

Skin Games placement puts Coventry aesthetician on global stage

By Susan Shalhoub - April 6, 2018 3:07 am

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TOP AESTHETICIAN: Michelle Maynard, owner of 360 Face Mind Body in Coventry, was named a finalist in the holistic category of the International Skin Games and will move on to the main competition and awards ceremony in California on April 7. / PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

Licensed aesthetician Michelle Maynard, owner of 360 Face Mind Body in Coventry, at first pushed aside the suggestion that she enter the international skincare competition Skin Games.

It involved videotaping her work on a client over a course of eight weeks. Aestheticians from around the world compete to be finalists, and then go on to the main competition and awards ceremony in California on April 7.

But Dasha Saian, CEO of Saian Natural Clinical – a plant-based skin-care line Maynard carries, was encouraging. She told Maynard she should get out of her comfort zone. Her company offered to sponsor Maynard in the contest, providing her with products, the pure, minimal-ingredient natural ones Maynard used on clients and with which she was already familiar.

As it worked out, there was a holistic category in the competition. It suited 360 Face Mind Body well.

The wellness spa offers organic products and treatments for clients with skin issues such as acne, signs of aging, or who just want a relaxing facial treatment. In the competition video submission, she was allowed to use technological tools of the trade, just as she does at her spa, such as an ultrasonic skin spatula for cell metabolism, infrared technologies for acne and micro-phototherapy LHE (light, heat and energy) for anti-aging treatments.

With years as an aesthetician, Maynard had mastered these devices. But the video portion of this contest submission was different.

She had to teach herself how to use a video camera; it wasn't easy. With materials needing to be in before Jan. 1, Maynard submitted her video Dec. 27.

"I felt like I'd already won when I hit 'send,'" said Maynard. "I thought, 'I completed this task, I got it done!'"

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Years ago – before she began helping people ensure great skin health – Maynard was insuring them in a small brokerage firm, selling life and health insurance policies at The Good Neighbor Alliance Corp. in Coventry, which her mother founded.

Maynard would get professional facials to help with adult acne. She found her sensitive skin would react adversely to the product ingredients.

At age 34, she took a leave of absence from the insurance firm and enrolled in aesthetics training. She was in search of a natural solution for her own skin issues but found her new career.

Maynard took the leap, entering the skin care world in 2004. She worked in other spas but always knew she wanted a place all her own, on her terms, with practices she thought clients would appreciate.

"I wanted to do my own thing. ... When you work for spas, you have to do a lot in a little time, but some clients need more time," she said. "I learned a lot about product ingredients."

She opened 360 Face Mind Body in 2012, choosing natural product lines.

One product company she was interested in couldn't divulge its inactive ingredients, said Maynard. They were passed over for totally pure skin care lines, such as Farmaesthetics Skincare Boutique in Newport and others, where formula ingredients were an open book.

It's an area where Maynard doesn't compromise.

"She's done her own research," said Maynard's longtime client Linda Ohsberg of North Kingstown, "and impresses me greatly. She doesn't just do lip service. I think she was right-on with all her choices. She has helped me find visible results." If there is a product that might work, Maynard tries it in a cautious way, said Ohsberg, and "almost always follows up with a phone call" to make sure all is well.

Maynard's commitment to all-natural, clean products and to her clients is solid. And that is true also for clients undergoing treatment for cancer who have special skin needs, on which Maynard has also educated herself. Some kinds of chemotherapy may pull out the signs of prior sun discoloration, for example.

"It makes the skin mantle very fragile," said Maynard, now certified in clinical oncology aesthetics. Radiation can cause burns. Some people may have rashes, or dryness, or be more sensitive to smells, she said. The oncology skin care services help 360 Face Mind Body and Maynard serve more-specialized clients at a time where the personal touch is most important.

"We don't want to do more harm; massage can be great for these people. It's good to be able to offer it," she said.

Maynard, a wife and a parent, has not found every day as a small-business owner to be easy, but a "constant roller-coaster ride." She has considered closing up shop as she's juggled home and work. She wonders about her business efforts at the same time she invests in industry learning and technological devices.

One challenge she faces is the societal notion that skin care is a luxury service, not something people commonly do for overall wellness, as it is in some other countries. But she thinks that mindset is beginning to shift. "Because when you walk in a room, people see your face first," said Maynard.

For now, she focuses on the Skin Games event and the support of her loyal clientele.

"I made it this far," she said.