

THE BARBER POLE

Professional men's cuts, shaves and conversation keep patrons coming to The Barber Pole

by Brenda Welch

While some men head to their local sports bar to relax and watch their favorite team play on a big screen TV, others choose a more unique venue and make their way to The Barber Pole.

In a world where multitasking is more a way of life than a catch phrase, The Barber Pole offers a casual, sports-centric atmosphere where customers can unwind and take in a game on TV while experienced barbers tend to their hair with old-school flair.

While men tend to cringe at the mention of a 'spa day,' industry trends have shown that they enjoy being pampered and groomed, and that is exactly what they can expect at The Barber Pole, which is located near the intersection of Kempsville Road and Volvo Parkway. It's been closed for a week for annual winter vacation, but will reopen on Monday, February 11.



The decor meshes the feel of an old-fashioned barber shop with the familiarity of a corner pub where customer's kick back in comfortable, leather barber chairs to watch ESPN on the 42" flat screen TV and peruse the team jerseys and sports memorabilia that line the walls while drinking freshly brewed coffee. The nostalgic barber shop effect is made complete by the candy cane striped pole located outside the front door.

Specializing in flat tops, military, and business cuts, The Barber Pole employs seven barbers with more than 180 years experience combined. A man's \$14 haircut includes hot lather, a straight edge shave around the ears and back of the neck, and a light shoulder massage compliments of an antique barber massager. Men can even indulge in the trend toward full face shaves, complete with hot towels, moisturizing lotions, and the safe and effective straight edged razor.

"Our customers come here for an experience as well as a haircut," Nancy Bush says. "I am incredibly proud of the talent I have working for me right now. It's the best I've seen under one roof."

Nancy is the owner of The Barber Pole and says her barbering acclimation began more than 28 years ago when she was a newly minted cosmetologist trying to find her place in the profession.



Jack Kellijian treats a client to an old-fashioned straight-edged shave

"I worked in higher end salons in New York early in my career, and I quickly realized that I didn't enjoy giving permanents or applying color," Nancy remembers. "When I moved to Virginia in 1985 and began working at a barber shop in Kempsville I knew that I had found my niche."

For seven years Nancy honed her skills at that barber shop, and it was during that time that she met and married her husband Steve, who was in the Navy. Military orders sent them to Yokosuka, Japan, where Nancy managed the Chief Petty Officers' Barber Shop.

When they returned to the States and started a family, Nancy worked part time until four years ago when she bought The Barber Pole, formerly Quality Cuts, from her longtime friend and co-worker Kathy Dalton.

"It's a wonderfully strange turn of events that she was ready to sell when I was ready to buy," Nancy says. "She is a dear friend and has a great sense of humor—plus she can talk sports with the best of them. Actually, we all are huge sports fans, and we're always learning something new from our clients."

The familial relationship and love of barbering shared by The Barber Pole team lends to the hometown feel that Nancy has strived to create. "I've spent a good deal of my life living in this community, and as a military wife I have an especially strong kinship to the area," Nancy says. "My goal was to have a barber shop where locals can come to laugh, share stories, and experience top quality men's grooming, and I am proud to say that I've achieved that."

To accommodate customers who work during the day, Nancy keeps the shop open late in the evening each weeknight. Unlike many other barber shops, they take appointments and accept major credit cards.

She also offers a coupon card to returning customers for a 10th haircut free, and she suggests that those who shop at the nearby Farm Fresh supermarket hold on to their receipts because they may find a \$2 off coupon for a haircut printed on the back.

Since many patrons are fathers, Nancy says that they bring their sons with them to get a haircut and also share in a bit of bonding time. "We love when kids come in, and we make sure to give them the same attention and experience that we give everyone else," she adds.

Being a professional barber is about more than just cutting hair. "It's truly an art where you have to hone your skills. We take pride in saying that we are barbers, who are experts at what we do. It all comes down to the skill of the person cutting hair."

And Nancy says that with Valentine's Day right around the corner, women should consider getting their special someone a gift certificate to The Barber Pole. Men deserve to be pampered.

"I guarantee that once they come to my barber shop, they'll leave here looking good and feeling appreciated and relaxed," Nancy beams. "They'll know they've found their barber shop home."

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