



At the Tip of Her Profession

ByLynn O'dell | December 1, 1994

Marti (Robbins) Preuss is a big-time perfectionist. It's a good thing, too. The Houston nail technician is part of a team that does nails for Creative Nail Design Systems' photo shoots, a process that can take up to eight hours. Then there's the shoot itself, which can take several hours more.

"I really get into absolute perfection (on photo shoots). When it's magnified like that, every little thing will show up if it's not absolutely perfect," Preuss says.

Just photographing her nail makeover entry for submission to the North American Hairstylist Awards last fall took five hours "just to get the light right," she says. But perfectionism paid off--- Preuss won the competition, which was the first time nails were included.

She wasn't always at the top of her profession. A perky redhead, Preuss is brutally honest when she remembers the first set of nails she ever did. While working as a hairdresser in the mid-70s, she used Mona Nails' liquid and powder, followed the written directions, and tried to build a set of nail using forms.

"They looked like hammerhead sharks," she says with a laugh. "My poor client said, 'You're not going to charge me for this, are you?'"

Products changed, Preuss improved; now she's recognized as one of the nation's top nail artists and she shares her expertise with others as a Creative Nail Design Systems' educator.

Preuss, who manages Geometric Haircrafters in southwest Houston, does both hair and nails. Preuss does lifestyle assessments on her clients before she begins to work on their nails. If clients have an active lifestyle, such as lifting weights, playing soccer, or "having 12 children in diapers," they can't have a very long nail extension, she says. Lifestyle and the natural nail bed tell her what to do, she adds.

Preuss' own nails are average length because her lifestyle is definitely active and because she thinks an average length is a better look for her long fingers. She loves to go fly fishing; makes most of her own clothes; and does quilting, crafts, and woodworking. With her husband, she is busy wielding a hammer and another kind of nails to build their dream house.

Because Preuss talks with her hands, she avoids bright polish, preferring to keep her nails buffed to a high shine; “All that color flashing in front of my face makes me crazy,” she says.

If her native state cooperates, Preuss would like to open a nail school. Texas passed legislation last year that allows nail technicians to get an instructor’s license, but legislators stopped short of separating nails from beauty schools. A bill has been introduced to create separate nail schools, she says.

“If I can start a school, I can get students on the ground floor rather than waiting until they’re out of beauty school,” she says. Among the possible students is her 25-year-old son who just got out of the service. He’s a computer technician and likes doing precise work, she says.

“He comes to the salon once a week and gives a manicure to a friend. All the clients are bugging him to do their nails,” says Preuss, who obviously wouldn’t object to that career choice. After all, there’s a future in it.

Accessed at https://www.nailsmag.com/392430/at-the-tip-of-her-profession?fbclid=IwAR0R9I5WYAc3L429jqyJZPAtzJ8y7TUPuu8ulJag5-0IsL-esdG_CjnQ5u4