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DUNDEE AND ANGUS
COLLEGE

Criianne Smith

A D&A Spotlight Interview

College Couture: Crianne's Journey from Education to Entrepreneur

Meet Crianne Smith, a beauty business owner whose journey from Dundee and Angus College exemplifies the transformative effect the College can have on shaping radiant careers in the beauty industry.

When you were younger? What did you dream of doing as a job?

"Well, actually, I wanted to be a forensic psychologist, completely opposite to what I'm currently doing, so I went into psychology at university and hated it and decided that it was not for me. So yeah, that dream very quickly became squashed."

Can you share a bit about yourself and what you were up to when you first joined D&A?

"OK, so that's quite a big story. I'll give you the short version, so I was on maternity leave before I started at D&A. I kind of had a part-time job at a dentist where I was training to be a dental nurse, I had decided that I didn't want to do that anymore and just went on to start learning about beauty and I kind of fell in love with it really. I thought, well, I really wanna do all of it, so that's what I did!"

When I came to the College, I did VTCT level 2 and Level 3 Beauty Therapy. The course covered all aspects of beauty therapy. So, you're training to do nails, facials, massage. If you think about beauty therapy, you're thinking of everything that you learn basically in the course, but it also includes the likes of anatomy and Physiology around the body and the muscles and all of that. So, it's really quite a broad spectrum that you're learning, but it's fun, it's interesting, and it helps you in the future as well.

I now own Petite Beauty and it is a beauty salon that is completely private. It is just me and the client that are usually in the room at one time, so it's great for anyone who maybe has anxiety or social awkwardness or anything like that, or even just somebody who likes my company. So, I do a whole range of different beauty treatments and that can be nails, massage, facials. A whole list of things."

Thinking about your time at D&A, what are some standout moments or experiences that you still carry with you?

"The staff, to be honest, everyone at D&A is just like a community. No matter whether you're there part-time or whether you're there doing a full-time course, you're always getting that experience with different staff members."

"The staff in the beauty department still have their own businesses and they can give you the level of interaction that you might need when you go into your own business or when you go into a salon or a spa or whatever journey that you decide to go on to do."

How did your experiences at D&A lay the pathway for your career? Are there any classes or staff that set you on your path?

"So, when I started my course, I didn't know that I wanted to be self-employed, it wasn't until I was halfway through my very first year that I found out, actually, I really love doing this. I decided to go in and start working in a salon, not a spa because I'm too chatty and I thought, why not, just push the boat out and if I'm going to do it, do it for myself. I had the backing of my lecturers and tutors who were there to help me and say yeah, actually, you should do this. So, all the staff in the beauty side, they were so supportive and so good, and I think just learning from them was a helpful experience."

I do also have to give a shoutout to the Students Association because you know it was fun, it was great and it was nice just to have that overall family feeling, to be honest. I was the Student Association Assistant for Kingsway Campus, and we were

basically there for the students and the staff to come together and support them in any way.”

What were the first steps you took after finishing your course, and how did your time here shape your career choices?

“So, the first steps I took is that, I started my business while I was still at college, I was halfway through my second year, which was just after COVID, that’s when this place opened. I sort of came for a nosey at a room down here and thought, I’ll just have a nosey, I’ll just have a look at what it’s going to be like and then when I came here and sort of envisioned what it could look like, that’s when I fully decided, I’m going to do this. I’m just going to put my all into it and I think being halfway through my last year I was able to just push myself into that direction. Having the encouragement of other peers who were on the course and kind of knowing where I wanted to go, really helped.”



Where has your career taken you since those early days?

“It has grown phenomenally, and I don’t think I give myself enough credit for that. So, I was actually looking at my diary from December, two years ago, I

think I had 12 clients and this December, just in three weeks, I’ve got over 250 clients.

So, for me, I’m kind of like, wow, okay, yeah, you need to realise where you’ve gone and what you’ve done!

The business has really, really boomed and I’m hoping to progress further next year, but we’ll see about that, there’s things in the pipeline. So, it’s great, the business is doing so well and I am really proud of it, to be honest, and I wouldn’t be here, without the knowledge and experience from D&A.”

Looking at your journey so far, what are some moments or accomplishments that make you particularly proud?

“Just having my own business, having that knowledge there that I can turn around and say this is mine. I’ve had the knowledge from the college to get me to where I am now, this is probably my biggest achievement, I would say, and the whole time being at the college just added to that because I’ve been able to look back and go, OK, that’s where it started. That’s where I had my first love for beauty and that’s where I’ve wanted to go from here and look at the journey that I’ve taken and how I’ve gotten here.”

If you could share a piece of advice with current students based on your experiences, what would it be?

“Have fun, just have fun, and enjoy yourself and don’t take life too seriously but if you want it, really want it, just do it. Stick in at your grades, get them and go on to do what you want to do.”

What are your hopes for the future?

“My hopes for the future are that I am going to extend the business ever so slightly. I’m going to go potentially into something else, like teaching and just continue being happy and pushing and making my clients happy and making them relaxed and enjoy myself. I would at some point in the future like to come back and work at the College and do a big circle back to where it all started for me.”

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