

GROWING UP, JACK ABSOLON HAD ALWAYS HAD TO ADAPT TO HIS SURROUNDINGS, NEVER IMAGINING A CAREER IN BARBERING WOULD BE RIGHT FOR HIM – THEN HE MET JEN WINTERS

**Jack Absolon** spent most of his teenage years playing football for Southend United, even moving to America at one point to pursue his love of the beautiful game. At 22, his contract ended and he was back in England uncertain of what the future might hold, until he met Jen.

“She gave me the opportunity to become an apprentice at Phoney Pony so I grabbed it with both hands – excuse the pun,” laughs Jack. “Barbering was never on my radar before, I never thought it was for me but Jen was looking for someone she could get on with and train quickly and she asked if I’d be willing to give it a go. Jen has always been the kind of person who wants to push boundaries and she made me want to try.”

For the next few months, Jack threw himself into training, with Jen spending time developing her training techniques to suit his needs. It was a learning process for both parties, figuring out how to hold certain tools, figuring out different approaches to certain techniques, but Jen was both patient and determined to make Jack the best barber he could be.

“We were starting completely from scratch, I don’t know if anyone else has ever done this kind of thing before, but I had so much support from Jen and also from customers,” explains Jack. “One customer even built me a strap for my arm that I can put combs and tools in, so it’s like having two hands.”

Jack’s skill now he claims is only where it is because of the support Jen gave him, and her belief in him made him determined to succeed. They both knew the opportunity in front of them, which only gave Jack more passion. What, then, has been the biggest challenge he has had to overcome?

“It’s psychological. My confidence has gone through the roof now – when you step into a busy shop, they expect a quality cut, so having one less hand is not an excuse,” says Jack. “I had to get my head around that idea, so psychologically, that was probably my biggest challenge. My hand is not an excuse and I had to be just as good as Jen and Jacob. The two of them have been such massive supports to me though, learning from them has been amazing, I don’t think I could have done it without them to be honest.”



# JACK ABSOLON

Jack now works full time in Phoney Pony barbershop, and just eight months into his career he is showing an immense amount of skill and creativity after just eight months. He has a clear penchant for classic cuts such as pompadours and the styles of the 50s and 60s and he is now beginning to build himself a loyal client base.

“The reaction from clients has been really varied. When I first started, people would sit in my chair and you could see them thinking ‘how is this guy going to do this?’ but as the cut went on, you would see them realise that I know what I’m doing,” laughs Jack.



“Now I have people coming into the shop and asking for me – that always makes me so proud. I couldn’t ask for any more than people wanting me to cut their hair, that’s what you want, for people to think you’ve done a good job.”

With almost a year of training behind him, Jack has high hopes for what the rest of his career might hold, perhaps even having the opportunity to cut at barbering events, where he can show the industry what you can achieve if you have his passion and determination – and it helps to have a barber like Jen Winters as your support system.

“I just want to become the best barber I can be – at the end of the day, I just want to cut hair.”