

Regis poised to roll out men's-only format

Regis International is working on plans to roll out its men's-only **Barber's** format in the UK three years after opening the first and, as yet, only branch in London's West End.

Jackie Lang, **Regis UK** managing director, told *SalonFocus* that, although the company was still "tweaking" its branch on Duke Street, a decision had now been taken in principle to roll it out nationally over the next five years.

"There's an opportunity for a men's concept and we are working it up now," she said.

The 850sq ft Duke Street Barber's was opened in the autumn of 2008, and at the time the ambition was to build up a 50-strong chain, assuming the brand proved popular with the public, (*SalonFocus*, September-October 2008).

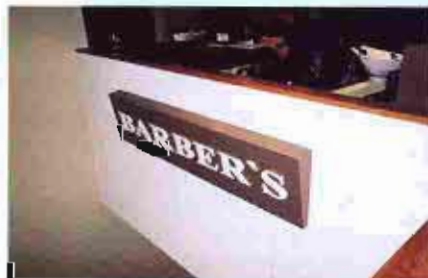
Any roll-out of Barber's would be a potentially significant addition to Regis' stable of UK brands, which, alongside its eponymous Regis brand, include **Supercuts**, **Hair Express**, **Trade Secret**, **HCUK**, **Mastercuts**, **Sassoon Salon** and, most recently, the Tesco-based **Beauty by Regis**.

The company has also spent £350,000 opening a 4,500sq ft day spa in department store chain **House of Fraser's** flagship **Jenners** outlet in Edinburgh.

However, Regis' presence in House of Fraser has gradually been declining, and now stands at nine outlets, compared with around 30 two decades ago.

The company has, for example, been also recently replaced in House of Fraser's Birmingham city centre store by franchise salon chain **Francesco Group**.

This, Jackie emphasised, was not evidence of any change in the



BARBER'S: OPPORTUNITY

relationship between House of Fraser and Regis, but simply because of an overlap with a nearby site.

"It is part of our strategy: where we want to stay in a department store, we stay in a department store. Where we have another salon on a high street or a mall locally, it is part of our strategy not to have both," she told *SalonFocus*.

Regis was now looking at opening another day spa in Wolverhampton, where the group would probably in turn close its high street location because the stronger of the two businesses was in the department store, she added.

Nevertheless, Francesco Group managing director **Ben Dellicompagni** has been bullish about his ambitions with House of Fraser. The Birmingham site, which opened in February, was part of an "ongoing rollout" of salons with the department store chain, he contended.

Ben told *SalonFocus* he envisaged expanding to 13 salons within House of Fraser in the next five years, in large part because both companies had shared values and client demographics.

Francesco in House of Fraser

Francesco Group's new **House of Fraser** department store salon in Birmingham is a departure for a group that comprises 32 **Francesco's** and nine **Scissors Hair Design** branches.

Its first House of Fraser salon in Telford, Shropshire, offers cut and colour and permanent blow-dry and a range of specialist treatments.

The Birmingham salon will for the first time offer a blow-dry bar, aimed at city centre workers, where they can have their hair shampooed and blow-dried ready for meetings.

Francesco's long-standing expansion strategy has been to open two salons a year, though it would not be averse to stepping this up to four a year once the economy improves, managing director **Ben Dellicompagni** has argued.

He told *SalonFocus* his ambition is to develop "a brand that is clearly recognisable in the UK, that stays true to its brand values".

Yet he nevertheless does not see Francesco's developing the sort of high-street presence of franchised brands such as **Toni&Guy**.

"If we achieve that [brand ambition] with 60 salons then the company will have achieved its goals. I don't think we need 200 salons to do that," he said.

The company is also committed to expanding its training provision for 14-19 year-olds in work-based learning and education, and to this end operates three training academies in Stafford.



REGIS IN JENNERS: NEW DAY SPA

A spokeswoman for House of Fraser said: "As part of our strategy, House of Fraser is constantly reviewing its concession brands to ensure we cater for our customers' needs. With this in mind, we do not have a preferred partner of choice in our salon businesses as we look at each store on a location by location basis. We can confirm that Francesco Group has a presence in our stores and we continue to work closely with Regis which currently trades in nine House of Fraser stores."



BEN DELLICOMPAGNI: AMBITIONS