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# Salon 2.0 - The Post Covid Edit

Dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic for the last two years has brought sweeping changes in the salon industry that are here to stay

Words | Bindu Gopal Rao

**T**he impact of COVID-19 has changed the way the salon industry works. Being an industry that needs close contact with customers, there have been many changes implemented in the fundamental style of working which is likely to continue going forward.

## New Vistas

When COVID-19 started, the safety of staff and clients became the priority of salon owners. Some protocols included disposable towels, capes, shoe covers, gloves, masks, thermal checks, and sanitization of the salon every day; chairs and equipment after each client came into the salon. "We also took only one appointment at a time. Now that we have learned to live with the pandemic and know that it will not leave our lives very soon, we still insist on *masking and sanitising and cleaning our equipment* after each use. We still space appointments out, we take *only three client appointments at a time*, so that the salon is not very crowded, and we space our chairs out so that people feel comfortable as well," says **Zeeba Mortezaei, Founder - Why Not by Zeeba**, a boutique salon in Mumbai.



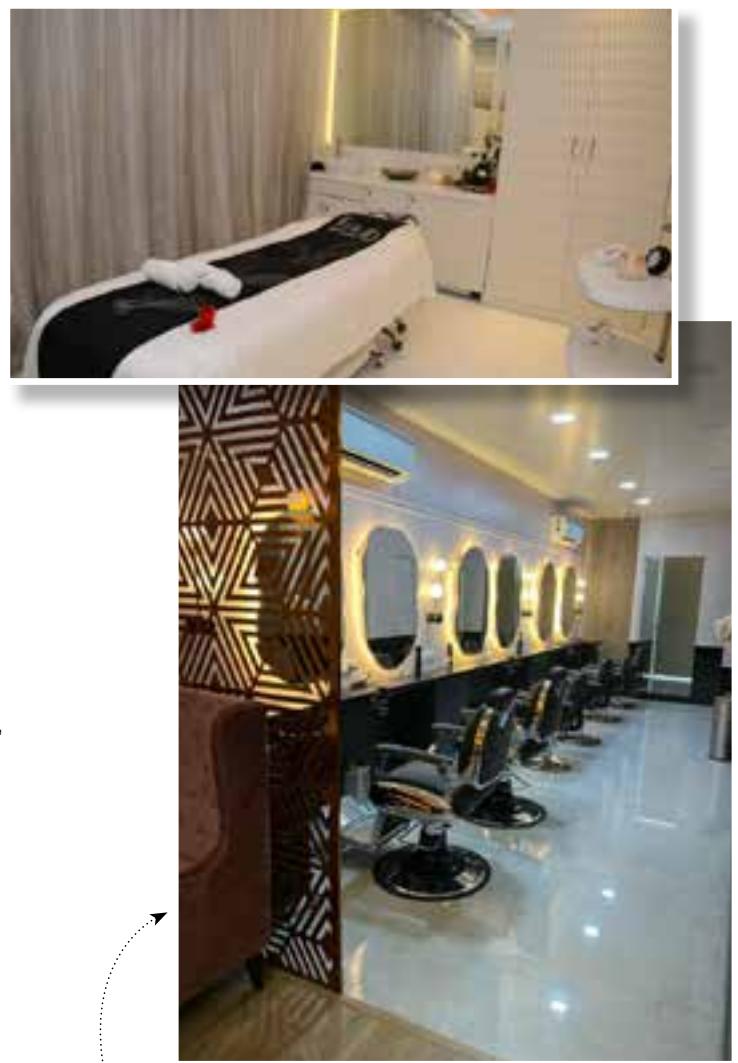
## Safety Matters

Transparency and trust are two aspects that have become very important in the post COVID era and both clients and staff are expected to share travel history and health status to maintain overall safety at the salon.

## Kruti Sheth, Founder - The Lair Man Barbershop,

Mumbai says, "even after the pandemic has now come back into control, we still *sanitise more than before*. We ensure the salon is kept impeccably clean and sanitisation is at its best. We have stopped *using disposable towels* for our salon services and now use regular towels because disposable ones do not really offer a wholesome experience. We still *sanitise each chair after every use*. We used to *keep a 15-minute buffer* between two clients so fewer people had to cross paths."

