

# Candy Shaw is changing the world with Sunlights Balayage

**Candy Shaw** grew up in the beauty business in a family of award-winning and influential hairdressers with influential friends. In fact, her family would frequently host guests and close friends like **Vidal Sassoon, Paul Mitchell** and **Horst Rechelbacher**, who although they were just starting out, were destined to change the world.

With that back story, it's no wonder that Candy grew up thinking big—and ready to make a difference, as well. Her “overnight success?” Painting hair with **Sunlights Balayage**, which provides balayage products and education to make hairdressers' lives easier. **Beauty Industry Report** recently caught up with Candy for an update.



*Candy Shaw, the colorful founder of Sunlights Balayage, is known as the Balay Lama.*

**BIR: Welcome, Candy. What is your story? How did you get to where you are today?**

**Candy Shaw (CS):** Hi, Mike! Let me first say it's a pleasure speaking with you. We're big fans of **Beauty Industry Report**. Your publication has supported us from the beginning.

I come from a long line of hairdressers. My father, **Jamison Shaw**, was a former world-champion competition hairdresser who recently retired after 60 years. He was raised on a farm and had an eighth-grade education, yet he went on to become the first American to win Hairdressing's Grand World Supreme Championships in Amsterdam in 1962, the Olympic Gold Medal of hairdressing. His specialty was the Marcel iron. Never before had that coveted trophy been won by an American. He returned home to great fanfare and appeared on the “Ed Sullivan Show” and in *Time* magazine. My mother was both his model and a makeup artist.

I, too, never went to college. In fact, I never even went to beauty school. I'm severely

dyslexic. I got through high school by trading haircuts for math homework. When I graduated at age 18, I made a bee-line for Paris to study in Europe's great salons. I was influenced by hairdressers like **Jacques Dessange, John Louis David, Alexandre de Paris** and **Bruno Pittini**. I developed as both a French cutter and a balayage painter.

Today, I run three companies. **Jamison Shaw Hairdressers** is a 50-year young, third-generation, family-owned and operated salon business with 50 employees, 50 chairs and 5,000 square feet in the heart of Buckhead, Atlanta's chief fashion and financial district. I work behind-the-chair full time, and see as many as 35 guests each day. My **Advanced Training Academy**, which teaches both French cutting and balayage highlighting, is now 20 years young. Its classes sell out over a year in advance. My newest venture is **Sunlights Balayage**.

**BIR: Where did the idea for Sunlights Balayage come from?**

**CS:** Sunlights was born out of necessity. I'd been struggling to paint hair with products



*To reach millions of stylists and usher in the balayage revolution, Candy Shaw, the world leader in balayage education, created The Balay Box, a complete balayage class in a box.*

designed for foiling for nearly 20 years. Since I couldn't convince any of the major manufacturers to come out with the necessary products, I decided to make them myself.

Once I realized what I had to do, I, too, set out to change the world. Not once, Mike, but twice.

Sunlights' first goal is to increase hairdresser productivity significantly world-wide in order to help hairdressers, who are mostly women, earn a better living and live a better life. Since our brand of balayage enables hairdressers to see two to three times the number of guests in a day, it allows them to double, often triple,



*Sunlights Artisan Team members from as far as Oslo and Sydney joined Candy in Atlanta for TrainTheTrainer2.0. At The Balay Bash, Candy was presented with a llama named Spike.*

their incomes. My second goal is to significantly decrease the environmental impact that hairdressing has on the planet. Hairdressing has a dirty little secret. The tons of aluminum foil used to color hair can't be recycled and end up in landfills. **The Balay Box** eliminates the use of aluminum foil in hair coloring, making it a much greener, more sustainable practice.

**BIR: Sunlights has made tremendous strides in two years. Can you describe your journey?**

**CS:** Years ago, when Sunlights was just an idea, I approached some of the world's leading hair color companies with the concept and they turned me down. They thought balayage was a passing fad. So, I found a chemist, spent several years in R&D and created Sunlights. Next, I showed it to the world leaders in the beauty industry supply chain and they turned me down. So, I went to the world's leading manufacturer's rep firms, both foreign and domestic, looking for help with distribution, and they, too, turned me down.

