

Pamper Yourself in Scranton

By Allison Mowatt

We all know too well the stresses of everyday life and the importance of relaxing and pampering ourselves once in awhile. You can always go to your local spa and salon, but why not visit Lavish Skin Care, Inc., an upscale skin care and cosmetics boutique in the heart of downtown Scranton?

The store is owned by Lake Ariel residents, Matt Drace and Jon Chernes, and is located at 600 Linden Street. The 1,500 square foot store features a full line of organic cosmetics, hand cut soaps, bath and body products, candles, room diffusers, pajamas made in France, and home décor items, such as lamps, pillows, tables, vases, candlesticks, and dishware. The color scheme of the store is chocolate brown and chartreuse green with light hardwood floors. Natural lighting from the outside brightens the store highlighted by drum-shaded chandeliers, which lend the products a complimentary glow of appeal. The store also carries all types of men's products from skin care to bath and shower. It's easy to see that this store is a one-stop shopping experience for anyone looking for a little R & R.

Matt and Jon took ownership of the store last September when the previous owners decided to put it up for sale. When Lavish first opened about four years ago, Matt and Jon helped the previous owners (who are their friends) with the design of the store and helped develop marketing strategies. "We always felt like we were a part of the business even though it wasn't our own," said Jon. When they found out that their friends were selling the business, Matt and Jon expressed an interest in taking it over, and the rest is history. "We felt that the planets aligned at that point," said Jon. "Everything fell into place." Although they changed some things around, such as revamping the store logo, creating a new color scheme for the boutique, and adding some new products to the shelves, Matt and Jon made sure to keep the customer favorites that brought people to Lavish in the first place.

Matt and Jon both lived and worked in New York for about twenty years before deciding to relocate to Lake Ariel in 1998. "We fell in love with the area and made a lot of friends," said Jon. Matt spent time working at various places such as *Oprah Magazine*, *Town and Country Magazine* and the TV show, *This Old House*, and now manages the store full time. Jon is currently the Managing Editor of

House Beautiful Magazine in Manhattan and has also worked for Martha Stewart as Director of Retail Operations and was even on her Apprentice show in the final interviews that took place. Jon said he worked closely with Martha Stewart for about eight years and helped develop the Martha Stewart Everyday items that are sold at K-Mart stores nationwide and the Martha Stewart Signature brand items. He said it was wonderful working with her, and the experience taught him product development and also different marketing ideas. Working at these places taught Matt and Jon much of what they needed to know to run the store and make Lavish what it is today. "We were looking for a way to combine our talents in graphic design and product development," said Jon. "We used to always talk about selling beautiful things while working at these various places in the city. Now we are actually selling them," he added. With their combined artistic experience, Matt and Jon are running a trendy yet modest store with only quality products you would otherwise have to travel hours to find.

According to Matt and Jon, the community has been very supportive of Lavish, and their customer base continues to grow as more and more people seek hard to find quality cosmetics and skin care products. Some of the more popular skin care and cosmetic items at Lavish are products such as Bliss, L'Occitane, and Mario Badescu. Matt and Jon are not only selling these beautiful products, they are putting their creative heads together to develop some of their own, too. Some upcoming projects they are undertaking include creating their own line of cosmetics and skin care, which will be called Lavish, by Matt and Jon. They hope to have their line in store by the summer. In addition, they also have a new line of candles and room diffusers coming in from California called Aquisse that are hard to find locally, and they expect the line will be a big hit. In addition, Matt and Jon recently started holding various events at the store, including Christmas parties, wine tasting, private parties, and bridal showers. "The space lends itself to being a hip and cool spot for people to gather," said Jon.

With this gem of a store right in Scranton, everyone should enjoy a little Lavish once in awhile. The boutique carries everything you would need to pamper yourself for any special occasion or for just being you.

Visit www.lavishskincare.com for more information or call (570) 558-2273. The store is open Tuesday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. They are closed Sunday and Monday.

