

Kea Can Dance

By Michael Suba



Do you remember your first business trip? It's something I have often asked my business friends. My first biz trip is actually rather hard to remember now, it being so long ago. But it was with my father and we were at an Allen Arthur (HA! Remember them?!) meeting in the southern United States. I remember how exciting it was as a young man to be on a trip for the company. But we all know the arc of this

tale. Business trips lose their allure over time. Waiting at a luggage carousel gets boring. That does not mean that these trips are not worthwhile, it's just that the excitement and the coming of age thing quickly passes and it can become a wasted weekend more often than not.

That never happens when I go on a business trip to Cesare Ragazzi. Cesare Ragazzi. They are the manufacturers of the "CNC", an advanced hair system. They also produce a popular line of trichological treatments. They are based in Bologna, Italy, and a business trip there is not like any other. For decades I have gone on countless trips and attended conferences looking for better hair and better manufacturers. We have all been there and done that. This time I was organizing a photo/video shoot in Bologna with the people of Cesare Ragazzi. This was going to be special. I had been there eighteen months before and knew that their hospitality was exceptional. I felt like a kid again.

I realized, however, even before I left, that this trip wouldn't consist of three-hour dinners and fantastic scenery every day. Stefano Ospitali, CEO of Cesare Ragazzi, had told me that he wanted to expand the project. For almost twenty years my salon has had a "Wigs For Kids" program where we take ponytail donations and make them into free wigs

for children. One of those children is Kea, and she suffers from Alopecia Totalis and we are making a film about her. Kea has been coming to me for her wigs since she was six years old. It's fun seeing clients grow up. She has appeared on numerous television stories highlighting my studio and the work we do, so when I was looking to produce a documentary on alopecia I decided that she would be the perfect model.

We designed a Cesare Ragazzi CNC for Kea last fall and planned to take this vibrant 15 year old and her mother with us to Bologna to film this latest chapter in her hair loss jour-

ney. These hair systems are the only permanent attachment systems with Virgin hair. It's Spring Break time in the US and Kea is ready to flaunt her new hair. This system will give her the freedom to do all of the normal activities that teenagers her age do, such as dancing and Kea loves to dance. How fun is it to dance and swing your hair without a care in the world?! Kea now has the freedom to do this and the CNC system will be there right along with her, boosting her confidence along the way. It was the most fun I have ever had on a business trip.

Then Stefano came up with a brilliant idea. "Michael," he said, "You wear the CNC, I wear the CNC, Danielle and Michaela and Kea also wear the CNC. We should have a photo shoot with all of us since we are all here together." I

blanched at the thought of trying to arrange parallel photo-video shoots at such short notice since we would only be in the country for a few days. "Stefano," I tried to explain, "We will not have time. We are there for six days. We only can shoot for four, probably only three if we are realistic. It's not possible." He laughed at me. For a moment his chuckle made me think that his office was actually under an active volcano with a helipad. "Michael," he said soothingly, "You sleep a little more before you come to Bologna. You sleep a little more after you leave Bologna. When you are here you do not need to sleep."

So that was the plan. And it worked. Who knew?

My son, Tyler, came along. He is almost finished hairstyling school and had a great time with me the last time we went to visit Cesare Ragazzi. Danielle Grillo from New Jersey, and Michaela, a native of Bologna and employee of Cesare Ragazzi, would be modeling the CNC in the shoot. My videographer, James Sidney, came with us from Toronto. Cesare Ragazzi had their own photographer as well. The minivan was packed.



Cesare Ragazzi's CEO, Stefano Ospitali, and COO Angelo D'Andrea, met us at the airport. The first thing that he did after we got settled into our lovely hotel in the nearby town of Bazzano was take us out to dinner. That set the stage for the week. Stefano takes as much pride in his hospitality as in the service of his company and I have found that on every occasion both are exemplary.

Dinner was in a local restaurant off the main square of the town in an old wine cellar. As Stefano is fond of saying, "Life is too short for bad wine."

The next morning dawned cold and drizzly. But it was exciting as we were going to the Cesare Ragazzi factory for the tour and then to their retail center in Bologna. And Bologna is where the sidewalks are marble.



Kea wasn't the only CNC client getting cut in. I was too. But she got all the attention. I know that having a full cap bonded system is not revolutionary. But having a full cap bonded system with pure virgin hair is. This is why the CNC is highly sought after.



Having traveled the world in search of the best for my clients I am used to my hosts doing what they can to make me feel welcome and to make the trip enjoyable. But when you are in the hands of the Cesare Ragazzi it's different. Their idea of hospitality is so over the top that it makes all other trips fade into obscurity. I understand that the backdrop of a gorgeous Italian Renaissance city with its style and grace (and food) helps. But the fact that you are with those

that make beautiful hair systems means that it IS a business trip.

Over the course of the next days we went bowling, went to sea in a gorgeous 60 foot sailboat, cycled through the downtown, and basically could not find a disappointing meal. The weather was perfect and we really did not get a lot of sleep. And even bar-hopping combined work and play.

But through it all, no matter how exhausting, it was an awful lot of fun. How could it not be?

What was so thrilling about this trip was how excited Kea was to have the hair that she always wanted. She could not stop playing with it. She wants to be a dancer so we surprised her by taking her to a dance school in Bologna. She had a private instruction and had a great time.

