

Who wants a Proper Haircut?

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We're open again, and how good it is to be back in the Salon. The first few weeks back were pretty crazy. 13 hour days, 7 days a week. It felt like the Christmas rush, only we'd all been off work for months so it was quite intense! We had invited our regulars to book ahead online and we are fully booked until the end of August. That's a good feeling though so I'm not complaining!

Hair appointments are spaced out more so we have time to clean and sanitize in between visits. It means a longer working day and we have to wear a visor and a mask now. We've got to be safe and careful with clients, but it's a pain to wear all day; uncomfortable and restrictive. Clients arrive in a mask and put all their belongings in a clear plastic drawer, so we can always guarantee a covid-safe place for them ...another thing we have to disinfect of course.

I found myself being more chatty than ever – I'd barely spoken to anyone face-to-face besides my close family. Clients have been understanding of all the changes here and it makes you appreciate the time that you put in previously, getting to know them, being friendly and chatty. Now I'm the one who needs a good chat and what goes around comes around.

Sometimes you need a real break from something to know how much you like or hate it; some people will have decided to change jobs thanks to lockdown. Personally, I was so looking forward to meeting clients and colleagues again, and getting back to the physical act of cutting hair. I subscribe to stylist vloggers and started watching hair instructional every day. I'm very experienced but there's always more to learn and it helped keep me positive.

My wife is a hair stylist too and we cut each other's hair a few times, it was nice to do it more than was really necessary, we were both missing our craft. I'm glad people had a go themselves in lockdown – for me it means they were happier, but that they also realised quite what a skill it is to cut and style hair well, so they appreciated coming back to the salon even more.

We're a small independent business, in the North Laine in Brighton, the hub of independent businesses. We're not part of a big chain, there's no-one to prop us up in times like these. The salon did get a small grant from the government, but only I was lucky enough to get support for self-employed people. The business can survive this, as long as we're not shut down for months again, but this has been a tough time for places like us and it's made me change my own approach to where I shop. I've made a pact with myself to buy local, support local wherever I can. It's a chance to be more eco too. I'm a keen cyclist and it's been great to be on roads that are free of traffic and pollution; it's been a chance to think about how to be more friendly to the planet, virus or no virus.



By Nick, August 2020