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Salon Business

Big Fish, Small Pond

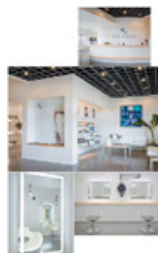
September 1, 2008
By: **Nicole Palmieri**
American Salon

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In every small town across America, there's at least one salon that raises the bar for everyone else. Novato, CA, (population 47,630) has NH2 Salon.

Novato, CA, is home to the Buck Institute for Age Research, The Republic of Tea and the birthplace of Battlebots. It is also home to NH2 Salon, where locals receive the royal treatment.

Founders Nina Husen and Nicole Hitchcock opened NH2 because they noticed a lack of both high-quality salon services for area residents and up-to-date education for stylists in the elite town located just 30 minutes north of San Francisco.



TOP TO BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT: The reception desk; clients can browse the salon's retail area while waiting for their appointment; the styling stations; a predominantly white decor reflects the salon's clean and crisp atmosphere.

The 4,000-square-foot salon features a clean, crisp and predominately white decor, complete with hanging blow-dryers from Freestyle Systems, adjustable shampoo bowls, mirrors designed for high-end boutiques and hotels, and a lot of natural light seen throughout.

NH2 offers only hair services, which allows stylists to concentrate solely on their clients' hair and ensure their experience at the salon is top-notch. In addition to offering every client a complimentary Bumble and bumble treatment, stylists are educated on all the products used at the salon. "Each product used on our clients during their visit is placed in a basket for them to purchase if they want to," Hitchcock says. "We don't push clients to buy, but we make sure they understand what was used to make their hair look so great, and give them the opportunity to replicate the look on their own."

At NH2, education is key, which is why Hitchcock and Husen created the NH2 University. Stylists from NH2 as well as from the surrounding area are invited to attend advanced training from guest artists on everything from current cuts and styles to color and techniques. "These classes are for stylists in the area who can't travel to New York City to keep up with the hottest trends and techniques in hair," Hitchcock says.

While these classes teach stylists about all areas of hair, each NH2 stylist must choose a specialization. Says Hitchcock, "If you make employees focus on a weakness, it can take the joy out of work. Here, they become an expert in something they enjoy." —NICOLE PALMIERI

In stock: Bumble and bumble, Wella

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