

George Hammer

George has developed his natural **entrepreneurial spirit** into a habit – a habit of scooping up untried concepts and brands, and turning them into a **bountiful success**. In a career which already spans over three decades and shows no signs of slowing, he has an enviable and documented track record of commercial achievement. His pursuit of opportunity is tireless and coupled with an outstanding talent for anticipating trends in social perspective and retail. From his first forays into fashion to his latest innovations in hair and beauty George is consistent in his ability to **realise** the **potential** in every commercial proposition he touches.

George has always been high on **energy** and big on **abstract thinking**, both qualities that play a significant role in his talent for business. *"I like to challenge the norm and prove that a thing can be done, despite popular opinion to the contrary. That's what interests me,"* says George. He credits gut feel for a project and his determination to take controversial concepts to the heart of mainstream business. He blends his love of renegade ideas with his unique flair for forging first class **professional partnerships**. His history is studded with market changing choices and his future is certain to hold many more.

Chronology

On graduating the London College of Fashion in **1971** George became the creator and backer for a plethora of fashion labels including Strawberry Studio, Marie Helvin, Wet Swimwear and Bodymap.

In **1975** the Fitness Centre breathed fresh life into a vacant warehouse in Covent Garden that had once been a rehearsal space for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Its opening heralded the beginning of country wide craze in aerobic exercise and spawned an industry that still thrives today. Prophetically it also included the launch of the Alternative Therapy Centre whose services included acupuncture, osteopathy and aromatherapy.

The Sanctuary on a cobbled street in an upcoming area of Covent Garden became the world's very first Urban Day Spa in **1980**.

With an established track record in bringing unusual concepts to market George was signed as UK distributor of Aveda in **1993**. It is his vision for Concept Salons and his total belief in the emerging popularity of environmentally aware therapies that has helped build Aveda into a global leader.

A joint venture with premium French skin, hair and lifestyle brand L'Occitane followed in **1997** and resulted in the opening of flagship stores across London's more high profile shopping districts.

Mister Mascara, Ruby and Millie and Tweezerman were brands that benefited in **1997** and **1998** from George's strengths in developing distributor partnerships with High Street retailers and high-end department stores. He also opened an Aveda salon inside Harvey Nichols and the first Aveda Lifestyle salon with retail store, organic café and florist in Marylebone Village.

George opened the Aveda Institute in **2001** and forged fresh ground with the Urban Retreat at Harrods. This outstanding commitment to a holistic approach to wellbeing opened in **2002** occupying all 22,000 square feet of the fifth floor. In **2004** Urban Retreat opened a second site in Harvey Nichols Manchester which is enjoying the

same level of outstanding success as Harrods. The concept constantly evolves and remains a hot bed of fresh innovation for George's future ventures.

2007 saw the launch of Urban Retreat Products - capsule collections of hair, beauty and perfumery products conceived by George and created with the 'British Beauty Experts', the crème de la crème of the British beauty industry including such esteemed personalities as Roja Dove, Daniel Sandler and Anastasia Achilleos.

Also unveiled in **2007** was U.R.Beautiful, a diffusion of Urban Retreat's successful beauty destination at Harrods. Occupying over 5,000 square feet on the first floor of Boots in Kingston, this vast concession offers customers an extensive range of accessible, professional hair and beauty services.

Yet another successful venture revealed in **2007** was One Marylebone. Testament to George's infinite energy and incomparable flair for identifying lucrative opportunities, he oversaw the renovation of what was formally the Holy Trinity Church, built to the designs of Sir John Soane, to create a truly unique events space. Returned to its former glory, One Marylebone provides a glamorous, central London venue for the most exclusive private and corporate events.

In **2009** George founded a new company named *all for eve* in honour and memory of his sister-in-law, Nadia, who died from ovarian cancer on December 8 2008. The brand's sole purpose is the creation of much needed research funds and greater awareness of gynaecological cancers with 100% of wholesale profit going to The Eve Appeal to help fund the research team at University College London.

George has begun **2010** with the launch of in-house MediSpa at Urban Retreat, Harrods which consists of 4 rooms offering a unique combination of the latest in medical aesthetics with elements of ancient healing and medicine. The concept will be rolled out across all locations in the coming months.

The Future

Personally, professionally and intellectually George is a man that never stands still. **2010** includes development of the 20,000 square foot Grade 1 listed St Marks church in Mayfair and further expansion of the Harrods salon to include a spa area.

Whatever the future holds you can be certain that George Hammer's habit of turning challenging ideas into a commercial reality will thrive unchecked.