

# suburban life



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# True BLue

At his salons in Huntingdon Valley and LBI, **BLue Hair Studio founder Will Bostock** nurtures a one-of-a-kind culture that provides “much more than a place to get your hair done.”

***Be different. Take a risk. Have no fear. Be yourself.***

Such aspirational sayings may ring hollow to some, but not to Will Bostock. To him, these words serve as guideposts, a roadmap, an instruction manual for living his life and running his business.

Bostock owns BLue Hair Studio, the Huntingdon Valley salon and spa he founded more than two decades ago. While BLue has earned its reputation as one of the area’s finest salons, where he and his staff welcome anyone in search of a world-class cut and color, it has become so much more than that.

“I’ve been adamant about creating a place where people can belong,” Bostock says. “I started this business 23 years ago with the idea that a salon could be a lot more than a place where I could do hair and make money. I knew it could also be a community center, a cultural place, and somewhere people go that actually



BLue East in Harvey Cedars, New Jersey

feels like it belongs to them.”

In BLue, Bostock nurtured a culture that screams authenticity, promotes kindness, and encourages risk taking. Naturally, BLue attracts others—employees and clients alike—who want to lead an authentic life, value kindness, and crave a little risk.

“You could have the hippest place with cool décor and stylists who have tattoos and blue hair, but there’s nothing special about that if you don’t have the other piece,” he says. “There’s nothing cool about being overly hip. It’s only cool if it’s backed up with a level of care and kindness, and we have that here.”

### Something Different

Bostock began nurturing his artistic streak at a young age. He grew up in Bryn Athyn in a family of musicians, but music was just one of many creative outlets. He drew, painted, and otherwise used his imagination

“as a place to escape to.” When he started cutting his older brother’s hair, he found something “really satisfying” in the process and in the end result.

“Hair is the one accessory that has almost no bounds,” he says. “What I like about hair is that you take something and imagine it as something different; there’s a strong parallel with decorating and design. Unfortunately, some people get caught up in playing it super safe. Often it should be just the opposite; people need or want something more exciting, but no one has ever offered it to them. When you show them what’s possible, that’s what builds long-lasting relationships.”

BLue’s embrace of individualism applies to members of Bostock’s staff, too.

“People like to reflect their individuality, and we want the people who work here to express their unique quiriness,” he adds. “We want that individuality, and so do our clients. If you support individuals being themselves, it makes for a more dynamic environment that people want to return to.”

While women make up the majority of BLue’s clientele, Bostock has seen the number of men who come to BLue—either the main salon or BLue Vinyl, Bostock’s old-school barbershop, which includes a pool table and a wall of whiskeys—increase from one year to the next. The barbershop “resonates with a certain crowd,” he says, but many men choose to have their hair styled and, in some cases, colored in the salon. “It’s a place where all people come together,” he adds.

Bostock’s creativity shines through in the



“It’s a place where all people come together.”  
—Will Bostock,  
owner of BLue Hair Studio

many innovations BLue has adopted over the years. Art Deco furnishings. Live jazz every Saturday. An art gallery. Special events with fellow artists, ranging

from painters and writers to dancers and musicians. Collaborations with nonprofit organizations and other area businesses. Massage, waxing, and skin care, among other spa services. A tattoo parlor.

“Who says you can’t?” he asks. “As an entrepreneur, you have to have a willingness to live in the realm of risk. You have to somehow learn to be comfortable with waking up with Old Man Risk breathing down your neck every night. You also have to thrive on being on the edge of things, because sometimes the scariest times present the biggest opportunities.”

### Expanding Horizons

Bostock pounced on one unexpected opportunity early into the pandemic, when the world was mired in uncertainty. Salons such as BLue had to close their doors for nearly four months, but Bostock chose not to sit around and wait.

“I opened a satellite location on Long Beach Island in the middle of all the insanity,” he says. “For me, I’ve always been at my best in the worst moments by pulling toward something more positive and just keep creating. The satellite is doing well, and the main salon [in Huntingdon Valley] is doing better than it was before COVID. It just shows me that when you have creativity and kindness, and you align yourself with creative people, it outlasts everything else.”

The LBI salon, known as BLue East, has helped Bostock expand BLue’s client base and attract a crop of new, exceptional talent. He has a second home in LBI, so the satellite

location has afforded him more time to “recharge the batteries.” It has had a similar effect on some of his staff.

“I saw how easy it was to lose people after the shutdown, so you have to set yourself apart to make it a special place to work,” says Bostock. “If you work here, you can pop down to a great little beach town for a few days, work in that salon and expand your client base, and watch the sunrise on the ocean and sunset on the bay. It’s kind of a ‘work-cation’ concept. I love the idea of contrast and changing up your physical surroundings. For a creative person, it can really open up your eyes to new things.”

Likewise, an emphasis on continuing education enables stylists, colorists, and other members of his team to add to their skill set, and ultimately provide better service to clients. Bostock has brought in “top educators from around the world” to share their expertise on everything from the latest trends in cutting and coloring, to back-to-the-basics technical skills, to customer service.

BLue has changed quite a bit over the past 23 years, and it will continue to evolve, but Bostock’s passion for his craft remains unchanged. It’s apparent in the way he speaks, in the culture he has created, and in the experience provided to each person who enters one of his salons.

“I’m doing what I love, and when you’re doing what you love, you don’t have to tell anybody,” he says. “I’m proud of what we’ve built here, and my fellow workers and clientele are proud of it, too. It’s much more than a place to get your hair done.” ■



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