

Associated Skin Care Professionals

# Skin DEEP

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The Baby Bump   
Working with pregnant clients

## Selling Skin Care

How to get inspired, boost retail sales,  
and beat the online competition





# Spa in the Spare Room

## Insights from home estheticians

by Rebecca Jones



**Teri Kotantoulas knew from the day she started her esthetics training that she didn't want to work for anyone else.** She would open her own salon—and she would open it in her house.

“Being at home gives me the flexibility to still be active in my daughter’s school events,” says Kotantoulas, who opened Face to Face Esthetics six years ago in a spare room inside her 1,600-square-foot home in Denver, Colorado. “I can’t say doing this would be right for everyone, but it’s been a good experience for me. I’m doing well, and my clients love coming here. I’ve never had an issue with security, as most of my clients are word-of-mouth referrals.”

In Fort Worth, Texas, Lugenia Vaughns is about to celebrate the one-year anniversary of opening Lugenia’s Skin Care Studio inside her home. It’s been a challenging year, trying to promote a business that’s virtually invisible from the street, figuring out how to stay connected with others in the industry, and finding the courage to pass out business cards to everyone she meets.

Vaughns’ only regret is that she didn’t do it sooner. “I love it because no one is coming to me with an invoice every week, charging me for my space,” she says. “With all the money I spent on rent since becoming an esthetician, I could have purchased better equipment, or taken more training. I wish I had known earlier that I could do this.”

### Your Own Boss

Starting a home-based practice isn’t a typical career path for estheticians, but as the latest economic downturn forced many small businesses to downsize or close, it is becoming an increasingly popular option. Overhead expenses are minimal once the practice is set up (see “Working from Home” on page 26 in this issue for all the legal and practical things you need to consider to make that happen), and the chance to be your own boss is a powerful lure.

Converting part of your living space into a place where clients—often strangers—will feel comfortable means some ongoing effort

from the whole family. “There can be no kids’ toys lying around, no animal stuff if you have pets,” says Kotantoulas, whose clients enter through her front door and must pass through her living room to get to her treatment room. “I keep my house really spic and span. It needs to be clean and uncluttered, and have a professional appearance, while still being part of your home.”

### Constant Promotion

Promoting a home-based business can be a never-ending challenge. New clients won’t stumble onto you by accident, so you’ll have to work for every one of them. “If I had to do it again, I would have started advertising way before opening up,” says Vaughns. “I would have put more thought into it. It’s hard just to get your name out.”

Vaughns, who says she is naturally shy, forces herself to come out of her shell and attend business mixers, neighborhood group meetings, and any other social gathering where she can pass out business cards to potential new clients. “You have to put on those heels, get in that car, and go out and meet people,” she says. “If you’re not that type of person, this won’t be easy.” She’s also learning to master social media, since that’s an inexpensive, yet critically important, way to reach clients.

Kotantoulas combats the sense of professional isolation by joining online forums and regularly attending trade shows. “You do miss having that interaction with other professionals,” she says. “If you work well independently and you like to be creative in how you do things, that’s the mindset you need to work on your own. If you need to be around other professionals all the time, then this may not be the right thing for you.”



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