

THE

SUMMIT

SOCIAL



SAMANTHA



JAMES



It's a winter wonderland out there and this time of year gives us all the feels - peace, love, happiness and gratitude. With this in mind, we looked to feature a salon partner making a difference in their community, a salon partner whose compassionate nature made our hearts swell!

Samantha James Hair Design is at the forefront of socially responsible business today. From environmental efforts, community involvement, LGBTQ2+ Community support, and forward thinking service options, they inspire us to be better! So we made our way down to Winterpeg, sporting one-piece snowsuits (obvi), to get the scoop on all things SJ.

The more we learned about the founders (Samantha + James) and their cute little salon family, the more we fell in love with their vibe. Naturally, we partnered up with

local talent to shoot a feel-good editorial piece celebrating all things festive.

This shoot is all about inclusivity and features babes having fun. Thank you to all of the creatives who came together to bring this vision to life.

Read on to learn more about Samantha James Hair Design - oh and Merry whichever holiday you celebrate, from our Summit family to yours.

XOXO, the
SUMMIT
Fam

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Q+A

— SAMANTHA —

Tell us about some of the environmentally friendly practices at your salon?

We are a part of Green Circle, which helps reduce 95% of the waste in our salon. We also eliminated plastic retail bags, and we offer refillable shampoo bottles for purchase, or encourage clients to bring their own. We are continuously trying to think of new ways to be eco-friendly and introduce these practices as often as we think of them!

We heard you offer gender neutral pricing, what's the scoop on this?

We had the idea in mind for a while, but didn't know how to go about it (all stylists can relate to the fear of change.) But we noticed some salons initiating gender neutral pricing, and it gave us the confidence to get on board! We have always considered our salon a no-judgement zone and wanted to make a safe space where everyone felt as comfortable as possible.

What inspired you to open a salon?

After falling in love with the industry, I began hairdressing right out of high

school. I was working full-time in a salon when I decided to further my education with a degree in business. I absolutely loved business classes - especially learning about the marketing aspects. I always had ideas around opening my own salon, but it just took finding the right person to partner with.

“We have always considered our salon a no-judgment zone and wanted to make a safe space where everyone felt as comfortable as possible.”

What is your favourite part about coming to work each day?

The people! I'm fortunate to have a really great clientele and an amazing team that James and I built together. From day one we wanted to create an inclusive, drama-free, and fun environment doing what we love!

How do you enhance the customer experience in your salon?

We try to cater to everyone by offering all-inclusive pricing, a great beverage selection, and new initiatives like silent services. We believe the experience goes past a good haircut - it's about making clients feel comfortable and providing services they can't get anywhere else.

What's your fave hair product rn?

Evo shebang-a-bang!

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

The importance of having supportive people in your corner to talk about your passions with. It's so helpful to bounce ideas off of one another, or just to reaffirm (as a business owner) that others are experiencing the same struggles. Often, all you see on social media are the "picture perfect" aspects of being an entrepreneur.

What do you love most about this industry?

It's never boring or stagnant and there is something for everyone. I love a

challenge, whether that be running a successful business, staying on top of evolving trends and styles, social media, editorial work, or becoming an educator.

Tell us something that not a lot of people know about you.

I love dancing! I travel to dance festivals often and recently started a dance company with a close group of friends.

Who inspires you?

The people I have met in my life inspire me every day. I have learned to surround myself with the positivity of those who lift me up and motivate me to grow as a person.

What do you like most about working with your Summit rep?

Other than the inside jokes (she knows what they are), Jessica is full of information and always there when we need her. Owning a salon can make your brain go a 100 miles a minute, and she's always there with feedback and advice.

“We try to cater to everyone by offering all-inclusive pricing, a great beverage selection, and new initiatives like silent services.”

How do you unwind after a long work day?

With a glass of wine and Netflix while snuggling with my cats...can you tell I'm single, haha!?

What's your all-time favourite song?

I am literally the worst person to ask this question to because I can never remember the name of a song! But you can never go wrong with Michael Bublé...it drives James nuts when I put him on repeat all day at the salon.