As a result, I decided to do it myself. It took us 100 days to line up distribution in 45 states and 7 Canadian provinces with 25 A-list indie distributors. Today, Sunlights is sold in eight countries, including Scandinavia, the "birthplace of blonde," and we're negotiating with distributors in dozens of other countries.

Today, I have great relationships with all the entities that turned me down. But the truth is, I am eternally grateful they first said no. As a result, I did it myself and I'm able to say Sunlights is made in America, is 100% woman-owned, made by one hairdresser for all hairdressers and is a family-owned and operated multi-national business. We've created over 100 jobs and are spreading Sunlights and joy around the world as we paint the globe yellow! Dreams really do come true!

**BIR: You have ushered in a paradigm shift in distributor education. How did that happen?**

**CS:** Sunlights was born out of education. Shortly after we started this journey, we realized that we are less a manufacturer and more an education company that happens to offer

extraordinarily useful products.

When we initially approached our distributors about education, every one told us they were used to losing money, or at best breaking even, when it came to education. We told them we did not like their business model and informed them we were not interested in participating. Instead, we invited them to try ours. Needless to say, it took some convincing, but we were so sure our model would work, we even guaranteed them against losses. We started renting ballrooms and packed sold-out classrooms with hundreds of stylists wanting to see the efficient, no-nonsense brand of education that the Sunlights Artisan Team presents. Each show generated thousands of dollars in ticket sales. In addition, our distributors, on average, sold an entire pallet of Sunlights' merchandise at the venues after each show. We split the profits with our distributors. We've done this model dozens of times since.

**BIR: Tell us about your products.**

**CS:** Our main products are **Sunlights Professionnel Balayage Lightener**, a proprietary kaolin clay based balayage lightener (salon \$34.00), and **The Balay Box**, the complete balayage class in a box with everything a stylist needs to learn and do balayage, including education (salon \$99.00).

Sunlights is intended for professional use and was engineered to work with any manufacturer's crème developer, color line or additive. Since it can be combined with whatever products stylists already have in their dispensaries, it is extraordinarily versatile. The first highlight pays for The Balay Box. The remaining 33 (generating between \$2,500 and \$8,000, depending on stylists' prices) are pure profit, making The Balay Box a very easy sale.

**BIR: Where do you see the future of the rapidly changing hair color industry going?**

**CS:** That's easy. In the next three to five years, balayage will take the place of foil highlighting the same way foil highlighting replaced pulling hair through a cap. Balayage is a consumer-driven trend that provides the results that women want. Balayage is faster, more profitable,



*First to market, Sunlights has pioneered explosive growth in the rapidly emerging balayage category.*



*Sunlights Balayage creates natural-looking sun-kissed blondes like the one above.*

greener and more fun! Sunlights will continue to lead the charge of the balayage revolution, as we teach stylists the world over to paint their way to financial freedom.

**BIR: Sunlights recently won The Beauty Pitch at Cosmoprof North America, the "Shark Tank" of the Professional Beauty Association. What has that done for your business?**

**CS:** People now return my calls! Plus, we received a \$5,000.00 cash prize from our good friend and supporter **Harlan Kirschner**, CEO of **The Kirschner Group**, who sponsored the start-up category that we won.

**BIR: Finally, let me congratulate you on being named Maverick of the Year by the 13th Annual Stevie Awards for Women in Business. What's new for 2017?**

**CS:** We are getting a lot of requests from our distributors to expand our professional line and transition into the consumer marketplace. We are looking to expand into Russia in 2017 and are planning our Australian and Pacific Rim tours, as well. We have some very exciting things in store for our upcoming third birthday. Much of it is top secret, so you'll just have to wait and see!

*For more information about Sunlights Balayage, contact Jamison Codner, director of education, at 855-820-7677 or [info@sunlightsbalayage.com](mailto:info@sunlightsbalayage.com). Visit [sunlightsbalayage.com](http://sunlightsbalayage.com).*