

Health Profile

By Deb Breslow, photo by Warren Westura



LOVE IS IN THE HAIR

They've catered to stars and been featured in *Vogue*. Now it's our turn to enjoy this duo's hair artistry.

Pamper: to treat with excessive care and indulgence. Such is the philosophy of Zoku: a slice of Soho in Summit. Clients experience personal service in a tranquil environment where hair artists live up to their reputation to create and transform. Zoku, meaning partnership in Japanese, is the inspiration of owners Zoe Cortez-Staricco and Christine Ku.

Cortez-Staricco, a colorist who has catered to some of Hollywood's hottest names, and Ku, whose styling appears in magazines including *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, came to this area after years of success with Laurent D. of *Prive* in NYC. And they've brought with them the distinctive styles their Manhattan clients have come to expect.

"We wanted more time with family," Ku said of their move from the city, where their families had to accept their late hours. "When the lofty storefront space in Summit became available, it was meant to be. Now we have our work—and time with our families."

Combining skills and talents featured on the runways, Cortez-Staricco and Ku opened Zoku in August.

With four stylists and three colorists, Cortez-Staricco says that specializing allows them to better serve their clients. "If you don't specialize, you are a master of none." The exclusive line of Kerastase and Shu Uemura products sets them apart; only select salons are approved to carry them.

"People want five-star service," notes Ku. "New Jersey clients have traveled to the city for our experience—now we're local." In fact, today New York clients are the ones who travel, taking the train to the salon, located across from the station.

Cortez-Staricco had been working at Brad Johns' salon when she was scouted by Laurent D. to open *Prive*. As color director, Cortez-Staricco's clients included celebrities including Gina Gershon, Tea Leoni and Natalie Merchant. Frequently quoted in *People* and *MORE* magazines, Cortez-Staricco's television spots feature her expertise in color.

Ku's work in Hong Kong included styling gigs with record companies, music videos, and fashion shows. Salon customers can browse through her extensive portfolio of magazine work.

"Our local clients have busy lives and families," Ku observes. "To ensure their salon time is relaxing and pleasurable, we offer champagne, wine, and hot and cold teas."

"Even our *sinks* are comfortable," noted CoCo, Zoku's assistant colorist. "Clients rest their heads on a cozy neck rest and prop their feet on footrests. They leave feeling like a million bucks."

To welcome their new community, Zoku is offering a special on February 12 called "Love is in the Hair." Just \$35 reserves a spot for a complimentary hair treatment, deep conditioning, scalp massage and blow-dry—along with wine and cheese. The \$35 is redeemable toward the purchase of products containing ingredients that will save the integrity of the hair.

In addition to color and styling, Zoku offers Great Lengths hair extensions, Kerastase deep conditioning treatments, wigs, and bridal consultations. ▲

Zoku Salon

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Hours: Tues, Wed, Fri 10am-7pm, Thurs 10am-9pm, Sat: 10am-5pm.