

Beauty is as Beauty Does

Michele E. Buttelman
Features Editor

Tuesday November 12, 2002

To celebrate her 27 years in the Santa Clarita Valley beauty business, Monique Raymond of Monique's Day Spa and Massage Center recently did something very typically "Monique." She gave something back to the community and her customers.

Monique's "Beauty Expo," conceived and organized by her son, Henry Von Norden, was an evening of free food, gifts, demonstrations, massages and an introduction to the latest in beauty treatments and products.

More than 200 of Monique's friends and customers flocked to the day spa to hear brief presentations from various beauty vendors and to experience the new "natural face-lift" process from Cosmecanique.

A certified Cosmecanique technician invited guests to experience the non-surgical, non-invasive process, and a line quickly formed - which rarely shrunk throughout the night. Each guest received the treatment on half of her face so she could see the visible results.

Raymond and Von Norden presided over a raffle drawing where baskets of beauty goodies were awarded to lucky winners. The grand prize was a free "Brite Smile" treatment offered by Newhall dentist Dell Goodrick who was on hand to explain the teeth whitening procedure.

"Today I am celebrating my 27th anniversary in the Santa Clarita Valley and I am so happy you are here to share this day with me," Raymond told the assembled crowd.

Raymond opened her business in 1976 and remains in the same location she started in, the shopping center next to the IHOP on Bouquet Canyon Road in the heart of the SCV.

The center, built on the former site of Saugus Elementary School, is a warren of small shops and boutiques. Monique's has expanded to include several more units over the years as the business grew. Services include full-body massage, body wraps, Vichy showers, facials, permanent makeup and other traditional spa and beauty services.

"I was the first tenant in the building 27 years ago," Raymond said - a testament to her flourishing and successful business.

After the presentations, guests scattered among the various beauty booths and received free makeovers courtesy of Youngblood Natural Mineral Cosmetics, free massages from day spa employees or talked with Sothy's of Paris or the other beauty consultants available about skin care. Some guests slipped discreetly to another part of the spa where a representative of Faces, Inc. was providing Botox injections.

Guests also converged on a lavish spread of hors d'oeuvres and desserts from RSVP Catering of Newhall and a wine and champagne bar. Mary Blaw of Sterling Cuisine (a personal chef service) of Northridge was also on hand giving out samples of her Butternut Squash soup to demonstrate that healthy food can also be delicious food.

Kathy Alkaraghoulis of Canyon Country was pleased with the results of her makeover from Youngblood. "I really enjoyed it," she said as she smiled broadly. "I hope they do this again and it is an even bigger event."

Ria Hudakoua, an aesthetician employed at Monique's also found the Beauty Expo a great experience. "I just enjoyed the whole atmosphere. It's been wonderful. It is fun to see my clients enjoying themselves," she said. "I am so proud to work for Monique."

Long-time Monique's customer Olga Joseau of Newhall said she enjoyed the unique evening of beauty. "I've been coming to Monique's for years and I think this was a wonderful idea. It is a great way to get educated about so many beauty products and services. I can't wait to try the Cosmecanique machine," Joseau said.

Long-time friend, customer and former Santa Clarita mayor and city councilwoman JoAnne Darcy said she thought the Beauty Expo was a great idea. "This is such fun," Darcy said. "Monique helps a lot of women in the community. She had worked with so many of the women who have come through the Association to Aid Victims of Domestic Violence...; nobody really realizes all that she had done in this community."

Von Norden said the success of the Beauty Expo has encouraged him to plan another, for the daytime, and include additional beauty services like hairdressers and manicurists. "This has been beyond my wildest expectations," he said of the large turnout. "I really feel this Beauty Expo will continue to grow."

At the end of the evening, Raymond was overcome with emotion at how many friends and customers had turned out to wish her well on her anniversary. "This was such a beautiful night. It has been a beautiful evening. It shows me that I'm doing something right in the community," she said.