

Lifestyles

An Eye Dazzling Experience

Plucky Chappaqua Artist Rejuvenates Clientèle

By Stephanie Susnjara

Consider the eyebrow. For those in the know, expertly shaped brows can work miracles. Women who frequent high-end beauty salons realize that a clean, defined arch can appear to lift the whole face, as well as widen and enlarge the eyes, acting a bit like a face-lift without the surgery.

A professional trimming can also rescue a man with bushy, wiry brows from an unappealing werewolf look. Tidying up an overabundance of eyebrow hairs can restore confidence in that unfortunate teenager sporting a Frida Kahlo uni-brow, not to mention put a stop to any teasing from his or her peers.

Those in northern Westchester in the know about eyebrows reply on the gentle and precise hands of Chappaqua-based Gail Marie Delbalzo, who recently won the 2008 Best Eyebrow Artist award given by Westchester Magazine.

Ever since she was a little girl growing up in upper Manhattan, Gail Marie has had a special affinity for sculpting eyebrows. When she was 10 she practiced plucking the brows of her beloved Italian grandmother.

A licensed cosmetologist and certified paramedical esthetician, Delbalzo graduated from Wilfred Academy in 1989. She moved to Chappaqua in 1992 and began working at well-known salons throughout the county,

including Michelle Danielle in Chappaqua and Billy's in Mount Kisco. Prior to opening her current Chappaqua location, Delbalzo owned and managed the spa at the Saw Mill Club for eight years.

"I find it such a challenge every time a person walks into my room," she said. "Sometimes people are nervous. I calm them down within seconds by taking their face in my hands and seeing what needs to be done."

One of her devoted customers, Bedford resident Judy Zolt, has been seeing Delbalzo for 12 years and loves what she has done for her.

"I always had a problem with my brows. Gail Marie made them finally look right," Zolt said.

Every eyebrow appointment with Delbalzo lasts at least half an hour and starts at \$40. Her method for creating the perfect individualized design combines cutting, waxing and plucking, although some people with extremely sensitive skin opt to forgo the waxing. Waxing is advantageous though, since it pulls the hair from the roots, slowing re-growth for up to six weeks.

Delbalzo is also noted for her skill at brow and lash tinting.

"Dying brows and lashes requires a careful and meticulous touch, which Gail Marie has mastered," praised Zolt.

Delbalzo estimates that her current client base, which includes celebrities, tops 500 customers. They come from as far away as Manhattan and Poughkeepsie. Most people find out about Delbalzo via word of mouth.

"People are always asking, 'Who does your brows?' Chappaqua resident Staci Toporek said. "A friend said recently, 'They're a



STEPHANIE SUSNJARA PHOTO

Eyebrow artist Gail Marie looks on as her client, Chappaqua resident Staci Toporek, admires her newly coiffed brows in a hand held mirror.

masterpiece. They complete your face."

Her cozy, discreet atmosphere is especially well-suited for men who sometimes feel uncomfortable since eyebrow shaping is typically seen as something for women.

One devoted male client mentioned that as he gets older he needs the extra grooming.

"Some guys might laugh if they knew," said the client who wished to remain anonymous. "I'm in construction. But, as I've gotten older, my brows have started to look a little unkempt. A barber would do a hack job. But Gail Marie makes it look natural. People don't even realize my eyebrows have been professionally coiffed."

Delbalzo

Some of her most grateful devotees are members of the younger generation.

She is very sensitive when it comes to

providing services for teenagers and tweens, many of whom experience excessive hair growth due to hormonal changes.

"As a child growing up with thick brows, I know the humiliation—then triumph—of walking into school and not feeling self-conscious," she said.

Delbalzo's not against a shot of Botox. However, she recommends that a woman first "take a look at the power of a well-designed, articulated brow line. Not only is it more cost effective, it can make the eyes just pop."

In addition to her celebrated eyebrow designing and shaping, Delbalzo offers brow and lash tinting, full waxing services and signature facials. For more information or to schedule an appointment with Gail Marie Delbalzo, call 914-238-1554.



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