaction).
3. **Don't lease card-processing equipment.** You'll pay for it in the end. How much more? Just multiply your lease payment times the length of your lease to see the true cost of the machine or software.
4. **Choose a vendor with a flat cancellation fee.** Make sure your contract states a specific amount, usually a maximum of \$300, for canceling within three years, which covers the company's cost of setting up your account.
5. **Consider "integrated" card processing systems where payments are handled through your salon management software.** It can save you thousands per year in additional surcharges and wasted receptionist time by eliminating terminal entry mistakes.

For more information, call Mataya at 888/313-1308.



PHOTOGRAPHY: MATTHEW COULTER (FIBER SALON), CORBIS.COM (CHOOSING A CREDIT CARD VENDOR), GETTYIMAGES.COM (SIGNATURE SERVICE)