

Ross Ippolito grows professional waxing category

For more than 30 years, **Ross Ippolito** has serviced the salon industry—first as a stylist and educator, and then via **International Beauty Systems**, his full-service distribution company, and **International Beauty Systems Group**, which is the exclusive importer of **Perron Rigot Cirepil** and **Esencial Depilatory Waxes and Beauty Care** for the U.S. and Canadian markets.

BIR: How did you get started in your career?

Ross Ippolito (RI): My journey in the beauty industry began in 1948 as a stylist. As my dedication to the field grew, I became an educator for manufacturers worldwide. In 1973, I met **Jheri Redding**, who would soon become an industry icon and a valued friend. He offered me an opportunity to become a **Nexus Professional** distributor. In 2002, under a separate division, I became an importer of beauty products.

BIR: Please describe your two companies.

RI: International Beauty Systems, the parent company, is also a distributor selling salon products direct to salon professionals. International Beauty Systems Group operates as an importer, selling Perron Rigot products through a network of independent distributors; we do not sell direct.

BIR: Why did you start the import business?

RI: Skin care was becoming an integral part of our industry. Women had spent years “covering up.” America was now guiding women toward treatments. I saw that as an opportunity to become involved in a market other than hair. Our research showed that the depilatory waxing category provided a viable opportunity.

I then met an importer from Japan, who sought to relinquish the Perron Rigot line. We traveled to Paris to meet corporate officers and negotiate being endorsed as the North American exclusive importer.

BIR: How has the depilatory waxing category evolved for salons and spas?

RI: Depilatory waxing has become an integral and highly lucrative segment of the beauty industry. No longer just an indulgence, waxing for the entire body has become an ongoing treatment for both women and men. We market Perron Rigot and educate salon

professionals that it is a system—not simply products to sell.

BIR: What makes Perron Rigot wax stand out from the many brands on the market?

RI: From the beginning, Perron Rigot has considered waxing to be a premier treatment and a demanding art requiring quality products and true expertise. We believe that just as in skin care, every depilation service should consider a client’s skin type. Available in a variety of low temperature textures, formulas and fragrances, our non-strip and strip formulations offer individual customization. It’s not just about what we remove; it’s about what we leave behind—healthy skin! Perron Rigot’s line of gentle, hypoallergenic waxes and pre- and post-depilation care is free of rosin, beeswax and fragrance.

BIR: Tell me about your flagship item.

RI: Cirepil Blue was introduced in 1988 as the first patented, low temperature, non-strip wax. Clients love its warm temperature and gentle hair removal. Our company is also well known for our refill bead formulations.

BIR: Who are the key members of your management team?

RI: International Beauty Systems Group’s dedicated management team includes **Anthony Wiers**, senior vice president of operations; **Debbie Valenza**, vice president of business and product development; and **Lynn Maestro**, director of marketing, education and trade shows. We deeply appreciate all of the other members of our team, as well.

BIR: How do you distribute and market Perron Rigot Cirepil and Esencial?

RI: International Beauty Systems Group is represented by an elite group of authorized distributors who pledge to actively promote the line while upholding its reputation and image. Promotions, advertising and education are major components of our success.

BIR: What type of education, training and trade show participation do you provide?

RI: We are currently introducing our

International Panel of Experts at industry trade show and education venues. This panel includes male and female estheticians from England, Nova Scotia and Paris. Once a year, we present a train the trainer forum to waxing educators. It features industry speakers, as well as hands-on training. In addition, International Beauty Systems Group provides ongoing support for its distributors’ educational events. I have always considered education a key factor to success, and we are dedicated to providing it to salons.

BIR: What is the best business advice you ever received?

RI: Maury Davis, a successful business leader, said to me, “There are three ways to go in business: bargain basement where everyone wants a cut rate price; main-stream where you’ll battle price wars or high-end where people will pay price for quality.” Opting for high-end, my business has always reflected offering results-oriented products to help our customers and their customers grow.

BIR: What would BIR’s readers be surprised to learn about your company?

RI: Strange things happen in life. Here’s the story we’ve been told: One day, the company’s chemist took his young gum-chewing grandson out to eat. While informing his grandfather he wanted to have his gum after his meal, he promptly took the gum out of his mouth and plopped it on his forearm. (Much better than under the table!) When the meal ended, he removed the gum, but with it came the hair off his arm. The grandfather realized the skin had not been compromised, yet the hair was successfully removed. As a result, he invented non-strip wax, adapting the chemistry of



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polymer in gum to polymer in wax. This patented formula made us a leader in non-strip wax and remains what we are best known for today!

BIR: What inspires you?

RI: This industry, its people, my family and my faith.

To learn more, reach Ross Ippolito at 800-947-2341, ext. 418, or ross@ibsg.us. Visit www.cirepil.com.



Melted waxes come in a variety of colors.