

Lone Star Style

Avant Garde StudioSalonSpa expands to the flourishing city of San Antonio.



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP RIGHT: The styling stations; the treatment room for facials, massages and waxing; the lighting in the semi-enclosed shampoo area periodically changes color based on the seven major *chakras*, or energy centers of the body; the communal table in the retail area is designed to encourage clients to experience the products while they relax.

Capitalizing on San Antonio's predicted economic growth and healthy median annual income, Avant Garde StudioSalonSpa, an Aveda Lifestyle Salon and Spa, opened a location in the city's new Quarry Village development of luxury residences, restaurants and shops in April. The Avant group of salons, with three other locations in Austin, Texas, was founded by Roy Fredericks and Connie Strang and is managed by Neill Corporation. "It's very different from our other locations in that we have such close contact to our potential customers," says Neill Chief Operating Officer Sharilyn Abbajay. "We are creating marketing strategies for residential customers."

Staying true to Aveda's mission of caring for the environment, Neill incorporated eco-friendly materials throughout the 2,649-square-foot salon and spa, including low-VOC paint, steel and natural timber flooring. Perhaps the most striking feature is the semi-enclosed shampoo area, which features a panel of light that periodically changes color based on the seven major *chakras*, or energy centers of the body. Blue, for example, is a soothing color that represents the fifth chakra, while red represents the first chakra and stimulates circulation. The 650-square-foot retail area features a community table that is intended to encourage guests to relax while experiencing Aveda products.

So far the new San Antonio location has received rave reviews from customers, Abbajay says. "We've come in at the right time," she says. "I think the San Antonio market is very promising." ❧
—LOTUS ABRAMS