

VICI Salon & Spas Embrace High-speed Technology in the Laundry Room

By Haley Jorgensen

By investing in high-performance washer-extractors four years ago, VICI the Aveda Institute, in Milwaukee, significantly improved laundry productivity and ensured robes, capes, towels and sheets were properly cleaned with a touch of a button. VICI's high-speed 55-pound capacity Continental washers have cut dry-time by 25 percent—reducing natural gas consumption and bolstering laundry production.

The 30,000 square-foot VICI Beauty School graduates 140 students from its cosmetology and esthetics programs each year, and simultaneously, offers the public a full array of pampering beauty and spa services. The facility also boasts the VICI Capilli Salon & Spa, with 24 stylist stations and five spa treatment rooms, according to Ron Thomas, director of corporate operations. It is among three VICI operations in Wisconsin, with two new facilities underway in Madison and Glendale.

When equipping the VICI laundry operation to handle laundry for both the institute and the spa and salon, Thomas sought high-speed industrial washer-extractors rather than home-style



New Pro-Series Washers handle the laundry for both the VICI Beauty School and VICI Capilli Salon and Spa. Two new VICI salon/spas opening soon will also feature Continental high-speed washer-extractors.

toploads or industrial hard mounts. He received guidance and expertise from Great Lakes Commercial Sales Inc., in Brookfield, Wis., who carefully evaluated VICI's needs and installed two 55-pound capacity Continental Pro-Series Washer-extractors and two 75-pound capacity dryers. Until then, according to Thomas, VICI relied on top-load washers. But the home-style machines lacked needed programmability, capacity and longevity.

Programmability for Ease of Use and Quality Clean

VICI in Milwaukee, which processes around 1,900 pounds of laundry each

week, needed highly programmable, industrial-grade washers to keep pace with its laundry influx. The facility uses four different washer programs: one for white towels and bath robes with bleach; a second for black towels without bleach; a third for colored sheets; and a fourth for nylon capes.

"We try to create a real-life situation for students," says Thomas. "At most salon/spas, staff must do their own laundry. With our Continental washers, it's simple for the students to do this. They just select the program number and press start."

Once the Continental high-speed washers were programmed for load



Ron Thomas, VICI director of corporate operations, chose Pro-Series Washers for their high-performance and ease-of-use.



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type, according to David Anderson of Great Lakes, they automatically blended optimum water temperatures, water levels, chemicals, extraction speeds and cycle times for the best possible results.

“This ensures a consistent clean,” says Anderson. “By controlling water temperature by degree, the washer helps chemical additives effectively penetrate stains, suspend solids and disinfect fabrics. In spas, this level of control is especially critical for removing massage oils that can lead to dryer fires if left in towels and sheets.”

Moreover, by opting for automatic chemical injection, Thomas says he’s assured the right mix of chemicals every time, no matter who is doing the wash.

VICI chose the Continental high-speed, freestanding washers over lower-speed hard-mount washers for good reason. Not only do the machines reach far greater extract speeds than typical hard-mount machines—removing more water from every load—they are simpler to install, according to Thomas.

Freestanding for Simple Installation & Maintenance

“We plan for the future, so it’s important to look at how the laundry is structured for equipment replacement down the

road,” he says. “We didn’t want washers that bolted down so that in 15 years we’d be stuck with mounting bolts coming out of concrete. We liked the idea of freestanding equipment because there’s little to no vibration and they are easy to move in and out for maintenance.” With a dump tank situated right behind the washers, a hard-mount machine wouldn’t be as easy to service if there was a plumbing problem down the road, he maintains.

“The laundry facility backs up to the classroom and the CEO’s office,” he adds. “We needed washers that would run quietly with little to no vibration. These are fantastic.”

The High-speed Difference

And, thanks to Continental’s high-speed extraction capabilities, Thomas reports it doesn’t take washed items as long to dry. Compared with most hard-mount washers, which generate extract speeds of 70-150 G-force, Continental high-speed washers produce extract speeds

exceeding 380 G-force. In turn, according to Anderson, dry-time and resulting gas consumption decrease, while productivity surges.

“Our facilities used to rely on top-load washers,” says Thomas. “One of the reasons we purchased the high-speed Continentals was to reduce the energy we use on the dryer by reducing dry-time. Now the towels come out of the washers barely damp and we’ve reduced dry-time by 25 percent.”

By cutting dry-time, VICI slashes gas usage and completes more laundry in less time. As a result, it takes students just 65 minutes to wash and dry a load of black towels weighing in at 55 pounds. “We have a scale cart and maximize every load to save even more on utilities,” says Thomas. “It’s been four years since we installed the washers and we’ve had no problems with them; just routine maintenance.”

Following suit, the VICI salon/spas opening soon will also feature 55-pound capacity Continental high-speed washers.

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