

beautybiz

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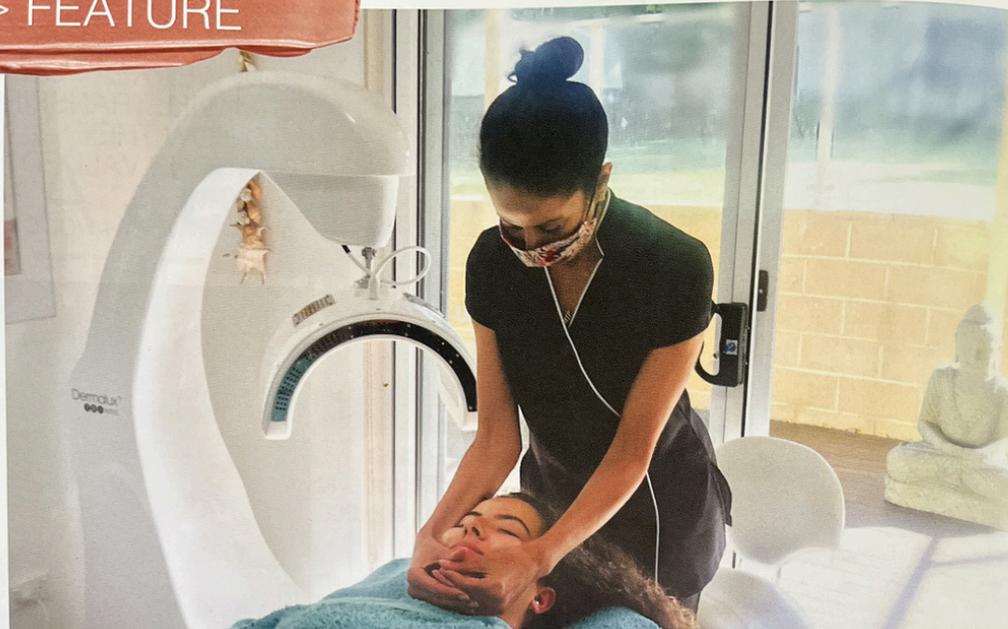
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THE HOUSE OF SAMARA

Growing up in Yorkshire in the North of England, Sara Bowtell was a bit of a tomboy, and as a child was always up to some sort of mischief. Her first impression of beauty came from her Grandma. She was always curling her hair with big rollers, carefully applying make-up and always took care with her dress and appearance. That's where Sara's love of beauty began, it was quite a ritual to watch as a young child.

Fast forward to today, Sara Bowtell owns and operates House of Samara, a sustainable home-based skin care salon located in Allambie Heights on Sydney's Northern Beaches, and Sara was a finalist in the recent Australian Beauty Industry Awards 2022 for solo operator of the year.

House of Samara has been operational for seven and a half years and has a growing following of clientele. As a sole operator and skin therapist, Sara's key area of speciality is in treating skin conditions, such as acne, rosacea, pigmentation, and anti-ageing. Sara's daily role involves skin diagnostics, skin consultation and education, working with clients to create a customised treatment program that is manageable and achievable. Consideration of lifestyle factors, budget, and commitment, to treatment plan is always factored into the design of a client's program.

"House of Samara is a winner," says Sara, "as I strive to go above and beyond by providing an exceptional level of products and services. I invest a considerable amount of time in personal education, researching products and service offerings. As a sustainable business, I aim to operate as a fully functioning skin care

salon that is conscious about the environment and provides a service that seeks to improve the lives of those it interacts with."

"In the future I perceive House of Samara as being an industry leader, specialist, and educator in the provision of holistic skin services that are ethically sourced and have a minimal environmental footprint. I wish to educate and provide clients with the necessary skill set so that they can make informed decisions regarding the overwhelming range of products and services that are currently on the market. This is why an initial diagnostic skin consultation is imperative and reduces wastage on products that are not suited for the client's skin type or concern. As a small sustainable skin care salon, I wish to lead the way and encourage more business owners and consumers to examine how they can do more to reduce their carbon footprint."

Our Beauty Editor **Louise May** chats with Sara to find out more about House of Samara.

