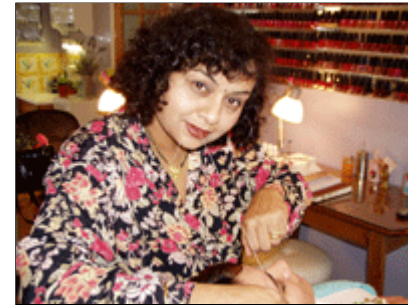


Beauty secrets from India flower in Goleta

By Jeff Jones , Voice Staff Reporter

On the warmer winds of spring, soothing scents of familiar flowers are rising from the basin of the Goleta Valley. And the fragrant oils and treatments at Spa Concepts have been generating a heat all their own since Dee Oza took over at the beginning of the month.

By the middle of April, the master aesthetician and specialist of techniques practiced in her native Bombay, India the past 5,000 years, hopes to be even bigger and better in the Hollister Professional Building, kitty-corner from Goleta Valley Cottage hospital.



"The massages are uplifting," said Oza, taking a moment to show which wall was being knocked out to accommodate more services at the rapidly growing addition to the local business community.

"The whole idea of Spa Concepts is, by coming in you go home relaxed and feeling better. My customers always seem to come back, and follow me wherever I have gone."

It was Oza who first followed her dreams across oceans and lands far removed from the mysteries of ancient India. After being in the "beauty business" for nearly three decades, she believes many customers enjoy receiving treatments from someone with deep ties to the roots of origin.

Shiro-dhara, for instance, is the technique of literally dripping a steady stream of warm, herbalized oil on the center of the forehead and letting it go through the scalp, down the neck and on to the shoulders. At the same time, a continuous massage is applied.

"Shiro-dhara is not even that common in the United States," Oza said. "People have heard about it, but there aren't that many salons offering it from a specialist from India."

Let alone on the South Coast. Known for its capacity to ease the nervous system after only a half-hour treatment, Shiro-dhara is one of several services resulting in a calming effect.

Facials and body massages with essential oils also make for a soothing and aromatic combination, when under the spell of Oza or other technicians applying their magic, while a Sitar plays in the background.

"Rose and sandalwood essential oils are mainly from India," Oza said. "They're imported and very expensive compared to peppermint extract, which is more common here."

More recently, Oza worked at Robert's Shear Magic in the Camino Real Marketplace, where she created skin care services. But since the owner there was retiring, the employees needed to venture out on their own.

Eyebrows by Threading, which Oza says has helped her create a fine following to her own business, is perhaps one specialty most often directly linked to her name.

"I'm known for this," she said without hesitation. "I'm called the Queen of Threading. So many clients are very happy with this because the hair is softer and slower growing."

Oza definitely must possess good eyesight and a good deal of patience, although she can deftly move the process in 10 minutes or so.

"Threading picks up the tiniest hairs growing from the skin's surface," she said. "It defines eyebrows very sharply -- with crisp edges and shapes. I use a small spool of white thread twisted in my fingers."

Oza said quick movements remove the unwanted hair much more effectively than tweezers or waxing, and threading doesn't compromise the skin's elasticity.

Besides spa manicures and pedicures, permanent make-up, paraffin wax treatments and the aforementioned specialties, the Spa's Henna painting can also be traced to "olden days" in India, Oza said.

Henna leaves, picked from bushes and ground into fine powder, form a sort of paste for special designs carefully applied to the skin as personal decoration for special occasions like baby showers or weddings.

"We apply Henna for good luck," Oza said. "This is becoming more popular in the U.S., especially after Madonna did it."

But you don't have to know the Queen of Pop, or the Queen of Threading, to make an appointment at Spa Concepts. Simply phone 403-8906 Monday-Saturday.

Courtesy photo

Caption: Dee Oza features many treatments at Goleta-based Spa Concepts that she honed to perfection several continents away.

[Go back](#)

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