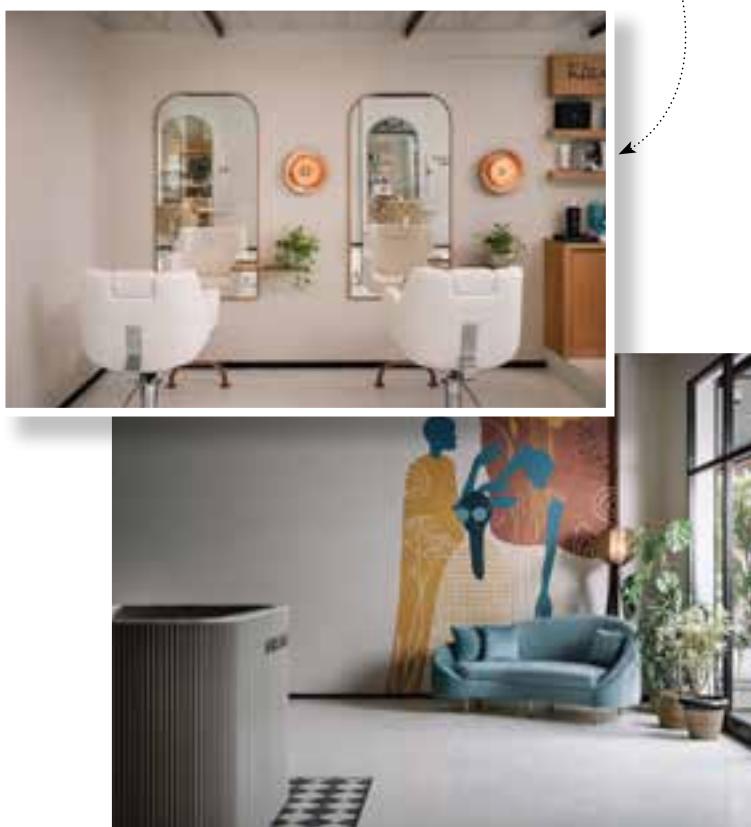
Surgical cleanliness is something that most salons have retained, and constant sterilisation of tools and work surfaces helps keep viruses at bay. At **Levo Spalon, Gurugram** we continue using medical grade alcohol sanitizer (which was very hard to procure) for work surfaces - a protocol that we maintained during Covid and will in the future too. Threading protocols were changed such that the operator can do with her mask on. *Sanitising of guest payment cards* post shipping and before handing them over to the guest is our practice to be followed in the future too. Likewise, our valet still sanitizes guests' cars after he brings them to the guest," says **Pranita Baveja, CEO - Levo Spalon.**



### Cleanliness Cues

Hygiene has always been an area that has needed attention and became a crucial health aspect in Covid. Post pandemic, cleanliness and hygiene remain important for salons and are being maintained in all situations.

"It is crucial for your clients and your health and safety. If we all create a hygienic atmosphere, I am confident it will be easier to fight Covid, and customers will not hesitate to come to your place. It is an ironclad rule that our *staff must use sanitizer* before coming into contact with clients. We have also kept a spray machine that generates *sanitizer fog* every couple of hours to remove any infection from the closed environment," says **Abhinav Tibdewal, Co-Founder - HairSaintSalon**, one of the largest salon chains in Gujarat.



Customers prefer having *single-use, mono-dose products* used for their treatments which assure complete safety. "Covid has taught a lot in terms of hygiene. The safety factors are here to stay even after Covid goes away. Sanitizing or maintaining cleanliness would become a norm. Guests would be more aware of how the staff are servicing them. Even the staff are aware and are trained to follow hygiene and safety norms. Cleanliness would be a priority now for all the salons," says **Ved Sharma, Co-Founder - TSO Salons**, a chain of 12 salons across the country.

### Normal Notes

With COVID cases on the decline, salons are also getting back to normalcy. Some of the stringent measures that were in place for the last two years are being discontinued.

"Treatments only by appointment do keep the salon occupancy below 50%, but today we take in walking guests too. We earlier preferred guests to come in without companions, which we allowed now. Staff was staggered to reduce the number of people in the salon and *today we work full capacity*. Food service was reduced to packaged snacks and drinks which is changed now to in house snacks and drinks. Guests were given disposable shoe covers which are discontinued now," says **Baveja, CEO - Levo Spalon, Gurugram. SS**