Coffee or tea? Wine or beer?

I'd never had a cup of coffee until we opened the salon, but now I'm slightly addicted... and definitely wine over beer!





“Clients are wanting bigger changes with less time commitment and risk. Wigs are how it’s gonna happen...start working on those lace fronts people!”

-James



JAMES

We love your focus on inclusivity and giving back to the community. Tell us about some of the initiatives you are involved in?

Currently we're working on creating a set of blow dry classes, one of which will be specifically tailored to trans women. As children many of us learn how to take care of ourselves by mimicking what our parents do; for women transitioning later in life, caring for their hair can be difficult. Our goal for this class, is to educate woman on how to keep their hair happy and healthy, which includes understanding everything from: hair care, maintenance for differing styles and lengths, wig work, as well as how to achieve specific looks. We want everyone to know the importance of hair care, no matter their gender identity.

“We want everyone to know the importance of hair care, no matter their gender identity.”

Tell us about your SJ family?

Everyone works so well together – all

supporting and treating one another as equals. Sometimes I like to compare us to a tattoo shop, where all the artists go around to check others work, comment and admire it when it's done. That's us - nothing but love!

What's the most meaningful part of your job?

Mentoring our stylists. Seeing our team (especially new talent) thrive behind the chair makes me so proud. I don't think I'm the best out there by any means, but Samantha and I make a really great team and it makes me feel like we're doing something right!

“I've been seeing a lot of bowl cuts and lovin' it, but I'm excited for fashion mullets to come back!”

We heard you offer silent services – what's this all about!?

Silent services are nothing new if you really think about it; but now, rather than an unspoken understanding, clients can actually book this type of service without feeling embarrassed, or uncomfortable. This is especially helpful for new clients that we haven't been able to build that rapport with yet. This service is great for anyone with social anxiety, migraines, or just in need of a little quiet time. We still provide full consultations, product recommendations and any maintenance info, but if it's not hair related, we don't say anything!

Where do you see the industry going in the next five years?

I've been seeing a lot of bowl cuts and lovin' it, but I'm excited for fashion mullets to come back! (I'm sure a lot of people are cringing at this). But I want to see a full curtain fringe with ears showing - shaggy layers in the crown and some nice length at the nape. I was cutting a wig for Halloween this year and came up with this afro/mullet look that I'd like to play around with. I think wigs are going to explode... not in the next 5 years, but maybe in the next 10-20. Clients are wanting bigger changes with less time commitment and risk. Wigs are how it's gonna happen...start working on those lace fronts people!

What's the worst beauty trend you've ever tried?

I got my friend to give me an entire head of blonde loop & lock extensions. I loved it at the time, but looking back it was definitely a bad judgment call. I looked like Axl Rose's straight edge kid brother, who just wanted to tag along while he hung out with his friends. #choices

What makes you laugh the hardest?

The simple things...when everything in the universe lines up and you and a friend say/ do something so minimal, but ever so slightly off that you laugh so hard you can't stop. Also, dad jokes are pretty great.

Who is your fave style icon?

Dan Levy and Darren Chriss. Their style is bold but timeless in all of the best ways, and their thick, curly locks are spectacular.

What was your first job ever?

I worked at Bata Shoes with my best friend at the age of 15... they soon learned not to pair us up. It was great.

Name one talent you'd like to acquire?

If we're talking realistic talents, I'd want to be able to fix small to large appliances. (Everything is so disposable nowadays and I'd like to know how to fix something instead of just replacing it). If we're talking more supernatural, teleportation is close to the top... that or performing Ninjutsu. (My fellow anime fans will understand.)

When / where do you find yourself singing?

All over the place! Mainly in the shower and in the car on my way to work, but I have no problem serenading my fiancé in the middle of the grocery store.

If you were an animal, what would you be and why?

A Himalayan house cat. Sleep 16 hours a day. Eat when I want. Have that diva attitude going on, and no one can say anything about it except "oh, that's just how cats are." Plus you can make people feel super happy just by choosing to give them affection. What a life it'd be.



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