

Beardly Fashion: Urban Fellow's Seth Davis shows how beards make the man

They say that confessing guilt is good for the soul. With that in mind, I shall make this startling confession: I am a man with a beard, and I have never had a barber trim or shape it.

With that burden off my chest, I now feel free to say that I am growing out my beard to better look the part for a folk metal band I sing for. My beard is a vibrant red which naturally grows straight down. This has led to some issues. For example, if I wear a collared shirt, it pushes my beard back up so it looks like I survived some small, cartoonish explosion. I decided that I needed expertise in the matter and consulted with **Seth Davis** of Urban Fellow Barbershop & Shave Parlour, located on Washington Street in PVD.

Seth Davis is the founder of Urban Fellow. He explained that out of high school, he became a laborer because "[I've] always been good with my hands." Growing tired of the work and constantly being outside, he decided to put those hands to different use and went to barber school. Once he graduated, he started working in salons and old-school barbershops. Over time, he developed his craft and decided that he should start his own shop.

Davis opened Urban Fellow in 2014, originally in Warwick. "It was daunting at first, but we were able to grow quickly and start building a list of regulars," Davis said. In 2019, he decided to move headquarters to their current PVD location. "About half of my [employees] stayed with us in the move... it was tough convincing our regulars to drive from Warwick to PVD. We even provided little coupons." Then, of course, the pandemic hit, which further complicated what they did. "Our full name is Urban Fellow Barbershop & Shave Parlour. During the pandemic, we couldn't cut facial hair which took half of our name off it." Despite the setbacks, today's shop stays quite busy with its nine barbers full of reservations.

There are not many places around PVD that specialize in facial hair. I asked Davis why that might be: "Not many salons have people trained in facial hair - the majority of who they work on are women or children. You may find an old school barbershop that does work on men's facial hair, but they only know how to do older styles of trimming. Our barbershop is for the modern man and we cater to modern styles ... it's not that the other places aren't capable of doing a good job, they just don't get the practice." Davis teaches aspiring beard-trimmers around New England how to properly cut men's hair. "It feels good to help these kids," he said.

Davis went on to explain why facial trimming and beard shaping are important in the modern day. "Beards are becoming more acceptable and prevalent in modern American business. However, the important thing now is to have proper maintenance of them ... During the pandemic, it was understandable seeing people a little more unkempt. But now that we are going back out in the world, we need to stay presentable and look clean." He encourages people who grow out their beards to use balm and oils to ensure they do not get split ends. "When you have a split end, it's basically a hair in half which leaves it brittle and can fall off or stick out. Keeping the beard hydrated with balms and oils leads to better control over how you are growing it.

Before he picked up any cutting implements, Davis studied my head and explained what he suggested

we do. I agree with what Seth said about his hands: He is incredibly gifted in how quick his are. They deftly move between cutting implements, trimming my hair as he casually keeps up conversation on whatever topic we talk about: sports, music, craft beer, etc. When it came time to trim my beard, he looked like a swordsmith, wielding his (straight razor) blade with precision, ensuring there are no imperfections or stray hairs. He is a master of his craft. This isn't just a job for Seth, it is art.



Before



After

The result of the cut is astonishing. My face looks completely different than it did before. Cleaning and shaping your beard truly makes a difference. I went to a party right after my appointment and was complimented by quite a few friends, unprompted, about how good it looked. After my experience with a trained professional, I will not be going back to a salon anytime soon — I've learned the importance of beard shaping.

So remember, if you have a beard, make sure you are not just growing it out. Give it the love and care that Seth and other barbers would.