

Facing Success in Niche Market

Shop owner specializes in raising brows, spirits

By Kathryn Quinn Thomas

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The eyebrows are a face's frame and the right shape can open a face and lift the spirit, says Deanna Netti-Cahill.

Netti-Cahill is the owner of Brow Diva at 3025 Monroe Ave. The salon, open to women and men, offers eyebrow shaping, makeup application, waxing and facials.

Originally a makeup artist and owner of a small cosmetics company, Netti-Cahill found many clients needed brow services. Nearly seven years ago, she began to focus on brows, while working at Distingue Salon in Fairport.

When her clientele grew to more than 100, Netti-Cahill realized she had sufficient trade to work for herself.

Brow Diva is her second foray into small business. The salon opened in February and has two full-time and three part-time employees.

"It just evolved," she says of her new business. "It just felt right. My inner guidance propelled me in this direction."

Netti-Cahill previously was co-owner for 12 years of Rochester's Jumelle Makeup Co. with her twin sister, Deborah Netti. Her sister, who has two small children, currently offers services similar to those at Brow Diva, but as a sole proprietor.

In her 22-year career, Netti-Cahill has worked for La Prairie Inc., Jacqueline Cochran Cosmetics, Estee Lauder Cos. Inc. and Elizabeth Arden Inc.

At 44, Netti-Cahill's two children are grown and she sees plenty of possibilities in her future.

She says: "I feel I am ageless, although I'm chronologically 44. I embrace all of life's seasons."

Netti-Cahill became interested in brow shaping after reading about Anastasia Soare, who has a brow studio in Beverly Hills. Soare began her career giving facials and is now brow shaper to the stars, including Oprah Winfrey, Debra Messing, Chloe Sevigny, Kim Cattrall, Jennifer Lopez and Claudia Schiffer.

Of course, whatever is going on in Oprah's life becomes fodder for her television show, and eyebrows are no exception.

"Oprah has helped to bring about an awareness of the importance of having your brows shaped," Netti-Cahill says. "It's a life to the face and frame for the face."

The bulk of Netti-Cahill's clientele is female, although she offers brow grooming for men.

"I designed the space to be androgynous, so both sexes felt comfortable here," she says. "Men's grooming is a huge market."

Most women who visit Brow Diva have either been shaping their own brows or seeing another professional. Very few of her customers have never been tweezed, Netti-Cahill says.

Each face is unique and brows are shaped by trimming, tweezing and waxing to fit facial features, not to match a current fashion, she says.

"I usually end up doing a lot of correcting (of past mistakes)," she says.

The first Brow Diva visit with Netti-Cahill costs \$35 and return visits are \$25 each. An apprentice, Grace Shapiro, charges less while she is learning.

Netti-Cahill projects \$250,000 in revenues when her first year ends in February. She would like to add one more full-time employee, she says.

But her vision for Brow Diva is bigger than just the Monroe Avenue site. Netti-Cahill pictures at least one more Brow Diva on the West Coast in California, and is open to considering other locations.

"Whether it's a franchise or corporation, it's not clear yet," she says. "But Brows Diva will definitely evolve and expand."