



SKILLS & COMMUNICATION

A good stylist learns to listen

BY IRIS GONZALEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARTIN WADDY

Seeing a hair stylist, especially for the first time, can be an emotional experience. Hair is an important part of how we look, and a great hairstyle can go a long way in making us look and feel wonderful.

It is no surprise that a woman's relationship with her hairstylist can be much like her relationship with a significant other. When things are going well, a woman is happy and feels like the most beautiful version of herself she can be. These San Antonio hair salon owners share in common a focus on customer service, using their extensive training as hair stylists to enhance the natural beauty each woman possesses.

Each salon owner also shared advice for those seeking a new hair stylist. All agreed that any successful relationship is based on good communication, which often starts with the consultation before each hair appointment and continues throughout the stylist-client relationship. With skill and keen listening, each salon owner strives to achieve the same end result: a client with the best hair possible.



Caring for hair *at the highest level*

Melody Edens

Melody Edens Salon

148 E. Huisache Ave.

www.melodyedenssalon.com

Advice: "I cannot stress enough the importance of a good consultation. Open-ended questions such as, 'What kind of challenges are you having with your hair?' help us note what clients like about their hair because we want to incorporate that into the end result."

Inside the salon, housed in a historic home in the Monte Vista district of San Antonio, the shelves lined with owner-developed hair products offer intriguing choices.

A stylist for 35 years, Melody Edens has studied the science, art and psychology of hair color. "Think about the colors in your hair and the emotion that color elicits; it reflects your personality and communicates your personal image," Edens explained. "Understanding what your client wants to communicate is an important aspect of hair color."

An Amarillo native, Edens moved to San Antonio in 1988 and opened Melody Edens Salon in 2010. She attended barber college in Amarillo, and then received color specialist education with Redken, also spending time at the Vidal Sassoon Academy in London.

With three full-time stylists and one apprentice, Melody Edens is the only American Board of Certified Hair Colorists salon in San Antonio, the prestigious board certification status applying to everyone on the hair design team. The salon also uses a formatted, systematic approach to the consultation with clients. "We recommend solutions to solve their issues with their hair," Edens

said. "We give clients the tools and knowledge by educating them on how to recreate the salon result at home. It's been life changing for many of our clients."

Edens stresses the importance of hair care at home with products to keep hair looking and feeling healthy. The need for home versions of specific hair products drove Edens to develop her own line of hair care and styling products, working closely with a cosmetic chemist. The salon has been offering the Melody line of hair products for over three years, including a gentle conditioning wash for curly hair and an anti-aging hair elixir to restore luster and shine. "The process of developing these new products has given me a deeper understanding of why some products do or don't work," Edens said. "This has taken our ability to care for the health of our clients' hair to a higher level."

Melody Edens Salon has supported the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition (NOCC) since 2012. This year the salon donated to the American Heart Association and hosted beauty makeovers for women who have survived heart disease.

Edens' goal is to expand the salon staff to six stylists, offer longer hours of service for clients and continue the high level of education and success for her team of stylists. She is also working to expand her cosmetic beauty products and plans to continue to contribute to the community.



Enhancing *a woman's beauty*

Petra Williams

Petra's Salon and Boutique
434 North Loop 1604 West
www.petrassalonboutique.com

Advice: "Look for a stylist who will listen and suggest more than one option for you. You don't want someone who will talk you into something but instead will work with you, your hair and what you want. It is always about the customer; we as stylists are just enhancing the beauty that's already there."

Petra Williams was always interested in beauty, especially when it came to styling hair. As the biracial child of an African-American father and a mother of German descent, Williams realized her hair texture was different from that of her mother, who had no experience from which to offer her daughter styling tips. Once Williams decided to learn how to style her hair, she was drawn into a career as a stylist.

"When I was a teenager, working in beauty helped build my self-esteem," Williams said. "Hopefully, I can continue by helping others with their self-esteem by sharing my experiences."

Williams is a military transplant to San Antonio, settling here when her father retired when she was attending Theodore Roosevelt High School. A stylist for 38 years, she decided in 2006 to open Petra's Salon and Boutique in north central San Antonio.

A full-service salon, Petra's location offers hair styling and

color, along with nail services, facials, massages, hair removal and makeup application and lessons. The salon has a boutique with unique clothes, shoes and fashion accessories clients can browse during a salon visit.

Almost all of the salon staff has been with Williams since 2006. With little staff turnover, she can ensure that she along with all the stylists get to know every client who comes in for a service. This is what makes Petra's Salon stand out, according to Williams—its dedication to customer service.

