



THE V'S BARBERSHOP STORY

No one tells the V's Barbershop story better than Jim Valenzuela, the entrepreneur behind the highly-successful, small business barbershop headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona. There are funny anecdotes, sleepless nights and an interesting childhood in Tucson, Arizona rooted into the story, but we'll come back to that. The story is as genuine as the man known around town as 'Mr. V.'

"My kids think it's a big deal that their dad is 'Mr.V,'" says Valenzuela. "I can see it in their faces how cool it is their friends recognize the brand we've built in Phoenix. They tell me all the time how their friends know about the Barbershop and get their haircut there. That alone is a pretty special experience to share with my family."

And a family experience is what prompted the passion for the start of V's Barbershop.

After a rewarding career as co-founding executive director of MedPro, the second largest multi-specialty physician's organization in Arizona, Mr. V took some time-off. Always driven by an entrepreneurial spirit, he contemplated purchasing a retail franchise. It was during a due diligence trip for the prospective retailer in Knoxville, Tennessee that Mr. V came across an unassuming barbershop. And at that moment, V's was born.

"It hit me like a ton of bricks. All of a sudden, the childhood memories of going to the barbershop in Tucson with my father came rushing back to me," recalls Valenzuela. "It was a great experience. I was able to hang out with the 'guys,' listen to them debate sports icons and hear the occasional cuss word. I always had a blast going to the barber with my dad. And during my Knoxville trip, I also realized that I was stuck either going to the high-price salon that my wife patronized or to a quick-cut establishment that never had the same person cut my hair twice. I also knew that there were thousands of barbershops located across America, but literally all had run their course and had used up all their nostalgic equity. I knew a barbershop could be more and immediately visualized what I call 'Starbucks for men.'"

A community gathering place focused on men is what Mr. V pictured and bringing the old-time barbershop genre into modern times was what needed to happen.

Mr. V returned to Phoenix without purchasing the retail franchise. He immediately began researching other barbershops across the country and found much of the same...old, dilapidated shops that had run their course. Was he the only one that realized there was a hole in the marketplace catering specifically to men? His passion for the idea grew and was fueled with the notion of creating the same bonding experience he once shared with his father, with his own son. However, Mr. V didn't have any experience in the barbering field.

"I was creating V's during the days of dial up modems and researching shaves, combs, face towels online on a computer in a small office I rented. Back then, you name it and I did it, I didn't know what I was doing but my instincts were telling me that I was on to something. I put an ad in the paper looking for authentic barber chairs and found some in the garage of a Phoenix man that I had restored and put into the first location."

But Mr. V knew what he was doing. Using the strong sense of style he acquired in his youth and some common sense (as he puts it); he created the vision for an authentic and traditional barbershop experience. In November 1999, V's Barbershop opened its first location in Arcadia, a neighborhood in Phoenix and has been catering to men and boys ever since.

V's Barbershop is the first barbershop in the country to capture the timeless, authentic barbershop experience by combining a mix of modern amenities and classic style.

"When we opened V's in 1999, it was just before the huge metrosexual craze – American Crew men's hair product just came out and it was OK for men to pamper themselves. V's was really ahead of the curve."

Today, V's has 37 locations spread across 15 states with an additional 20 shops scheduled to open in the coming months.

And if you think that Mr. V has stepped back from the business details in any way over the last 19 years, you'd be wrong. He'll still shine shoes at that Arcadia location and has new barbers perform their first shave on himself.

"I love this business," he adds. "V's will always provide an environment where getting a great haircut or a traditional hot-lather shave also means building great memories for men and their sons. It is the core of our business."

For more information about V's Barbershop, please visit the company website at www.vbarbershop.com or call 602-414-4800.

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