

>>FLOORPLAN

CLOCKWISE: Natural light, masculine imagery, a macho retail display and comfy seating are the stars of the salon's waiting area; a handsome wooden reception desk adds character to the salon; the backbar station blends minimalism with comfort.



When Kurt Kueffner first envisioned MensDept., his new flagship salon in Minneapolis, he had two goals at the top of his list—to transform clients' ordinary trip to the barbershop into an extraordinary grooming experience and to deliver innovation in men's hair design. Mission accomplished on both fronts.

The 2,400-square-foot space, which adjoins the W-concept Aloft Hotel, boasts a fresh, modern design aesthetic. Masculine features including a monolithic wood wall made from solid ash, concrete flooring and an ultralong handcrafted vanity mirror pervade the space, adding depth and interest. Rounding out the look

are oversized styling chairs from Takara Belmont and abundant task lighting. "A lot of the more demanding technical work involved with cutting men's hair is below the widest part of the head, so we needed balanced task lighting that illuminates all the way down to the collar line," Kueffner says. "The lights are, by far, one of the greatest assets in the salon from a service delivery standpoint."

Beyond its masculine interior, the salon has another important element that sets it apart: its commitment to quality and innovation when crafting men's hair design. "There was a time when going to the barbershop was an important tradition for men—it was communal and uplifting," notes Kueffner. "Today, there's a big gap where that experience used to be. We aim to fill that gap by offering a high-quality, modern grooming experience."

To that end, Kueffner, whose sterling reputation as a top-notch educator and artist are recognized throughout the world, is hiring a skilled staff who then undergo rigorous education and training to ensure the services they perform, including cuts, in-between detailing, gray blending, custom color and permanent texture, are exceptional. "By the time a stylist reaches the floor, they will have spent more than 60 days in one-on-one training with me," he says.

"Men deserve exceptional customer service," Kueffner adds. "We've worked hard to deliver that as well as to provide them with a comfortable, modern environment where the quality of the experience and the hair work will be our point of difference." ><

—Kelley Donahue

IT'S A MAN'S WORLD

Hair guru Kurt Kueffner's latest masterpiece—MensDept.—suits men's grooming needs to a T.