

Shop aids search for perfect tan

By JIM WINDELL

Everyone loves a terrific tan, especially with limbs exposed in spring and summer clothing. But not everyone can vacation often enough in Florida or the Bahamas to keep that healthy, golden-tanned appearance.

What's the next best thing? The answer for many is Soleil, one of the many tanning parlors that have sprung up around the United States in the last several years. So far, Michigan has only a small number of these sun tan shops, but their numbers are gradually increasing.

In Birmingham, Debbie Klauka opened Soleil, a plush sun tan parlor, in March. With six booths on the second floor of the Merrillwood Building at 251 Merrill, Soleil advertises the newest and best tanning equipment in the Detroit area.

Twenty-two-year-old proprietress Klauka has a definite body-beautiful goal in mind for her customers. "I want to make someone over and help them feel good about themselves," she said, adding that she will soon install a hair salon, a makeup clinic and masseuses to her establishment.

TRIM AND CHIC with a honey tan barely hiding her freckles, Ms. Klauka is a redhead who proves that her sun-tanning techniques can turn a fair-skinned person into a dark-complexioned beauty.

"If you are exposed to sunlamps too fast, you will burn the skin not tan," she cautioned in her salon recently while explaining her business.

She is well aware of some of the controversy and skepticism surrounding sun-tanning parlors. "I know some dermatologists are against this, but they too use sunlamps to clear up skin problems. I think I know as much about sunlamps as they do. What they are doing is drying up the skin, but often they dry the skin too much and put scars on people."

Her brother was the one who sparked her interest in skin problems and the potential harm of sunlamps several years ago. "I saw my 16-year-old brother go to skin specialists who dried out his skin with lamps. They dried it out so much he now has to have his face repaired surgically."

Ms. Klauka doesn't believe most people will have dried out skin if they follow her directions, which includes regular use of moisturizers.

"People don't have to get a wrinkled, leathery look if they take precautions.

They should use baby oils and soak in the bathtub for long periods."

She admits there are risks, but adds, "Overexposure of any kind is bad, whether it is to the sun, food or what have you."

BETWEEN CUSTOMERS, Ms. Klauka said that the tanning salon business is an up and coming business. "We've done very little advertising since we opened, but we have 52 customers."

Customers join Soleil by taking out a membership which entitles them to a certain number of visits. Ten 10 visits cost \$30, while 20 visits cost \$50. A customer can use these visits anytime within a year, but Ms. Klauka suggests regular tanning treatments several times a week to maximize the tanning procedure.

No appointment is needed and a customer can walk in at any time from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, to use a booth under carefully supervised conditions.

"I tell people," Ms. Klauka stated in a strong, businesslike way, "that the sunlamp can hurt them if they don't do exactly as I say. I don't try to scare people, but I don't want them to be hurt either."

New customers are required to fill out a questionnaire which seeks out potential health hazards. The questions asked include those related to pregnancy and medications prescribed. Ms. Klauka frequently refuses to take an individual because of their answers.

"Pregnant women should not use our service," she said, "and any person using tetracycline also shouldn't. People taking treatment from a dermatologist often are taking tetracycline and the lamps will burn them every time."

ONCE PAST THE INITIAL screening, the customer is given dark glasses to shield the eyes and allowed to use a three-foot by three-foot retractorized booth. Stripped to the desired degree of undress, they are exposed on the first visit to the ultraviolet light from four banks of vertical fluorescent tubes for up to 90 seconds. The exposure to the tanning lamps is gradually increased over a period of weeks to between 13 and 15 minutes.

Debra Klauka grew up in Warren, but possessing an adventurous spirit, she left for Ann Arbor at a young age. She enjoyed the college town, but the wanderlust struck again, she said, and she was off to Fort Lauderdale and later to Houston.



Ah, spring,
ah, youth

It was a warm sunny day in Farmington City Park when Theresa Marok and Bill Petty decided to enjoy a few leisurely afternoon hours in each other's company. And what could be nicer than a friendly cuddle in the park in such nice weather? (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

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