

Cambria Hts. biz has walls covered

New York's first Fresh Coat Painting franchise operated by Queens duo

BY HOWARD KOPLOWITZ

Eric Black and Bayo Shivamber have called each other friends since high school. They took that friendship to a new level recently when they became co-owners of a professional painting franchise.

Based out of their Cambria Heights home office, Bayo and Shivamber operate Fresh Coat Painting, which they said offers professional painters at a discount price.

Black said he got the idea to buy the franchise after his sister was trying to get her new Charlotte, N.C., home painted. She wound up buying a Fresh Coat Painting in that city.

"When she told me about it, I jumped on the idea," said Black, 34. "There's no Fresh Coat in New York City."

The company took root four years ago and now includes more than 60 franchises, including the one in Queens that opened at the end of July.

Shivamber, a 35-year-old Jamaica resident with a background in real estate, said he saw the benefits the franchise could have for Queens hom-



Photo by Christina Santucci

Eric Black (l. to r.) and Bayo Shivamber are the new co-owners of a Fresh Coat Painters franchise.

eowners looking for a professional painting job.

"I saw the potential because there's a lack of dependable, reliable painters," he said. "Our prices, they're hard to beat."

Black said prices start at \$199 for a 12-foot-by-12-foot room, including the cost of the paint.

The business handles basic painting, but can also accommodate homeowners with creative tastes by painting

elaborate murals or providing marble and faux finishes.

Shivamber and Black first met at Manhattan's High School for Art and Design, where they both took an interest in graphic design. Black still creates artwork on the side.

"Our art background comes in" while running the business, Black said, referring to the business' more elaborate painting jobs. "Our creativity gives us an edge

over other people out there."

The business currently employs two professional painters with others on stand-by. Shivamber said some clients turn to Fresh Coat after attempting to paint a room themselves, but it also caters to those who are too old to perform the task and younger residents who are too busy to paint.

"Painting is an art," Black said. "Our painters know what to do when they see a wall."

Fresh Coat services all of Queens, Black said, and he and Shivamber are soon looking to expand into Manhattan just three months after starting the franchise.

"We're going to cover the New York market," Black said.

He cited the company's "branding" and "professional quality" as reasons Queens residents turn to Fresh Coat.

"The response from the market has been outstanding," Black said. "People are overjoyed."

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