



High Stylin' in Xenon with Freestyle Systems Dryers



Inventor, designer and former contractor, Blair Hopper, has patented a uniquely weightless blow drying system for up-scale hair salons across the globe. Using Ashlar-Vellum Xenon™ CAD and 3D modeling software on a Mac, Hopper continues to develop ground breaking products for the salon industry.

More than a decade ago, a stylist friend complained of carpal tunnel syndrome from the hours of holding a blow dryer. Hopper built a weightless system for her dryer and her symptoms disappeared in three days.

Like his original prototype, the Freestyle System applies a unique counter-balance mechanism with a torsion spring instead of a constant tension spring like a cord rewind. The weightless system installs just above each operator's chair and is fully adjustable to the height of the stylist with the touch of a button. It accommodates any number of different brands of hair dryers.

When Hopper first realized he had a commercially viable idea, he set out to design a product where all of the parts could be easily molded or machined. Early in the development process, Hopper brought his 2D drawings to a plastics manufacturer who charged him \$2000 to redraw his ideas in SolidWorks just to make a stereo lithography (STL) file. At that point Hopper knew he needed his own 3D modeling software and he was adamant it should be on the Mac. Finding Ashlar-Vellum Xenon, he learned it quickly and has loved it ever since.

Hopper tells about inventing a double helix connector that his plastics manufacture was sure couldn't be built. But because Hopper had figured out all of the details himself in Xenon, the manufacture finally agreed. When Hopper gave the CAD files to the manufacture's engineer, the engineer marveled at how Hopper drew it because the engineer could not figure out how to model it in SolidWorks.

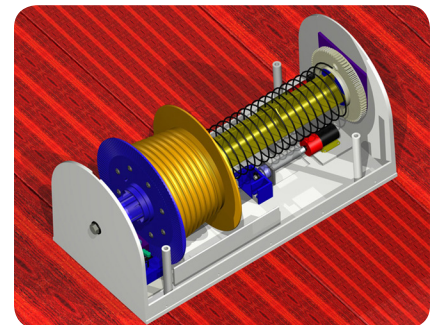
As the development process progressed, Hopper approached Paul Mitchell Systems. Linking up with Robert Cromeans, hair styling icon and artistic director for Paul Mitchell, together they designed his salon in San Diego and later in Las Vegas, featuring the first two installations of the Freestyle Systems dryers. Since then, Hopper's business has grown and now has almost 7000 stations worldwide.

He says about Xenon:

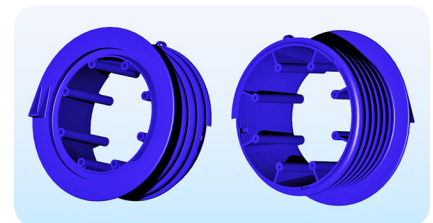
"I like how intuitive the drawing is. If you take something like AutoCAD and Solidworks and stuff like that, you kind of go through a lot more hoops than you do with Xenon. Mainly it's a very intuitive program to use."



The Freestyle weightless blow drying system.



Hopper uses a unique torsion spring counter balance mechanism to create his weightless system for salon blow dryers.



Hopper was able to draw this double helix connector in Xenon even though other engineers couldn't figure out how to draw it in SolidWorks.

Background/Contact

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