So for a business trip it had everything; wonderful hospitality, great friends and colleagues. fantastic hair, delicious food, and amazing photos and videos to showcase my business. It was also much needed time with my son. The challenge that I have now is to convince him that this is not what to expect from a business trip. If he thinks that this is "normal" then he will be very disappointed when he goes on his next one.

European Hair, Trichology ... and Truffles



By Chris Webb

December is truffle season in Tuscany. I had already decided to visit the Cesare Ragazzi factory and clinics in Italy in the spring and was waiting for a quiet period at The Journal - a myth I continue to cling to - but when Ragazzi managing director, Loreto told me the truffles were blooming (or whatever truffles do at the bottom of those oak trees) I was more than happy to change my plans.

Seven days after that phone call, I found myself at 30,000 feet and headed towards Bologna. Upon arrival, I knew I was at the epicenter of Italian design as I passed a silver Lamborghini on display in the airport reception area. The Ferrari factory isn't far away either! Cesare Ragazzi (I'm going to call them CR for the rest of this article) graciously picked me up and drove me to my hotel, again a statement of Italian flair with a hip decor... and a sensuous picture displayed above my bed. I was clearly in a different place.



The CR factory is also a different kind of place. Firstly, it is very sophisticated. The production areas display the company logo and are all color coordinated. Everyone wears color-coordinated uniforms too. Most of the

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employees have been with the company for several years and are proud of the work they do. They see themselves as part of the tradition of design and flair that has made this region famous. As for hair additions, or CNC® system as they call it, this is a non-invasive, dermatologically-tested, full or partial hair replacement system. It all starts with two plaster molds that are scanned by computer, digitized and forwarded to a design bay that creates a highly accurate base.

A word about the hair. It is European hair of a remarkable quality that is available in a wide array of colors and textures. In this picture, you see hair taken from inventory that is at least 40 inches long; I won't even try to guess at its value!

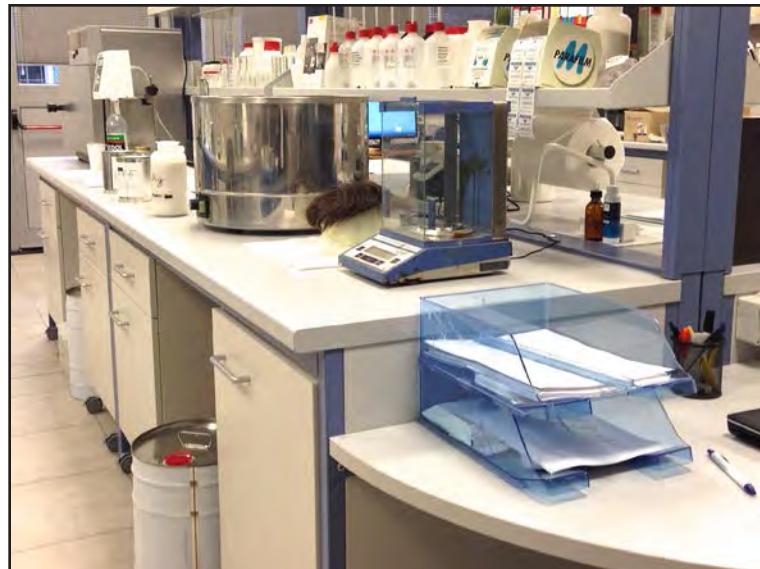
The base itself is a unique composition of medical grade silicone and colloidal silver, known for its anti-bacterial properties. The base is formulated to adjust to changes in temperature, so it remains comfortable even in the heat of summer. It comprises a central area where hair density is greater, and a special perimeter where the hair is gently feathered to achieve a natural hairline. CR uses a proprietary technology to achieve these special hairlines but I was asked not to take any photographs, so I cannot share more information with you. The results however, speak for themselves.



So is this a hair product for everyone? The surprising answer is no. Firstly, this is not a cheap product. Secondly, this is not hair designed for a "service plan." The virgin hair and the silicone base are built to last. CR recommends that clients order two hair systems or wigs together to guarantee a perfect match for the future.

and as security in case of an accident or unforeseen event. But if you are a man or woman with advanced thinning and are looking for premium hair inserted into a strong, easy to wear custom base, then this may be for you.

Now for the trichology program and the clinics. Full disclaimer - I was treated to a complimentary hair analysis and therapy and still think about them. So I have to admit upfront that I am biased. Now to the specifics. CR will not recommend a thinning hair solution without a full review of life-



style, medical background and an in depth scalp analysis by a trained trichologist. These data are computer analyzed and shared with the client before any therapy or hair addition is started. My hair therapy session lasted nearly two hours and included scalp massage, infra-red LED light therapy, shampooing, conditioning and application of a hair lotion selected by my trichologist. The shampoo chair by the way, fully reclined and delivered a back massage as my hair was washed and a hot towel applied. The rinse came from special oxygenated water in a transparent cylinder with bubbles rising up through it that looked like something out of star wars!



What's my takeaway? These are caring, generous people who wish to bring a trichology-based regimen and unique polymer-based hair collection to North America. Their personal way of doing business is seductive and flattering.

If there were a CR clinic near me, I'd certainly want to go back. But it may not be an easy fit for the US, given the geography and number of studios, so it may make better sense for individual studios to seek out Cesare Ragazzi themselves and do their own due diligence. I did - and I came away with new friends and an admiration for their commitment to a different and important technology.

