



From the Ground Up

SALON NAME
Tan Athens + Wellness
Oconee Tan + Wellness

LOCATIONS
Athens and Bogart, GA

OWNERS
Julian and Kristy Mazeika

ONLINE
tanathens.com
oconeetan.com

YEAR OPENED
2017; 2025

PRODUCTS
Designer Skin, Australian Gold, California Tan, Swedish Beauty, Norvell

EQUIPMENT
KBL, XTT, ETS, Sunscape, UWE, Miracle Sun, Norvell, POLY, red light therapy panel, infrared sauna

EVERY great business starts somewhere—often before the owner even understands where the path they're on will lead them. For Kristy Mazeika, that start wasn't a business plan or entrepreneurial ambition, but a part-time job at 19 that grew into a career and ultimately into ownership of two standout tanning and wellness salons in Georgia.

"This was never my dream. It just fell in my lap," Kristy says, laughing. "But I love tanning, I love the atmosphere, I love the people. I wouldn't change it for the world."

In Kristy's case, it wasn't just that a simple job unexpectedly led her to business ownership but, more importantly, that it prepared her for it. After working at a couple of different salons, Kristy spent seven years managing the location that later became Tan Athens + Wellness, mastering the operational side of the tanning business and developing a deep understanding of that particular market and clientele.

"When managing a salon, you think of all these things you could do to make it better that the owner wouldn't do. It was really good for me to have those years of experience. I knew all along what needed to be done," she says.

At that point, Kristy did develop bigger aspirations within the tanning industry—a vision for her dream salon—which came to fruition last year when she opened Oconee Tan + Wellness after designing and building it from the ground up.

ONE STEP AT A TIME

Kristy's introduction to tanning came early. The salon was locally owned, and that experience shaped her understanding of what a tanning business could feel like: personal, warm, connected. That changed when the owner sold her locations to a national franchise. After nearly a year, she knew the corporate environment wasn't for her. "I left because it was a different atmosphere than being with a locally owned and operated salon," she says.

So, she moved on to a different independent salon. The owner operated the gym next door and didn't give much of his attention to the salon, which turned out to be a blessing for Kristy's future endeavors. Kristy took control of the salon's operations in much the same way an owner would and learned everything down to working on equipment and changing lamps.

In 2017, Kristy had just had her second child and was planning to step away from the salon and be a stay-at-home mom when she got an offer she couldn't refuse. The owner wanted to sell the







salon, and she knew that with the price he was asking, her familiarity with the location, and her understanding of what needed to be done to improve, it was a can't-miss opportunity.

"It really helped with me already being the manager. Everybody already knew me. From the moment we purchased it, we started making profit," she says.

While Kristy had thought about stepping away from the workforce entirely, once she was in, she was all in, and it didn't take long for her to start considering expansion. Last year, Oconee Tan + Wellness opened its doors in the county next to Athens, where Kristy and her husband, Julian, reside. While Kristy says, only half-jokingly, that she'll never take on a full salon build-out again after that experience, she's proud of what they've accomplished and was able to create the salon of her dreams.

"We found this location and started the process in 2025, and this was our first time building from the ground up. We just opened in June, and it's been a whirlwind," Kristy says.

Beyond the fresh build-out, it's a whole new experience with a very different backdrop and clientele than the quintessential college town of Athens.

"Oconee County is a smaller area, very hometown, lots of farmland, but it is growing. One of the main things I like about this location and clientele is I'm still getting some high school kids, still getting that younger crowd, but they're coming into it with wellness and red light," Kristy says. "Their parents come in, and there's a HOTWORX and a training gym right next to us, so that really helps. It's doing a lot better than I anticipated. With college kids, they often just want what's cheap. Over here, they have the money and are more willing to listen to what we recommend."

MAKING HER PRESENCE KNOWN

As the owner of two busy salon locations, Kristy quickly learned that her biggest challenge wouldn't be equipment, pricing, or marketing—it would be staffing. "I think the hardest part is managing employees," she admits.

With more stability in Athens, Kristy focused more of her time at the Oconee location at first, but after recently losing three key employees in Athens, she's been stretched thin splitting her time between the two salons. Regardless, maintaining a personal presence is a non-negotiable for Kristy, as she views their locally owned and operated status as a badge of honor and competitive advantage, and she knows it wouldn't be the same if clients didn't actually see the owner working in the business. "That's what's going to help us grow is having the owner here because people love seeing a locally owned place with the owner in the environment," she says.

Despite the recent challenges with personnel, Kristy says she doesn't deal with a high rate of turnover. "I'm a big believer in treating your employees

how you would want to be treated, so I always go above and beyond with them, and I think that helps," she says.

Having the two locations only 15 minutes apart helps, as she was able to train new employees at the Athens location before Oconee was ready to open. Now, she tries to keep some distinction between the two locations to avoid confusion because they have some different equipment and options, but she is able to have key team members help out in both salons.

At the heart of both salons is a customer experience shaped by Kristy's own philosophy: service should feel genuine, personal, and human. She teaches her team that kindness isn't just good manners—it's good business.

"With having so many years' experience in tanning salons, I always tell people I started from the bottom and worked my way up, which was the best thing that happened because I know the ins and outs, and with that comes the knowledge of what it's like to be a customer. I always tell my girls, tanning is a luxury. We want customers to feel like we're excited for them to be here. Talk about their day, give them information, but never pressure them to purchase something," Kristy says.





