



PROFILE

Crowning Glory

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Selina Ong of Coulisse Heir highlights the importance of scalp health and why exercising self-care is an absolute necessity.



There is a tedious albeit necessary routine for an effective skincare regime. Beauty experts have preached about the double-cleanse method, deeming the practice as a sure-fire path to immaculate skin. But beyond the borders of the visage, the very same skin that serves as the delicate bed for our hair is an area that's often neglected.

“We are mostly visual people, so we typically only look after things that we see, otherwise we either procrastinate or neglect them,” said Selina Ong, co-founder of luxury hair and scalp care specialist *Coulisse Heir*. “As we age, our hair starts to fade, so it's equally important to look after it when it's still in its glory, rather than when only facing a problem.”

According to a 2020 research on Statista, the number of leading hair concerns of women in Singapore between the ages of 35 and 44 totaled 14, the top percentile being hair loss that was shared by 53.28 per cent of respondents. The other major concerns that followed were thinning hair, followed by hair damage.

One would scoff and assert that the meticulousness of hair care boils down to extreme vanity, but Ong emphasizes that the need for a healthy scalp is just as equal to self-love. She believes that the act of taking time out to nurture the scalp, an area she regards a pressing concern, should be second nature, and not as an afterthought in the habitual sense. “We want a positive message that goes behind scalp care, because just talking about it tends to have a negative association,” shared Ong. “People would immediately assume that you're either going bald or there's some kind of issue.”

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Located at a prime unit on the fourth floor of ION Orchard, Coulisse Heir is a stylish hair salon offering specialized scalp care services. The unassuming front with its textured walls and soft lighting does come off as a little mysterious, for even the name would require a little bit of understanding unless you speak Old French. “Coulisse” when translated means “backstage”, while “heir” is a word play on “hair”. “The novel idea is that upon entering our salon, one steps up to the deck, similar to how models go to the back of a runway,” said Ong. “We want everybody to look good, before facing the world, or going ‘on stage’”.

The salon houses seven private rooms they call “pods” and is equipped with a standing mirror, a mobile wash basin, machinery equipment, and a fully reclinable backwash chair. Save for other minimal pieces of furniture and accents, the private pod is a little sanctuary that is all yours to bask in for an hour or so.

“The pods are very intentional,” said Ong. “Most business owners will want to maximize the limited space that they have — the usual seating in the majority of hair salons comprises just one or two VIP rooms. But when space is compromised, it hinders what we have achieved now in terms of comfort and the provision of a private setting. Having privacy is a luxury, considering how the isolation period during the pandemic had all of us rethink about space for ourselves when boundaries started to get lost when dividing time between family and work.” Situated in the middle of the

get lost when dividing time between family and work. Situated in the middle of the corridor stands a marble island designed with supports of various mediums, mirroring the low ceiling lighting that's emitted from casts of steel, wood, and concrete. The statement counter is laden with a monochromatic display of Coulisse Heir's bottled products that are designed with stylized graphic motifs by local artist Theseus Chan.



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Ong, who has had 18 years of experience in the beauty industry, shared that quality product and efficacy were the first points of criteria she prioritized for Coulisse Heir as a new brand. “In my role, I manage the sourcing of products, marketing, branding, and collaborations,” she said. “I work very closely with a product innovator from South Korea, comprised of scientists and medical specialists. They specialize in a lot of products and treatments for hair transplant centers and medical clinics in the country. Together, we spent about two to three years on trials to create the desired products and formulae.”

Scientific technology is just one part of the company's two-prong approach, the other being ancient herbology. “Let's take the ginseng root for example,” explained Ong. “In traditional methods, the ginseng is first boiled, then ground down, steamed, and directly applied. Our ingredients are clinical grade so what we do is extract the ginseng gene and mix it in the product, along with other beneficial ingredients. This way, the efficacy is the same for the first bottle and the next 100 bottles.”

The salon champions its Signature Co-Cleanse Scalp Therapy, a treatment that encompasses both physical and technological applications to stimulate healthy scalp growth. The process begins with simple hair brushing and a shoulder massage, followed by exfoliation using the Oxygen Water Jet Peel Machine. The revered double-cleanse method is in play, after lathering up with the in-house lineup of cleansers (a term they prefer to advocate instead of shampoo). After a thorough rinse, a scalp essence is applied before subjecting the head to Chromotherapy technology for its healing properties. And before you make your exit, your hair is then blow dried and styled.

Besides advocating for aesthetic well-being, Ong is an avid sports person, with ice climbing and skating among her favorite activities. “I was a very active person in my youth,” she said, who's also certified in technical mountaineering. “I would say I've covered most of the Malaysian mountains and have taken on a couple of Nepal's terrains, including one of Everest's base camps.

“The goal for most trekkers is to catch the sunrise. As glorious as it is, I don't see the

point of waking up at an ungodly hour to watch it happen. What I enjoy most is seeing the different cloud levels, especially the low ones. It's not a sight that you can experience unless you're up in the mountains where the view is just clean and clear. Compared to the vastness of nature, we're so small in comparison, and being able to be among the clouds just makes me feel like I can touch the sky.”

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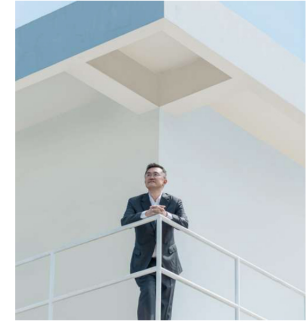
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