

2

BARRIAGE, Rhonda

Rhonda Barriage pioneered the business of making people feel better in Belleville.

She was the first person to establish a small esthetics operation in rented space almost three decades ago and has since turned it into one of the leading beauty and relaxation day spas in this region.

The 46-year-old Barriage owns and operates Beauty Works Spa on Sidney Street and prides herself on specializing in esthetics only.

"In a way, I feel I educated a lot of people on the esthetics industry and have made a very rewarding career out of it," she said. "And I'm happy to employ people that can make a living loving this business as well."

Barriage owns the 3,600 square foot commercial bungalow and employs 14 people, including a manager, guest co-ordinators, estheticians, nail technicians, registered massage therapists, reflexologists and electrolysis technicians.

She also practises all esthetics as well as laser hair removal, electrolysis and microdermabrasion procedures in her day spa.

"I thoroughly enjoy making people look and feel better about themselves because their confidence level improves and, in a fast-paced environment we live, everyone needs a retreat or a getaway from the rat race just to feel rejuvenated, to keep going."

She believes a day at the spa should be more of a lifestyle rather than an indulgence or retreat.

"What sets us apart in the esthetics business is that we offer a whole spa atmosphere where you can totally escape for two or three hours.

Well-Women in Business Oct. 27/01 p.3

Wednesday, October

There is no use of cell phones during this time, for example, and we have relaxation music piped in through the premises and refreshing hot beverages to offer our clients."

She is also working on introducing more men to the world of esthetics — her male clientele represents about 15 per cent of her business and she wants to double that at least.

"Men are just now realizing what women have experienced for years and that is total relaxation and rejuvenation," she said.

Barriage said she thoroughly enjoys being in business for herself.

"It's a win-win situation because I get paid for something I absolutely love," she said.

And she considers it "a great honour and very flattering" to be nominated for the women in business contest sponsored by The Intelligencer.

The Quinte Secondary School graduate got her start by enrolling at the Edith Serei School of Esthetics in Toronto. A year later, she earned her esthetic and electrolysis certificate and went into business for herself.

Barriage rented an eight-by-10-foot room in a hair salon in October of 1977 and started Beauty Works. She outgrew her space over the next two years and moved to a larger location on Sidney Street.

The next milestone occurred seven years ago when she moved into the former commercial building owned by her father, Mel, who ran a construction company. She purchased the property, tore down the small building and built her new

commercial home.

"Over the years with the demand for therapeutic treatments, I have expanded to include a Vichy shower, hydrotherapy tub, deluxe pedicure chairs and more in depth body treatments," she said proudly.

As her business grew, so did Barriage's expertise in esthetics. She completed advanced training in laser hair removal

and microdermabrasion, learned more about skin care products and techniques to offer her clients and continues to explore bringing other innovative ideas to her spa.

She even sends her staff on courses and esthetic shows in Toronto and Las Vegas.

"I have been lucky enough to find staff that share the same passion for the business of esthetics and that to me is what made

Beauty Works Spa such a success. It is the caring staff who I work with and, of course, the fabulous generational clientele that have supported us over the years."

Barriage is also past president of the Women's Sales and Ad Club in Belleville, a member of the Belleville and District Chamber of Commerce, has donated many gift certificates to all kinds of charitable organizations and has conducted seminars and treatments at many open houses.

The person who nominated Barriage said this of her:

"Rhonda is an excellent role model for other women in business as she demonstrates a strong, successful and dedicated woman. She continually strives to improve herself and her services to her clientele."

"IT'S A WIN-WIN SITUATION BECAUSE
I GET PAID FOR SOMETHING I
ABSOLUTELY LOVE."
— OWNER/OPERATOR
RHONDA BARRIAGE