

# The RainMakers

*Innovative Entrepreneurs Who Support The Beacon*

## The Salon So Nice They Named it **Twice**

*The Salon So Nice They Named it Twice* (Source: beaconcast.com, published June 9, 2008)

By Kate Copsey / STAFF

Carmen Ubeda, owner of Carmen Carmen Hair Studio in Roswell, started cutting hair when she was barely a teenager and has continued in that line of work ever since. She has not, however, always had the luxury of her own salon.

At the tender age of three years old, her father died and Ubeda, who is the youngest of seven children, was placed in an orphanage in Ecuador. She was kept apart from her siblings for several years until finally, at 12 years old, she moved in with her brother. After helping earn money for her family with odd jobs for a couple of years, she was taken into a hair salon at age 14 to learn the trade that she has practiced ever since.

Ubeda has had a love affair with hair for as long as she can remember. She recalls a day in those early years when her mother sent her to the shop to buy tomatoes. Along the way she passed a lady who had a fancy hairstyle. Fascinated, Ubeda followed the lady and mentally undid, and remade the hairstyle. She was so intent on figuring out how to replicate that style, that when she finally got it, she had wandered well away from the errand. She was so enamored with the hair that she went home without buying the tomatoes and found her mother in a mild state of panic.

But hair has not always been at the center of Ubeda's world.

Along with some friends from Chile, the adventurous Ubeda joined the circus as a teenager. First she sold hot dogs, and then she became a performer. They asked her if she could do the tight rope, and with a rather scared nod, she found herself hoisted onto the shoulders of a rope walker and given a long pole for stability. Together the duo set off along the rope.



**Carmen Ubeda of Carmen Carmen Hair Studio in Roswell gives Roswell mayor Jere Wood a trim and a laugh**

But even while she was managing the adventurous life of a performer, the innate beautician in her was being fed. While she was seconded to be a clown and even the magician's assistant when needed, she also sewed costumes and, of course, did hair.

But the instability of circus life led Ubeda out of the big top and to the United States, where she settled in New York City and attempted to become board certified as a hairdresser and teacher. With no effort at all she aced the practical portion of the certification test, but the written test was a problem.

"I couldn't understand a word," she said.

With determination she set out to learn basic English. Even though she was eligible to take the hairdresser test in Spanish, she wanted to pass the English version. And she did.

She got her first job stateside with a Helena Rubenstein salon in New York, but her insatiable interest in hair design led Ubeda to further hone her skills until, in 1986, she bought her own salon.

The hassle of employees and paperwork finally led Ubeda to close the New York salon and move to Georgia with a friend who was going to college here. Her first impressions of the state were positive.

"It was so clean and so inexpensive," she said.

And timing worked for her too. "It felt like the right thing to do," she said.

With no desire to open her own place, Ubeda settled into work in a salon. Finally though, a friend persuaded her to buy her own place again, and in February she contacted a realtor to find a suitable building.

Part of the impetus for owning her own building was for financial security in the future. Renting a chair at a salon gave no benefits in the long term, whereas a building and business would.

"In 10 years I will have something to sell," she realized. "At that moment we made the decision."

The trip from finding the right building in February to opening in May was a bumpy one. The red tape of opening a business provided hurdles that she and her supporters had to overcome, but Carmen Carmen Salon finally prevailed and the business on Crossville Road opened with a crowd of over 200 friends and well wishers.

Carmen Ubeda now has a selection of spa and traditional salon options for her customers, including hot, freshly baked goodies each morning.

You can visit Carmen Carmen Hair Studio at 1480 Woodstock Road in Roswell or call 770-645-5940.