

The Midas touch: The Markhams return full force

After hitting home runs with salon brands **ABBA** and **PureOlogy Serious Colour Care**, **Jim Markham** is back at bat with his new hair care collection, **ColorProof Evolved Color**



Jim and Cheryl Markham, CEO and vice president, respectively

Care. When you consider how many hair care lines have come and gone and how few really have been a big success, and then look at Jim's successful track record, you would not wait for him to come calling—you would send a limo

to pick him up. **Beauty Industry Report (BIR)**'s editor, **Mike Nave**, has been friends with Jim and his wife, **Cheryl**, for years, and we are delighted to be the first publication to share their next chapter in this exclusive interview.

BIR: Welcome back, Jim. What enticed you to jump back into the game with another line?

Jim Markham (JM): Actually, Mike, this is the fifth company I've founded. I started with **Sebring**, where I was the pioneer in men's hair cutting and created the men's wash-and-wear category. From there, I launched the **Markham** line, and further evolved the men's hair care category. I later recognized a big opportunity with naturals, which became the basis for **ABBA Pure and Natural** hair care products. That company proved to be very successful. After **ABBA**, I revolutionized the color care market when I introduced **PureOlogy** as the first line specifically designed for color-treated hair using sulfate-free, salt-free formulas.

BIR: How did you begin your career?

JM: I began my career as a barber in New Mexico, cutting hair for \$1.50 a cut or \$2.00 for flat tops. From there, I started styling hair, and found that I had a true gift for styling, as well as cutting. I entered various hair contests and kept winning—the New Mexico championship, Southwest Championship, National Championship and even the silver medal in the Hair Olympics. Along the way, I started teaching others my method for cutting and styling and realized that the fit between using

the right products, together with the right technique, was a natural. You needed both to get the best results. So, I began selling products, too. That was the start of my distributorship, and I eventually ended up distributing hair care products for four states—New Mexico, Texas, Colorado and Utah. To cover my territory, I even became a licensed pilot and flew all over in my own plane, demonstrating and selling products.

BIR: I know that you also developed a real celebrity following over the years.

JM: Yes, my clients included **Paul Newman**, **Frank Sinatra**, **Robert Redford**, **Steve McQueen**, **Peter Lawford** and many others.

BIR: Barber, champion stylist, hairdresser to the stars, pilot, distributor and manufacturer/marketer of hair care products—that's quite a list of accomplishments. Didn't you also win a few awards along the way?

JM: Well, sometimes you just get lucky. In 2007, I was presented with two awards—the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award and the *Orange County Business Journal* Entrepreneur of the Year award. I was also very humbled to be inducted into the **North American Hairstyling Awards** Hall of Leaders. Even before that, in 2002, I was presented with the Entrepreneur of the Year award by the **Independent Cosmetic Manufacturers and Distributors (ICMAD)**. It's been quite an honor to have my business success recognized by my peers not once, but several times.

BIR: What sparked your desire to launch product line number five?

JM: Over the years, I've had a strong passion and a unique gift for creating special products that meet a need in the market. That's how I built my first four companies. It's been a great journey, and after **PureOlogy**, I felt I had achieved my dreams and fully intended to retire, but something kept calling me back. I have such a connection to the industry, and a desire to give back to the stylists and colorists who have helped me to become so successful. This new venture is truly my labor of love.

BIR: Speaking of giving back, I know both you and Cheryl have been very committed to

supporting causes that are important to you. Is that something you plan on continuing?

Cheryl Markham (CM): Yes, Jim and I believe strongly in sharing our good fortune, and supporting worthy causes. In fact, as you know, in 2009 we were the **City of Hope Spirit of Life** honorees. That was an exhilarating and very busy year for us, and we were gratified to raise more than \$1.3 million for the City of Hope. **ColorProof** gives us an opportunity to continue to give back to the community that has served us so well.

BIR: How did your new line come about?

JM: I've stayed on top of activity within the marketplace and continued to dabble in the creation of new formulas. I've met with hundreds of ingredient companies. Ironically, what has struck me more than anything is the lack of major color care innovation in the past 10 years, since we revolutionized the category with sulfate-free, salt-free products. Yet, new, exciting and innovative technology does exist, as I have found, and look forward to demonstrating with **ColorProof**.

BIR: What is your vision for ColorProof?

JM: Performance, performance, performance! **ColorProof** is the next generation of prestige color care products. We've taken the newest innovations in ingredient technology and combined them with the best-in-class ingredients to create the next generation of high-performance luxury products specifically designed for color-treated hair. And, of course, we have a powerhouse program of educational support to back them up. We'll launch with 20 skus with suggested retail prices ranging from \$19.95 to \$39.95.

BIR: With all of the color support lines in the marketplace, describe ColorProof's major point of difference.

