

Business News

News and Profiles of Companies in the Airpark Area



A Knockout Hairstyle

Business: Ira Michael Salon
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Since moving to the Valley over a decade ago, I've met some people that everyone seems to love to be around. TV and radio personality Jan D'Atri, *Arizona Highways* writer Tom Carpenter, and weight loss guru Sam Meranto, to name a few. All of these people have three things in common. They lead interesting lives, they're genuinely caring for people around them, and they're straight forward and down to earth. Ira Michael is just such a person. From the moment you enter his modern, unassuming salon, you feel at home.

Michael was born on the East Coast and literally fought his way off the mean streets of New York and Miami. He fought extensively as an amateur boxer, and moved up the ranks to prize fighting where he fought in the Golden Gloves boxing championship. Once turning pro he quickly made a name for himself by winning six straight fights, four by knockouts. His dreams turned quickly to nightmares however when a serious car accident ended his boxing career.

Michael didn't have time for self pity, instead he threw himself into a new career path and of all things that path was that of a stylist. For a young, outgoing guy this was a great move. He got to meet a lot of women, learned a new trade, and no one was trying to beat him up.

He soon saw however that this was serious business. He learned every aspect of the trade and opened various salons across the East Coast. At one time, he was one of only four male owned salons in the entire state of Maryland.

Thirteen years ago, Michael opened up a salon in Scottsdale near the Galleria. His business flourished and he's built up a strong and very loyal clientele. Now he's opted for a more intimate setting where he can give his clients the more personal one-on-one attention he likes to provide. As he told me, "Individual service is important to me. I hate to work somewhere where there's numerous work stations, constant chatter and the noise of a

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dozen conversations and hair dryers going at the same time. My clients deserve, and get better attention than that.”

Michael's salon is clean, and uncluttered with a combination of natural earth tones and sleek modern accents. He always has great classic music, jazz, and unique Cuban rhythms filling the air. Everything about this place says comfort. As Michael puts it, “People have to be made comfortable. I give all my clients a personal consultation before I do anything else. A lot of stylist make the mistake of not listening to their customers. I always get my clients input and permission before I do anything.”

Michael carries the *Aveda* hair products line. He told me, “It's a more natural product with very high quality, and a proven track record of great results.” Those products include shampoo, conditioners, fixiters, controllers, deep conditioning agents, as well as natural scented soy candles.

With over 40 years of experience, it's easy to see why he's built up such a loyal following. He completely understands the concept of being a personal stylist. As he says, “You es-

tablish a relationship with your clients. It's an exchange of ideas and more importantly an exchange of loyalties.”

That experience comes through in Michael's abilities. When it comes to hair, there's absolutely nothing he can't, and hasn't done. He's the consummate professional.

When asked about the so-called chain store salons he has a generous attitude. “Look, they serve a purpose. If someone wants a simple haircut and that fits their economic situation, that's fine. However, don't forget, you get what you pay for.”

Ira Michaels is a bit hard to find. It's tucked away in the myriad of shops on the northeast corner of Shea and Scottsdale roads. But it's well worth finding.

I found it an affordable, and completely enjoyable experience. You can treat yourself to that experience Monday through Saturday from 10:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. or by appointment.

— Pete Christensen

