

LIMITLESS

June 2021

For the Lake Norman
area's 55+ adults who
place no limits on
living their best lives!

A history
quiz

FAQs
about the
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VitaStile
Hair Designs

N.C. Road Trips





Hair for Life

VitaStile Hair Designs Knows
You've Got Living to Do and
Great Hair Helps

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You've heard the term family business, but you've likely never seen a duo quite like Gay Coast and Braden Sloan. The cousins are 20 years apart in age, but Coast says she knew Sloan had an innate talent for hairdressing when he was a just a teenager. As she explains it, she was working in her first salon in Pennsylvania one afternoon and looking out the window while Braden, who was 13 at the time, was trimming the shrubs outside. There was

something about his technique that made her pause. She called him inside and asked him to trim the hair on a mannequin she had inside. It was then that she knew he had a natural talent. It wasn't long before he was cutting his brothers' hair, his friends' hair in school during study hall and eventually the soccer team.

"I always do things 150 percent all in," he says. "I knew I had to practice that much to get better, so I even took my shears to family events."

While Sloan found his calling at an early age, Coast's path into hairdressing was not a linear one. She grew up in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pa. Her parents firmly believed she needed to go to college to have a successful career, so she became a licensed practicing nurse immediately following high school and earned a bachelor's degree in human resources.

"But," she says, "I also did my Barbie Doll's hair and was late to the prom because I was so busy doing everyone



VitaStile employs eight stylists and the salon is open six days a week.

else's hair." However, she thought that to be a successful hairdresser, you had to live and work in a big city.

Following a dream

A chance meeting changed her perspective. While working in human resources at a travel company, Coast says she met a hairdresser she became friends with who led a really comfortable life. "She offered to let me go to work with her one day, and after that I went home, quit my corporate job and went to beauty school," says Coast. At age 27, she opened her first salon in the town of Slippery Rock, Pa. in 2002, about 35 minutes outside of Pittsburgh.

In 2011, Coast decided she needed a break from the cold weather and snow and decided to check out the Lake Norman settling in Denver and opening VitaStile Hair Designs. Sloan attended Butler Vocational-Technical school in Pennsylvania from 2010-2012 while still in high school and acquired 900 hours of study while there, even earning Student of the Year across all the programs of study (he focused on Cosmetology). He joined Coast not long after in North Carolina to help her grow the business while also taking classes at Gaston College and completing the state requirements to earn his cosmetologist's license.

Hair for the whole family

VitaStile has earned a reputation for caring for the hair needs of entire families. Both Coast and Sloan perform cuts, color, and styling. Coast says one thing that sets them apart is they offer full complimentary 15-minute consultations for new customers so they can share their history,

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experiences and what they are looking for in a service. From there, clients can book a follow-up appointment with a range of stylists, from beginner to advanced. VitaStile also offers a starting price of \$40 for cuts and 50 percent off all starting prices with their associate's program.

"With our associate program you can get the \$40 cut while a more junior stylist holds the shears but either Braden or I will supervise," she says. The salon currently has eight employees total, and Coast also travels back and forth to Pennsylvania every eight weeks to take care of family and select clients.

Sloan shares that he feels working in the salon industry is his calling. Not only has he gone on mission trips through his church to cut hair of kids going back to school (he's been to Mexico, Peru, and Kentucky), but he gets out of bed each day with the goal of making people happy while he does their hair.

"I love the people," he says. "I love changing someone's day for the better. I get out of bed to make people happy and do their hair. Last month I saw around 167 guests. I want to help people and be available

for them, working six or seven days a week if I have to. I do it for the people for than anything else.

When you feel good about yourself, you will go out to eat or shopping and help support the economy," Sloan adds.

Coast says she looks at trends and styles in Italy for inspiration. She's done a lot of education in Europe which is about two years ahead of the trend in the United States, and this helps the salon create unique looks for the lifestyles of their clients.

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Pandemic lessons

This past year has brought its share of challenges to the salon, but Coast says their clients were phenomenal. They had guests pay VitaStile for their normally budgeted services even while the salon was closed as a show of support. Trying to follow the rules and regulations required to reopen the salon was a painstaking process that required a great attention to detail, and Coast says her staff rallied when the doors reopened.

"A few of us would work from 9 a.m. to noon, go home to eat lunch and take a nap, and then return to work until 9 p.m." We did that for two months in order to accommodate all the clients who wanted to come in while we were at 50 percent capacity." ■

VitaStile Hair Designs

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