



Nasim Modaresi is an expert threader

salon spy



Salon owner Rebecca Dowdeswell (centre) with salon manager Sarah Swincoe (right) & threading expert Nasim Modaresi

name:
nkd

where:
6 Bridlesmith Walk
Nottingham NG1 2HB
t: 0115 924 1454
w: www.nkdwaxing.com

owner:
Rebecca Dowdeswell

brands used:
Perron Rigot, Tweezerman, Skin Doctors, Dead Sea Skin Magik, Australian Bodycare, Tend Skin, Just Kittingyng pubic stencils.

Nottingham's first ever fashion boutique opened in the 1960s in the Bridlesmith Gate area of the city centre, so perhaps it's no surprise that Rebecca Dowdeswell chose this location when opening her trailblazing waxing boutique, nkd. With a minimalist interior, created to appeal equally to male and female clientele, nkd offers a full range of specialist waxing and threading treatments, from basic bikini to a full body extravaganza, and is the only salon of its kind in the city.

Rebecca opened the business in December 2009 and despite its infancy, nkd is attracting between 40 - 50 clients per week and employs three members of staff including a professional threading expert. What is perhaps most interesting about nkd however, is that Rebecca is a journalist by trade, and opened the salon without any previous experience in the beauty industry. *Salon Spy* met with Rebecca to discuss the challenges of opening such a specialist business...

As you had no previous experience of working in the beauty industry, why did opening a waxing boutique appeal to you?

I lived in Brazil for a year, where they are world leaders in waxing (hence the Brazilian!). Since moving back to the UK almost ten years ago, it always struck me as strange how hard it is to get a really good, and I mean a proper, Brazilian Wax. I found that so many salons offered the service yet didn't really deliver it, either because they had misunderstood what a true Brazilian is, or because their therapists weren't adequately trained. Then, three years ago, I went to Asia and came across a couple of successful and sassy waxing bars. I instantly thought that the concept would work very well in the UK and that's what really gave me the push to do it. The fact that I managed to take my idea from a business plan on paper to a real live waxing and threading boutique is a real achievement for me. I feel like everyday and every week since we opened has been an achievement, especially when I see the number of customers coming in increasing on a weekly basis and absolutely critically, repeat customers.

So what makes your salon unique?

First and foremost, our therapists are absolute hair removal specialists; they either wax or thread all day which makes them real experts in their trade. Our city centre location says a lot about us. Our boutique is designed for busy people who want a service doing, and they want it doing quickly but they want it doing well. We aim to offer an express service without ever making the client feel rushed.

Tell me a little about your brand identity...it's certainly a little bit cheeky!

We've tried hard to create a strong brand identity. I wanted to get away from the almost bland and certainly generic feel that a lot salons have. Because of the nature of what we do, I thought we could really have some fun with the brand, which I feel we've achieved very successfully. The nkd logo is cheeky and provocative, without being offensive or vulgar in any way. I also knew before we opened that men would be a critical part of our customer base, and I'm really happy we're succeeding in getting to them, which I think is due in part to the androgynous feel of the salon and branding.

With such a specialist offering, what's important to you when choosing wax?

In terms of in-salon use, it had to be top quality wax and waxing products, even though they don't come cheap. We're certainly not the cheapest place to get a wax in town, but can justify our relatively high prices by the fact that we use one of the new generation hot, non-strip waxes, which definitely cause less breakage and thus fewer ingrown hairs, but are

considerably more expensive than the mass market wax brands that still sell in high volumes. That said, we'll always keep our eye out for the latest innovations in waxing, and if a better product comes along, I wouldn't hesitate to swap.

Is there anyone in the industry who you've gained inspiration from?

I really respect what Andy Rouillard - who's a guru when it comes to male waxing - has done. It must have been an immensely brave decision for him in the first place to train as a therapist in what is still such a woman's world. We've already found out for ourselves that male waxing is an extremely lucrative area. Instead of keeping his secrets to himself about what men want when it comes to waxing, he's very happy to share that knowledge.

And although your business is relatively new, do you have a long-term plan for success?

A nationwide expansion is definitely in my sights - I would never have started this business if I thought it was going to stay as one small salon in Nottingham. I think there's a huge opportunity in all of the Midlands' and Northern regional cities, which are often overlooked compared to the services you can find in, say, London. But I have much work to do in Nottingham first and obviously need to become established here before I think about opening elsewhere. Treatment-wise, I would like to start offering electrolysis in 2010, and then think about Laser / IPL and eyelash enhancements.



nkd's unisex treatment room

salon treatment spy review:

As a regular waxer, I have experienced many treatments with different therapists but never have I experienced a bikini wax like I did at nkd. Through their goal to offer men and women an authentic experience, nkd's therapists are able to deliver stunning results and a comfortable experience.

Never one to shy away from a bit of novelty, I opted for a Brazilian bikini wax with heart-shaped public topiary, and just for some added bling, sprayed with pink glitter. Any treatment reviewer will tell you that there's no place for coyness in this role!

Despite many years of bikini waxing I had never previously undergone an authentic Brazilian, but my therapist Sarah put me at my ease immediately and all my apprehensions went as she fully explained what would happen. I realised that this therapist was a true waxing specialist.

Before visiting the salon I had checked out their website, which was full of useful information and answers to any questions I had, which also meant there were no surprises during the treatment or any awkward questions to ask.

The use of hot wax meant that Sarah was able to perform a relatively pain free treatment even on the most intimate areas. She worked quickly and methodically and then used a stencil to create a very cute topiary heart shape in place of the traditional 'landing strip' associated with Brazilian waxing.

The hot wax enabled her to create a virtually perfect shape, which she then sprayed with pink glitter, specially designed for use in intimate areas and which would wash out. The treatment was completed with an application of soothing lotion, however I felt little soreness and since I have experienced a reduced amount of ingrown hairs.

I left this unique salon with a new attitude towards intimate waxing and I doubt that this will be the last time the team at nkd see me in all my glory!