



## Taking a leap forward

■ Move more than doubles space for Francesco's, and boosts spa services

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For Anthony Fini, owner of Francesco's Salon & Spa, calculated risks had to be made for his business to continue moving forward.

With his clientele outgrowing his building and parking lot on Center Street in Mentor, Fini couldn't remain motionless given the increasing number of area competitors.

"We were at a place in business that we were really stuck," Fini said. "We felt that either we make a change or we stay stagnant."

The result of that decision is a new, 4,200-square-foot storefront at 7337 Mentor Ave. in Mentor's Points East shopping center — more the twice the size of the former site.

After several months of construction, the salon reopened for business on April 3. It now has 26 employees, many of them with hairdressing experience spanning 10 to 25 years.

Previously, Francesco's had been a traditional salon with hair and nail services. For Fini, who admits to having initial apprehension regarding the change, the larger space is the key to him now offering spa, massage, facial and skin services.

"It's a gamble, but anything in life is a gamble," he said. "We have an excellent reputation in Lake County, so we had to take what we had and expand it to offer these services that our clients were getting elsewhere."

Fini says it was important to delve into the wellness sector because of its increasingly widespread presence in the hair industry.

By installing treatment and steam rooms, each complete with its own shower, Fini recognized that his customers might want to extend their visits to his establishment.



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**Nicky Fracci, an esthetician at Francesco's Salon & Spa, gives a facial to Rebekah Havanchak, a nail technician at the salon.**

"They totally love it," Fini said of clientele's response to the new services. "I believe (wellness) services will be the big thing in this industry in the next five to 10 years."

Area businesswoman Kathie Hartman, of Concord Township, says she also plans on using the new amenities in the near future. In the meantime, the eight-year client will continue going to her trusted hairdresser.

"I used to be the typical woman who stayed with my hairdresser for six months to a year, then off to someone different," she said. "Since I've been going to Anthony, I haven't let anyone else cut my hair."

"Now that he has a full facility, I'll be doing even more."

Fini, born in Italy, traced his roots by designing the salon with a Tuscany feel.

Secure with a loyal customer base since 1991, Fini now hopes to attract business groups for "corporate getaways" and client functions like a recent jewelry party hosted by Keri Berardinelli, a local representative for Pevonia, a professional line of skin care products carried by Francesco's.

"It just really has a nice ambiance and it's very classy," Berardinelli said of the salon. "There's nothing like it in this area ... Spa is a lifestyle and

more and more people are looking for facilities like Francesco's."

Additionally, the expansion has given Francesco's the chance to host pedicure parties for parents looking to provide alternative birthday celebrations for their children. Fini says any group of more than three can expect discounts for any planned party, specific to the services they would like.

"There's a few places in the area that have spas, but we wanted to be that spa — that designated place to get away, retreat and relax," Fini said.

For more information, call (440) 951-4800.