

IN THE MOMENT

SALON OWNER PASCAL IBGUI LIVES EVERY MINUTE OF HIS LIFE TO THE FULLEST.

By Ivy Gracie • John Reilly Photograph

Beauty Salon & Day Spa



This article is the second in a series on time management and work/life balance strategies of busy executives and business owners.

There's a joie de vivre about Pascal Ibgui, owner of two busy Pascal Pour Elle salon/spas on the North Shore. His enthusiasm is infectious, whether he's talking about his business, his children or his many pastimes. He seems to love everything about his life – and that's his secret to moving effortlessly through a hectic schedule.

In 20 years, Pascal has gone from modest businessman to burgeoning beauty mogul, with Pascal Pour Elle salon/spas in Glencoe and Glenview and over 125 employees. He's also developing an eco-friendly blow dryer, curling iron and flat iron, and has a project in the works in downtown Evanston. He's working to make his salons more eco-friendly and has started a campaign on Pascalpourelle.com to educate clients on living a greener lifestyle.

Pascal stays on point with the help of a strong staff. "I have two salon directors, a director of product development and three customer service coordinators," he says. The team oversees the day-to-day responsibilities of the salons, leaving Pascal ample time to concentrate on marketing and developing the business.

But Pascal is hardly all work and no play. A regular on the Chicago social circuit, he can often be spotted at the hottest restaurants and clubs. "People will ask what's new, so it's important for me to visit new restaurants and night clubs," he says. "If there's a new play, I'll see it. If there's a new exhibition, I'm there."

Along with the daily duties of fatherhood (his children are ages 4, 7 and 17), Pascal dedicates one night a week to date night with his wife and at least one night a week to quality time with the kids. "I'm away from work, I'm with them," he says. "It's about where they want to go, what they want to eat, what they want to do." In the summer, they visit every attraction in the city. "I believe watching TV is a waste of time, so I take them to the places like the Shedd Aquarium, The Field Museum and the Brookfield Zoo."

Summer's also the time when Pascal hits the track to practice Grand Prix racing in high-powered Ferraris and Aston Martins. "About two years ago, I was introduced to racing by my now very close friend and racing mentor, Rick Mancuso, of Lake Forest Sportscars," he says. "I've always loved sports cars, I've always loved speed – I thought I was a great driver but I realized on the track I have a lot to learn." But he welcomes the challenge. "It takes me away from my work and makes me focus." Pascal's long-range plan is to drive competitively. "It's going to take me many years before I'm able to get into a race, but it's a goal of mine."

Slowing down isn't an option, even when he's off the track. He's a regular at the East Bank Club where he lifts weights, runs and stretches. "I work in an industry where you always have to look your best, so fitness is important," he says.

It seems Pascal's always pushing himself; but he doesn't feel like he's missing out anything. "Some people meditate, but meditation doesn't mean you have to cross your legs, put your arms in a certain way and think about nothing. Driving a car on the racetrack, walking or running five miles, spending an afternoon with my kids, that's my meditation. That's how I relax."

Not a minute is wasted in Pascal's life, and being present for every moment keeps him energized. "If you're happy, you'll feel good about yourself and you'll project that energy," he says. "If you feel miserable you look terrible. The secret is happiness." ■

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This article originally appeared in the October 2009 issue of Today's Chicago Woman. www.tcwmag.com.