

Indulge in beauty



How to choose a great salon

By JAIME SCHRABECK, Ph.D.

WHETHER YOU consider a manicure or a facial an indulgence or a necessity, you want to get the best work. Nobody wants her health and safety compromised when they go to a salon. And that's why a state agency — the Board of Barbering and Cosmetology — regulates California's beauty professionals, including more than 218,000 cosmetologists, 96,000 manicurists, 46,000 estheticians, 17,000 barbers, 1,700 electrologists and 38,000 establishments.

Before obtaining a professional beauty service, the BBC strongly suggests you consider the following rules.

■ The business must display a license

In California, any business that provides hair, skin and/or nail services must obtain a license from the BBC before it opens. This law applies to any kind of business, whether a salon, day spa, hotel, medical office or gym. Consumers should look for a valid license in a prominent place in the reception area. It's also a requirement to display the poster listing the BBC Health and Safety rules, so that should be available also.

To determine whether a business is properly licensed even before you visit, go to the BBC website (www.barbercosmo.ca.gov), click on "Verify an Establishment" and enter the information requested.

If the business has a valid license, the website will show it, along with a current address, license number and a "clear" status. If the business has fines due, a delinquent license or no record of a license, that business should be avoided.

■ Each individual performing beauty services must also display a license

Within a licensed establishment, every service provider must display his or her own individual license. There are five license categories (cosmetologist, esthetician, manicurist, barber and electrologist), each with a specific course of training and scope of practice. For example, while cosmetologists can perform hair, skin and nail services, estheticians are limited to facials and waxing, and manicurists to doing nails.

To determine whether an individual is properly licensed, follow the same steps given above, except click on "Verify a License" listed under "Quick Hits."

■ The establishment must have clean equipment and work areas.

The BBC has strict rules about cleanliness to reduce the risk of infection. For example, service providers are required to wash their hands immediately before each service. All tools must be sanitized (washed with soap and water) and disinfected in an approved disinfectant. Any items that cannot be disinfected — such as emery boards, pumice stones, toe separators and wax applicators — must be discarded immediately after use. A foot spa, or any container of water used during a pedicure, must be sanitized and disinfected before every client.

■ Procedures they can't do

Because the sole purpose of beauty services is to beautify, consumers should not expect their beauty services to replace professional medical care. Licensees cannot diagnose or treat medical conditions, or perform any procedure that affects the structure or function of living tissue. They may never use a razor-edged instrument to remove skin (such as calluses, corns, moles or skin tags), perform chemical peels, penetrate the skin with a needle or use a laser. These procedures constitute the practice of medicine and must be performed by qualified medical professionals.

Receiving a professional beauty service should be a safe and pleasant experience. Asking questions and being informed will help you make better choices.

Jaime Schrabec is a licensed manicurist and owner of Precision Nails in the Crossroads shopping center.

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March Hare's 25th anniversary

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

THE CARMEL hair salon that Pine Cone readers voted best salon in 2009 has done what most businesses in the city could only dream about — operate in the same location for a quarter of a century.

March Hare, on the southeast corner of Fifth and Mission, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, and salon owner MaryAnna Wagner Stahl said its success lies in the nurturing attention it gives its customers.

"When you walk in," Wagner Stahl told The Pine Cone, "we give you a sensory journey" and a cup of comforting tea.

Even before staff at March Hare wash a client's hair, they offer her scents of essential oils and a soothing scalp massage.

"People say they feel so nurtured when they are here," Wagner Stahl said. "We love to nurture our clients."

Even though the salon has been in the same location for more than two decades, the space was remodeled three years ago.

"It's brand new, with state-of-the-art equipment," she said.

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