Fast Facts About the Salon

Levels of EFT	4
Staff Members	10
UV Units	19

Top Selling Products
JWOWW Triple Dip and Designer Skin Fever

Most Used Equipment
KBL 8000 Hybridsun and KBL K9S Hybridsun

"Close the conversation trying to figure out their needs, their wants, their goals, and I'm a really big believer that if you just treat everyone with kindness, they'll give it back to you. If you have an upset customer, just keep being kind back to them. Take care of each person and meet their needs in the best way possible. And being locally owned, we can work with people. I can create something in their budget to meet their needs. I want them to be happy and get what they need."

WELLNESS-DRIVEN BY DESIGN

After gradually upgrading equipment and incorporating wellness over the years in Athens, Kristy designed and opened Oconee Tan with the clear vision of a high-end wellness-oriented salon. Built out with enclosed drywalled rooms—a must for Kristy this time around—and a light, bright theme focused on her favorite color, pink, and gold accents, the setting matches the impressive equipment selection. With her vision in mind, David Moore and Eric Haynes of Tanning Supplies Unlimited helped Kristy execute the design.

"We created the layout and met with Dave and Eric, and they helped us create the room sizes, and they were so amazing to work with and made it perfect. We wanted it to be a light-colored, fresh, open, clean, wellness-spa atmosphere," she says.

True to her vision, the salon only features hybrid tanning units, alongside red light therapy and an infrared sauna. That equipment is separated into three levels of tanning at both locations, alongside three multi-service membership options and a wellness-only option.

"My main goal is obviously to get every single person on a membership. That helps with knowing the money is coming in but also gives them a nice price break. We do have 30-day options and five packs of sessions. We have wellness options where they just get red light and sauna. The Glow Access membership will give you access to all the beds, and Glow Access Plus

includes spray tans, wellness, and UV tanning. The Ultimate Glow gives you access to both salons because we have customers that want to go to both. When I was building Oconee, I knew I wanted different KBLs so people would want to use both locations," Kristy says.

Naturally, being the home of more than 40,000 college students, spray tanning business is always strong in Athens. Kristy's spray tanning expertise dates back to her days as an employee when she was first certified for airbrush by Norvell.

"Sunless is a huge benefit for us at Athens. With the college girls, they're going more toward sunless. We have two sunless booths and custom airbrush. Originally, I only had one booth but changed to two because we'd sometimes have a two-hour wait. With the high schools and big cheer competitions around Oconee, I knew we'd need two booths there, too," Kristy says. "We get a lot of people that want mobile spray tans, and that's something I've looked into. In Oconee, that's what they want. We're doing an event for a local company with a pop-up tent for spray tans. Hopefully that will help us get some momentum for that."



WHERE COMMUNITY MEETS CREATIVITY

Kristy's marketing philosophy is also rooted in her presence. Events are the cornerstone, whether they're at the salon, other businesses, or in the general community. The grand opening for Oconee last summer was a prime example. Kristy was able to schedule the celebration to coincide with a big Chamber of Commerce event in their shopping center to garner a larger crowd.

"I basically plaster myself and my face everywhere I can," she says. "Our little shopping center is new, so all the businesses are good about doing different events in the community. We're all out there doing different events with other locally owned business where we'll go to their space and set up a table or let them come here. We're part of the chamber here and they do events where they pick a different space or shopping center to have after-hours events, and we were able to put our grand opening at the beginning of that and have all those people already there."

In the process, Kristy leans into positive, feel-good branding. Recently, for a community Christmas parade, Kristy put together spray tan promotional cards that turned out to be a big hit. The cards said: Mental Health Spray Tan—$10 Off. Because You Deserve a Little Glow. "People were obsessed with that. We do a lot of handing out cards. Every time I go somewhere, I ask if I can leave some flyers or cards. A lot of free t-shirts and swag," she says.

When it comes to in-salon promotions, daily deals in Athens are typically complemented by occasional efforts centered around the college schedule, like "Tan until Spring Break" starting in January. Kristy says her "Pink Wednesday" event was never much of a success in Athens because most of the students were gone, but this year she extended it to a full week to help at that location, and her first Pink Wednesday event in Oconee was a big hit.

"We do daily deals that stay the same for a year, but every day of the week is different to help establish familiarity. Like, customers can come tan on Friday for a percentage off during slower hours. I always did Pink Wednesday, but with the college town, they're all



gone. So this year we did Pink Week at both salons, and it helped because the students had classes on Monday and Tuesday. In Oconee, we did $1700 in lotions sales on Pink Wednesday. Every person got a free swag bag. We do a lot of sponsoring for sororities. We recently booked our first time going to a sorority house and spraying," Kristy says.

THE NEXT STEP

As Tan Athens approaches its 10-year anniversary, the truth is that the groundwork for both salons was laid long before Kristy ever became an owner. Every job, every challenge, and every year spent learning the business helped shape the stronger, more resilient foundation she stands on today. With a well-structured membership model, a wellness-forward service mix, and a growing reputation, her operation is positioned for growth, but Kristy isn't in a rush.

"The main goal would be to have three to five salons," she says. "But right now, I'm content."

From the first tanning bed she cleaned at 19, to the meticulously designed wellness spa she opened last summer, Kristy has built her business the same way she built her career—step by step, client by client, experience by experience, from the ground up. And, thus far, it seems like everything has worked out just right.