JM: We have the newest and best ingredient technology—bar none—which allows us to provide better performance and better color protection than current products.

BIR: You're introducing a luxury brand into the salon marketplace at a time that many have shied away from higher-end brands because of the economy. What's the strategy behind your plan?

JM: There are a lot of me-too brands out there, and many of them are in the lower price range. We won't be one of those. To deliver the best formulas costs money, and consumers who want the best know that. They'll also find that our products are well worth their price tag. And, for those salons that carry our brand, that'll mean higher revenues and profits for them. We've also seen that beauty and fashion companies are reporting big increases in their luxury sales this year, so our timing is right on.

BIR: What is the timetable for the roll out of ColorProof?

JM: We will begin rolling out ColorProof in first quarter of 2012.

BIR: Who is on your management team?

JM: One of the most important things I've learned over the years is that it's all about the people and having the right team. We have an all-star cast, and I am so excited to have them on board! Of note, each of them left significant roles at other companies in order to work here because of the opportunity they have recognized with ColorProof. **Dawn Blackstone**

is our chief marketing officer and vice president of marketing. Previously, she was the vice president of global marketing for **Dermologica**. She also led marketing at **Graham Webb International** for almost seven years and for a number of other companies before that. **Dave Genes** is our vice president of sales. Previously, he was the global vice president of sales for **FHI Heat**. He also served in key sales roles at **PureOlogy/L'Oréal, Redken, Joico/ISO** and **Alterna**. **Steve Jarvi** is our vice president of operations. Previously, he was vice president of operations at **Sexy Hair**

Concepts, and before that, was the chief operating officer for **Joico**. He also had extensive operations experience prior to joining our industry. And, from the inception of this new line, I am very happy to report that my son, **Bob Markham**, has been involved in the business. Like the rest of the team, Bob has a lot of industry experience. He was a regional sales manager for **Helene Curtis**, and he

“We are doing ColorProof for the love of the beauty business and its people.”

started the first ABBA distributorship in Los Angeles. He later helped run the Oklahoma/Arkansas PureOlogy distributorship with his brother, **Jay Markham**. Now, he's working with Dave on sales and distribution for ColorProof



The ColorProof team from bottom left: Cheryl Markham, Jim Markham, Bob Markham, Phillip Wilson, Rachael Kiste, Dawn Blackstone, Dave Genes, Steve Jarvi.

and will remain a vital force behind the brand, together with the executive team.

In addition, I'm very excited to share the scoop with you that **Phillip Wilson** will be joining our team shortly. Phillip is the most sought after educator I have ever seen. He's headlined some of the world's biggest shows and educational events, and served as a creative/artistic director for many of the major companies in our

industry, including PureOlogy when I was president. He was named as one of the most influential hairdressers of the past 100 years by **Modern Salon** magazine. Phillip has a tremendous passion for creating new cutting and styling techniques and is a true genius in his field. The marriage of his innovative styling and cutting techniques with our break-through formulas is an incredibly winning combination.

BIR: What is your distribution strategy?

JM: We're going to be rolling out with a very robust distributor network—we've already finalized most of our distribution agreements throughout the United States. The outpouring of interest and support for this line has been the most enthusiastic reception I have ever had! Distributors want to get on board now.

BIR: Who is your target salon?

JM: ColorProof is targeted to the top salons, stylists and colorists—those who demand the very best products to support their salon services in between appointments.

BIR: Who is your target consumer and how will you reach her?

JM: Our focus will be on the clients of the top salons around the country—and who, like their stylists and colorists, won't settle for anything less than the best. As to how we will reach them, we have some very exciting plans, but that's something we'll have to share at a later date. It's a surprise, Mike!

BIR: Anything else you'd like to share?

JM: I've enjoyed great fortune in this business. That's why Cheryl and I both have tried to give back to the community that has shown us so much love and support over the years. I can say without reservation that ColorProof is by far the best product line I have ever created. In addition, Cheryl and I feel so fortunate to have the best management team, the best products, the best packaging, the best education and the best distributors. I am so excited to introduce ColorProof to the market. The products are revolutionary, and the combination of great results, married with a luxury experience, will set a new standard in the industry. I am confident we will be the next \$100 million company.

That said, this is my last company. We are doing ColorProof for the love of the beauty business and its people. Plus, it gives us more opportunities to give back and support worthy causes, such as City of Hope and my dear friend Paul Newman's special charity, **Hole in the Wall Gang**. It gives us joy to be able to give to others; Success not shared is failure. You ain't seen nothing yet!

To learn more about ColorProof, reach Jim Markham at 949-715-0488 or jim@jimmarkham.com and Cheryl Markham at 949-715-0488 or cheryl@jimmarkham.com.