

PLYMOUTH

A CUT ABOVE

Barbershop mixes old-time service, modern vibe



GENE WALSH — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Salvatore Giannone, owner of Sal's Barbershop, poses near a mural of images of Philadelphia sports teams in his Plymouth business on Jan. 11, 2016.

By Gary Puleo
gpuleo@21st-centurymedia.com
[@MustangMan48](https://twitter.com/MustangMan48) on Twitter

PLYMOUTH » For more than 40 years the red and white barber pole has been letting men know they were welcome to come inside, get a haircut and, like most barbershops, engage in a little bonding.

When Salvatore Giannone took over the space that had been Nick's Barbershop in Plymouth Valley Shopping Center recently, his goal was to amp up that old school personal service with a modern sensibility.

"Most men go to salons and the fancy joints, and the old barber trade is dying. But it's starting to make a comeback," said Giannone, a Plymouth Whitmarsh graduate. "I didn't buy an existing business, I'm renting the property and I changed everything about the place, from floor to ceiling, with the help of friends. Not that I didn't appreciate Nick's shop. I just felt like I could do something a little more modern, yet keep it retro Americana."

Entering the bright and welcoming Sal's Barbershop, 1011 Germantown Pike, Plymouth Meeting, is like taking a step back into another decade — a

long ago decade — when barbershops were sanctuaries for men, immune to the trendy shifts in culture outside their walls.

With the smell of Clubman aftershave in the air, the lineup of vintage barber chairs and most of all, the cozy hospitality, it's clear he's captured a bit of the golden age of barbershops — when his mentor and grandfather, Salvatore Giannone, began his barbering career.

"My grandfather was a barber for 50 years," Giannone said. "We worked together at Gus Butera's Barbershop in Conshohocken and he taught me as an apprentice. The day before he died he told me if he could go back 50 years he would have opened his own barbershop. And he also thought I should open my own shop."

Four years later Giannone knew the time was right to follow his grandfather's advice — sweetened with the presence of the chair his grandfather's clients sat in, which Giannone bought from Gus Butera.

"I just wasn't ready to open a shop four years ago. I had a lot to learn about the business. Now I'm a master barber who is certified to teach barbering," Giannone allowed. "I've been through a lot of trials and trib-



GENE WALSH — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Staff at Sal's Barbershop in Plymouth, from left, consists of barber Jim Modica, owner Salvatore Giannone, barber Timmy Renninger and barber Joel Mejias on Jan. 11, 2016.

ulations in my life. My grandfather was a pretty popular guy, and this was a seamless transition for me."

Drawing customers from Giannone's established following as well the foot traffic from Nick's old customers — haircuts are done strictly on a walk-in basis — business has been brisk from the outset, he noted.

"I did 24 haircuts the first day in here by myself," Giannone said proudly.

Since then he's hired three

more barbers, one of whom he worked with at Gus Butera's shop.

"I wouldn't hire somebody if they couldn't cut hair as well as I can, if not better. The quality of the haircut is always number one," he said. "But it's about more than a haircut here. We want to offer a different kind of barbershop experience. It's about hospitality."

From the moment they walk in, customers get hooked on