"It's all about service," Williams said. "Clients will want trendy styles, but in the end you still have to give good service. You can do that by getting to know people, their lifestyle and preferences and what makes them tick in order to learn how to best cut and style their hair so that they're happy."

Her goal for the salon in 2017 is the same goal she has had every year since first opening: "I am fully invested in the success of my stylists and in the satisfaction of my clients. If my stylists are successful and my clients are happy, I have reached my goal."



Preserving *hair's integrity*

Stephanie Sikkink

Pure Beauty Bliss Salon
20322 Huebner Road
www.purebeautybliss.com

Advice: "We offer a pre-service consult for new clients to discuss their desires and needs so we can recommend what would work best. Bring in multiple pictures of what you'd like to help that discussion, because a picture is worth a thousand words."

Stephanie Sikkink grew up in her mother's salon and day spa, spending time there before and after school. After moving to San Antonio in 2009, the Riverside, Calif., native attended the Aveda Institute. Sikkink first started styling hair in a rented individual salon space, then decided to open her salon December 2013 in Stone Oak. She co-owns Pure Beauty Bliss Salon with her mother, Sylvia Pico. The salon also includes a boutique with the latest styles in clothing, jewelry, fashion accessories and candles.

"My mom is my biggest inspiration; she's been in the business for over 28 years," Sikkink said. "I would sit in on the stylist training in my mom's salon before my school day started."

The full-service hair salon uses the Kevin Murphy color and hair brand, which includes a line of vegan products and ammonia-free hair color. "We're one of the few in San Antonio that carries this line," Sikkink said. "We also carry the Unite line of hair products, and as color specialists we use the Olaplex brand of hair products."

All eight salon stylists are Aveda trained. The salon offers a spectrum of color options, with free-hand balayage as its most popular service. With its subtle blend of color, it is a lower maintenance hair color option, giving hair a sun-kissed look without the need to retouch roots every four to six weeks. In addition to more dramatic color options such as oil slick (a blend of iridescent colors that mimic the look of an oil slick's surface) and ombré color effects, the salon's stylists can suggest a sombré, also known as "soft" or "subtle ombré." Instead of using dramatic colors, the base color transitions into lighter shades with more highlights at the ends of the hair.

Sikkink has "a two-year plan to open a second location on a different side of town so we can build a new clientele and offer more services, such as nails and facials," she said. With so many color options for clients, Sikkink stresses the importance of hair care above all else.

"Our philosophy is to focus on maintaining the integrity of your hair, whether it's explaining the importance of taking home the right products for your hair or consulting with you on your hair and what will work best, given your desires and hair," she said.



Restoring hair's beauty

Life changing

Maria Antonietta Joeris

Salon Visage

2510 N. Main Ave.

www.salonvisageonmain.com

Advice: "If you're changing stylists, I would ask for a referral card from your current stylist with your hair color information if you're happy with what you have so the next stylist can replicate it. If you're used to a particular product line, you can also look on their website for salons in your area trained on your product."

Maria Antonietta Joeris grew up surrounded by the beauty business. As a child, she would cut her doll's hair to practice her skills as she watched her stylist mother and barber father working with their clients. Joeris also learned she must connect with the clients who come into her salon, so the consultation before an appointment is her time for listening. This is especially important for women experiencing issues with their hair because of their health.

"I deal with a lot of women who need wigs because of an illness, such as hair thinning from alopecia, so I work with them to create hair integration pieces and hair extensions," Joeris said. "The end result can be life changing when you help clients make the transformation to having beautiful hair again."

Salon Visage has been open in Monte Vista for seven years. A salon owner for 25 years, Joeris has trained with Clairol, Redken, Vidal Sassoon and Toni and Guy and has received specialized training on hair integration pieces and wigs. The full-service hair

salon offers color services such as highlights, balayage, ombre and other current color trends, plus keratin and straightening treatments. Salon Visage can also perform microblading, which is a style of brow tattooing in which fine, individual eyebrow hairs are tattooed for a more natural look. Nail services, eyelash tinting and extensions as well as waxing are also available.

Joeris helps clients with special events such as weddings, proms and Fiesta. "We are already committed to working with 15 ladies on their hair and makeup for the upcoming Fiesta coronation," Joeris said.

Three years ago Joeris added a boutique to the salon, which carries fashionable clothing, jewelry and accessories. In addition to festive party garb and Fiesta-worthy accessories, Joeris carries Felipe Barbosa vermeil jewelry from San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. What does not sell in the boutique is donated to the Battered Women's and Children's Shelter in San Antonio.

"We are known for listening carefully and recommending the best approach to help clients feel good about themselves and their hair," Joeris said. "Restoring the hair's natural beauty can be a life-changing experience. As long as we continue to help our clients, I am fulfilling my goals."