

## STYLECRAFT/GAMMA+ continue explosive growth

It's a family affair at **STYLECRAFT/GAMMA+**, the high-tech tools that are designed and engineered in Italy and North America, and manufactured in Italy and Asia. They are distributed and sold worldwide by **Ken** and **Austin Russo**, long-time veterans of the category. Thanks to a strong pipeline of innovative tools powered by advanced technology, coupled with targeted education developed specifically for barbers, stylists and distributors/DSCs, the company is achieving exponential growth year after year. With the new Cosmoprof North America Miami taking place in their own backyard this month, we thought it was the perfect time to check in with them for an update.

**BIR: Welcome Austin and Ken. I always love catching up with you. Tell me what's new at STYLECRAFT/GAMMA+ since we last checked in.**

**Austin Russo:** So much, I almost don't know where to start. First, we ended 2023 up 40% above 2022! That's incredible, even for a company that's as young and aggressive as we are. A year ago, we moved our team of 50 into beautiful new headquarters in Boca Raton, FL, that my father designed to be comfortable and livable, and we've already outgrown that new space.

We roll out new tools every quarter, and the advanced technology is mind-boggling. We're finding that both stylists and consumers are willing to spend money to buy tools that are innovative and of excellent quality—and that's exactly what we are producing. We sell both brands in North, South and Central America, with our Italian headquarters handling the rest of the world. Looking forward, we will continue to focus on growing our international markets. That's why the new Cosmoprof show in Miami is perfect for us.

**BIR: Tell me about those tools. Are they primarily for stylists or barbers?**

**Ken Russo:** They're about 50/50. We sell through both beauty and barber distributors. We believe it's important to be equally strong

reps, educators and influencers

Plus, I absolutely love working with my family. My brother, **Spencer**, also works at the company as an IT executive, and he and I have the best mentor possible with our father, Ken.

We are also all best friends. No one has taught us more about business, people and life than Ken, and we are doing our best to carry the torch. Working in a family dynamic isn't always easy, but we are very fortunate, as we make an exceptional team and have fun every step of the way.

**KR:** I agree. Austin was named president last year, and I couldn't be more proud. He now handles the day-to-day operations of the company. I'm asked frequently if I'm getting ready to retire, but I can't imagine

ever doing that. I love doing what I do. It's way more fun than hitting a golf ball!

**BIR: Tell us about some of the new tools you are launching in 2024.**

**AR:** I would love to! We are launching three tools in February that I can't wait to share with our customers. First, is our **Precision Saber Trimmer**. It has a metal body that is whisper-quiet and low vibration. The high-torque, brushless motor that is now assembled with a premium X-Pro Gold Titanium wide-fixed blade is ideal for sensitive skin. **"The One" Black Diamond Carbon deep-tooth cutting blade** provides the smoothest cutting with no pulling or snagging.

Next is the **On The Go Barber/Makeup Case with Mirror**. Made with a super-soft, water-resistant Nylon material,



*Austin and Ken Russo, the son and father duo and best friends behind the phenomenon that is STYLECRAFT/GAMMA+.*

in both, because it gives the company more stability long term, regardless of the trends.

We have a strong education program for both barbers and stylists—and even technical training for DSCs!—and the crossover is greater than ever. It's easier to coach a beauty distributor to sell grooming products, so we're teaching both distributors and stylists about the most in-demand barbering techniques and the men's grooming business, in general, as an investment in their success—and ours.

**BIR: What's the best part of your job?**

**AR:** It's definitely the people we work with! We have an absolutely incredible team that has helped us reach this point. We could not be more blessed to have so many amazing A+ people to work with, from our internal team to our external



*The new Precision Saber Trimmer with "The One" Black Diamond Carbon deep-tooth cutting blade.*



The STYLECRAFT/GAMMA+ team of 50 is just like a family. About a year ago, they moved into their beautiful new Boca-Raton, FL, headquarters that Ken renovated to be a comfortable home away from home. He says that as much as they love the space, including a beautiful courtyard, they've already outgrown it!



*With braids being more popular than ever, the new LOQ Braid Sealer is the ultimate tool for achieving secure braids and twists.*

the new professional travel case holds a ton of accessories, tools, brushes and whatever else you need. Measuring 16 x 11.5 inches and 5.5 inches wide, it's small enough to take on a plane, yet large enough to carry clippers, trimmers, shavers, blades and accessories to the salon or barbershop, photo shoots and on location every day.

Finally, **Evo Nano Mist**ers in new gold and black (MSRP \$49.95) are perfect for professional barbers, stylists and home use. The Nano nozzle atomization technology dispenses a targeted and super-fine fog-like mist, ensuring liquids land where they are supposed to, keeping stations and clients dry.

We're kicking off March with two incredibly unique products. The **LOQ Braid Sealer** (MSRP \$49.95) helps to keep braided hairstyles—especially synthetic hair—looking

neat and well-maintained for much longer than usual.

Finally, our new **Twin Flat Iron** (MSRP \$79.95) features a dual-plate system that elevates the smoothing process while significantly reducing styling time. The first plate tames frizz, ensuring a sleek starting point, while the second plate takes it a step further by reinforcing and polishing each strand—all accomplished effortlessly in just one pass. Equipped with smart heat recovery technology, this flat iron is a true game changer. Its ceramic tourmaline plates not only ensure even heat distribution, preventing any unwanted hot spots, but also work to optimize the heat applied to your hair.

With all of these new tools plus our classic inventory, we can't wait to share them with stylists and barbers during show season!



*The new Twin Flat Iron tames frizz and ensures a sleek finish while significantly reducing styling time.*

**BIR: I understand your ecommerce business is thriving. What's the secret?**

**AR:** First and foremost, we protect our distributors and our salons/stylists—whether selling through marketplaces or on Amazon. Spencer manages this important part of our business, and it's our fastest growing division.

**BIR: Finally, I understand that you've been giving back on a grand scale.**

**KR:** We're very proud to be working with Beauty Changes Lives to provide scholarships for barber college and cosmetology school. We're also supporting barbers who are providing cuts for the homeless. It feels good to us and every one who works with us to do the right thing.

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