

off the lip

Waxing philosophical

SARA SCHLIEFF-ROSS, 35

Skin care expert

Her friends call her the muff master, but Sara Schlieff-Ross is more than just a Brazilian and brow waxing extraordinaire. The owner of Archbeauty on Memorial Boulevard West was named 2012 Top Entrepreneur by DAYS SPA magazine last January. With almost two decades of experience in the beauty industry, the gregarious esthetician understands that running a successful skin care business isn't just about providing quality, pharmaceutical-grade products and an array of beautifying services (waxing, facials, and make-up consultations). It's about making every customer feel comfortably at home, even when she's getting yard work done where the sun doesn't shine. But don't worry, ladies. What happens at Archbeauty stays at Archbeauty. **BY BRE POWER EATON**

Congratulations on winning top entrepreneur from DAYS SPA magazine! Why do you think you won?

Well, thank you! Basically they give the award to someone who has made a big accomplishment in a tough situation, and I've grown the business in a tough economic situation.

What kind of services do you provide at Archbeauty?

We do skin care analysis, where you can come in and bring in your skin care routine and we can tell you how to spiff it up. We're not going to tell you just to buy our products. We can tell you how to work with what you have. That's one of our most common practices. We also do brow and body wax for men and women, facials, makeup, bridal parties, private parties.

We do anti-aging, vitamin C, and collagen facials. We also have a botinol facial by GM Collin, which is the holistic form of Botox with no injection. The results you get in six treatments equals one session of Botox, but without the botulism.

What are the most popular waxing services you provide?

Brazilians and brows.

Can everyone have perfectly arched brows?

No. If you are more of a challenge for an arch, I think that tweezing is in your future. I'm an artist. I love to tweeze. Most people don't have the time to sit in a chair and get tweezed, but the detail is better when you tweeze.

What are common brow blunders?

A lot of people want to look like JLo. They even bring in pictures, but not everybody can look like JLo.

What about over-tweezing?

Put the tweezers down and dedicate six months to coming to see me. We'll change your arch. Hair does grow back. Saying to me that your hair doesn't grow back tells me that you're tweezing.

Do you enjoy causing people pain?

Depends who it is! (*Laughs.*)

For those who've never been waxed, how

painful is it?

Honestly it depends on the person; it depends if you've really prepared for it.

How so?

Take an ibuprofen before. It does help with the pain. Drinking before causes bleeding. Don't be tempted!

Is waxing worth the pain?

Definitely, definitely! It's so worth it. You'll never go back to shaving. I've never gone back.

What do you get waxed?

I do Brazilian, I get my brows, my upper lip, my arms, back of my legs, and that's it. (*She winks, then lets out one of her characteristic guffaws, the contagious laugh that keeps customers coming back.*) Ask my husband!

What exactly is a Brazilian?

A Brazilian is from Brazil. It is a wax that is supposed to remove all the hair that would be exposed when wearing a Brazilian bikini, and they wear a thong. And because we live in America, we go big or go home. So we've taken the Brazilian and gone crazy with it.

All hair is removed?

Yes. But some people leave a landing strip.

So why is it worth it? Why should someone come to you?

I can get into places that you can't get into. That's why I get the big bucks.

Where do you mean?

For all the girls out there I'm going to plead the fifth.

Do you wax more women than men?

Women have always led and men are finally following us in this department.

What do men get waxed?

We live in an area where a lot of people surf. Men like to wax their inner thighs and the back of their legs so the wetsuits don't pull the hair — it's easier to get them on and off. And then we do a lot of back and chest waxes. Loving a hairy man is not in style anymore. (*She pauses.*) Can I be blunt?

(*Bre nods.*)



She's pulling for you. Your beauty secrets are safe with Sara Schlieff-Ross, master bikini waxer.

PHOTO BY JACQUELINE MARQUE

Men don't like bushes, and women don't like hairy backs. There's a compromise. You wax yours and I'll wax mine.

Men don't like bushes, and women don't like hairy backs. There's a compromise. You wax yours and I'll wax mine.

What about the nether regions for men?

We've had requests for men Brazilians, but we don't do them here. I do know someone on the island who does, but it's not me!

When you're doing a bikini wax or Brazilian, you're up close and personal with your customers. Isn't this uncomfortable?

Not at all. I really don't think about it. I've been doing it for so long, it's like checking my email. Honestly! I'm talking to the person. It's not like I'm up in their stuff.

So you're comfortable. But what about your customers. Are they bashful?

I think I scare them more than they are scared to get a Brazilian! (*Laughs.*) Because I try to make people comfortable, I talk a lot, and I just don't think they expect that.

What are all the names women have for their lady parts?

There are lots of names. I have clients who

call it my cachewy, pooty, va-jay, my gina. Everyone has a name for her coochie.

Do people know what they're getting into when they're coming in for their first Brazilian waxing appointment?

They think they know, but they have no idea. They don't know how detailed it is. But everybody is curious about Brazilians. Everyone wants to try it once to find out if it is all the hype.

What's the usual verdict?

They always come back for more.

Have you ever had anyone quit after the first pull?

I always talk you off the ledge. I'm there to hold your hand. And pull your hair! So no.

Why were you interested in this field?

I had bad acne and my esthetician was the only person who could clear up my skin. So I understand firsthand the frustration of skin problems — acne and anti-aging — because I dealt with things not working. Given the skin I have today, I know how it feels to have an esthetician change my life. And I also know, when I see results on my clients, the reward of it. I see how I'm changing their lives.

What do you think draws people to Archbeauty?

We're a safe haven for girls to open up to us about anything in their life and know that whatever they tell us never leaves this house. It's one of my policies. I hold true to that.