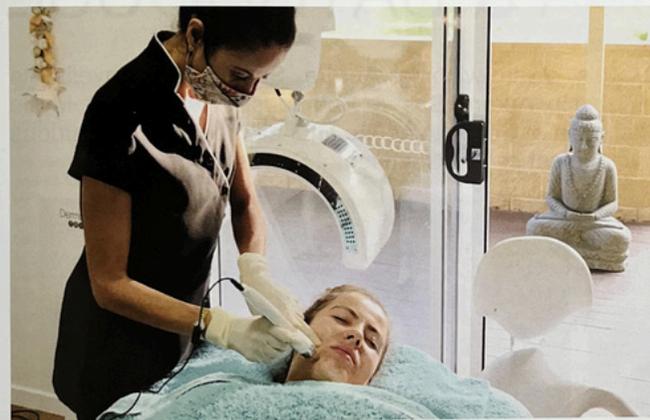
What inspired you to go green, and reduce your carbon footprint?

I've always had an interest in the environment, but it was really my teenage daughter who

inspired me to go green and adopt a more sustainable approach to not only living but my business as well. She's a climate activist and told me that I needed to do more so I did! It has now been 3 years and whilst I've made significant changes in both my business and personal life, there's always more that can be done. I'm still looking at ways to cut down on waste, repurpose what I have and buy less.

Do you have any tips or suggestions for salons wanting to reduce their environmental footprint but have no idea where to start?

Start with the small things you can change. Have a look firstly at what's going into your bins each day. Do you have a lot of mixed waste in your salon bins, empty product bottles, spatulas, paper, food waste, soft plastics etc. These products are valuable resources and can be recycled and repurposed into new products. Encourage the use of reusable coffee cups for your staff, provide a refillable water station as opposed to bottles of water, bokashi bins for food composting. Have a look at your energy consumption and provider. Is there an option to switch to a greener energy provider that doesn't invest in gas or upgrade to a more energy efficient



lighting system or is there an option to convert to solar energy? As you can see there are lots of ways to commence reducing your environmental footprint. Join the Sustainable Salons Network this is a great partnership for salons and will assist you in reducing your environmental footprint.

Would you say that it is a costly process? Do have any advice on how to keep the costs down when going sustainable?

As a sole-operator I don't believe it's a costly process, in fact it's quite the opposite. When you are looking at becoming more sustainable you are reducing what you are using. So, whilst you may have some initial costs to commence with this pays for itself over the long term. When I look at my investment for solar, solar battery my energy costs have reduced dramatically over the last few years. This also provides added value to my clients who are receiving a service that is more environmentally friendly and the satisfaction of delivering that service, I don't think you can really put a price on that.

What has been your biggest challenge you have faced in business so far? How did you overcome this?

Every day there are challenges in business and when you are running a business also

there is always a lot to take on board. You always need to be healthy and motivated, organised, patient and passionate about what you are doing. The biggest impact by far for me personally was the COVID lockdowns. However, it was a good opportunity to reset my vision and allowed me time to really focus on the future of my business. The changes I implemented have seen a major shift to becoming more sustainable and to lessen my carbon footprint. I have re-evaluated my business from many different angles including treatment menu, wastage, ethically sourcing of products and carbon emissions. I become a proud member of the Sustainable Salons Network which ensures that up to 95% of my salon resources are redirected from landfill. I have also installed solar energy, a solar battery and an electric vehicle for deliveries which has been such a wonderful opportunity for my business.

What would you say are the core values or philosophies which define your business?

As a sustainable business, I aim to operate as a fully functioning skin care clinic that is conscious about the environment and provides exceptional service that seeks to improve the lives of those it interacts with.

What's your advice to others who aspire to build an impactful brand?

For me personally I wanted to do things a little bit differently. I'm not a cookie cutter individual and my brand was never going to reflect that. Find the purpose in your business, if it's true to your values and philosophies then you will have a unique point of difference.

What has been your greatest lesson or piece of advice along your business journey?

I've learnt that if you have a vision that anything is possible with the right attitude, dedication, perseverance, and the desire to succeed it is achievable. There will be lots of hurdles along the way, mistakes, and a lot of sacrifices but if you do your homework and work hard you will achieve your goal.

What's on the agenda for the future?

I'm a big believer in further education whether it's learning more about micro plastic pollution, dermal education, or new technology we can all benefit from extending ourselves and gaining new knowledge and skills. I'm currently studying a Master of Human Nutrition through Deakin University, so I'm really excited to be able to offer my clients nutritional services in 2023. Nutrition plays a huge role in general health, skin health, compromised skin barriers and wellbeing. So yes lots to look forward too!