

BUSINESS

WEEK OF MARCH 6-12, 2008

A GUIDE TO THE GREATER FORT MYERS BUSINESS INDUSTRY



The craft and art of hairstyling

Studio RK teaches its stylists more than technique

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Inside the bright, busy halls of Studio RK, a full-service styling salon in south Fort Myers, co-owner Karen Steuber applied foil to a client's hair, a technique used to add highlights. As Steuber applied the foil, she said, "I'm going to make her look 20 years younger."

"The funny thing is," the client said, "I've known Karen that long."

Both Steuber and co-owner Renee Walker have owned Studio RK for more than seven years; they've worked in Fort Myers as stylists for over 13 and have cut hair since high

school. Since opening their doors, Studio RK, with a staff of 24 full-time stylists, has trimmed thousands of heads of hair, including celebrities such as Joan Rivers; and become the salon of choice for the entire Fox 4 news team. And in spite of a weak economy, Steuber and Walker added onto the already spacious salon by leasing a 1,700-square-foot adjacent storefront last December.

The 10 new styling stations it accommodates (bringing the total to 29, plus three nail stations) are needed to serve the salon's growing clientele, they said. About 1,650 people come to get their hair beautified or finger nails coiffed every month, up by about 200 from this time last year.

"Our growth is a direct result of our successful Associates Program," Walker said. "We provide extensive training and personal mentoring to all of our stylists, which results in more repeat customers and many word-of-mouth referrals."

Every year through their Associates Program, Walker and Steuber bring aboard beginners, fresh from beauty school or still in it. What they've learned over the years is passed on directly to their young associates, they said.

"We know that if we wanna take them to certain heights, whether it's personal or business, we have to have been there ourselves," Steuber said.

"We teach them the Studio RK way, which is very practiced and disciplined," Walker said. "But we're also a very trusting and compassionate company. We're not typically a company that says, 'leave all your problems at the door.'"

There are seven new associates this year, such as 22-year-old Erin Casey, who is still enrolled at Sunstate Beauty School in Fort Myers. What's she learning at Studio RK?

"A bunch of everything," Casey said.

SEE STUDIO RK, B3 ►



FLORIDA WEEKLY PHOTO

Stylist Maria Rosen at Studio RK's newly expanded salon.

WEEK at-a-glance



SWFAS ground breaking
And other networking social events in Greater Fort Myers. **B10&11** ►



Good moves
Meet Bill Valenti, president, CEO and founder of Florida Gulf Bank. **B2** ►



Women & Money
Financial advisor, and TV personality Suze Orman says save that government rebate. **B9** ►

Spring breakers still finding travel deals amid high costs

Fort Myers fourth on list of top spots for air travelers

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

While many travel suppliers are starting to predict a softer summer season than in years past, the traditional Spring Break shines on. Although higher prices dominate most markets, savvy travelers can still find bargains on the slopes and at the beach. With impending changes in the airline industry such as flight caps and further reductions in domestic capacity, the competition to find the best deals and lowest fares will remain tough, but not impossible.

Average airfare costs have risen by

more than 8 percent over last year, according to Travelocity. "Many people are finding it hard to find a fare that was comparable with what they paid last year at this time," said Amy Ziff, Travelocity's editor at large. "However, I dug into the data to find where savvy travelers could find some good deals."

And Fort Myers continues to be a hot Spring Break destination. It ranks fourth according to

Top booked air destinations

>>Domestic Flights:

1. Las Vegas
2. Orlando Area
3. South Florida
4. Fort Myers
5. Phoenix Area
6. Tampa/St. Petersburg
7. Denver Area
8. Los Angeles Area
9. New York City
10. San Juan, PR

SOURCE: TRAVELOCITY

>>International Flights:

1. Cancun
2. Puerto Vallarta
3. San Jose Cabo
4. Bahamas
5. Aruba
6. Jamaica
7. London, UK
8. Dominican Republic
9. San Jose
10. Netherlands Antilles (Bonaire & Curacao)

data collected by Travelocity, just behind Las Vegas, South Florida and Orlando

Ziff encourages travelers to book early.

"The average advance booking window has increased to 81 days this year from 76 days in advance last year. That means a lot of savvy travelers booked way further ahead than usual to lock in deals and guarantee their seats," according to Ziff. However, she predicts that this will be the start of some better deals and even some last second deals

SEE TRAVELERS, B3 ►