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Luxury Beauty Interview With  
Michael Angelo, Owner and Founder of The Michael Angelo Hair Studio  
and Michael Angelo Masterpiece Haircare

**1) What have been some of the biggest challenges of maintaining high standards of social and environmental responsibility?**

The biggest challenge we find is convincing clients that recycling and being green is popular. We have noticed people still carry plastic water bottles that are not refillable. We try to convince them that although walking around with a smart water or Fiji water bottle can appear to be vogue, drinking a refillable water bottle can be just as fashionable. Another challenge within the salon industry is trying to find companies that are willing to work with you on reducing, reusing and recycling. For example, some companies are working with salons to help recycle hair clippings to create "Hair Mats" used in the cleanup of oil spills. Aluminum which uses large quantities of energy to create is 100% recyclable using 95% less energy to recycle than that made from scratch. Salons use a considerable amount of aluminum foils for hair coloring which could easily be recycled, however we have found that most recycling companies require the foil to be free of product which will actually cause you to waste water by washing the foils before recycling them. In essence it's taking away from the purpose of saving energy and water.

**2) What is the most hopeful sign you've seen recently in the green economy?**

The most hopeful sign we have seen recently in the green economy is the use of reusable carry bags instead of grocery bags made of plastic. More companies are giving them away for free or charge a minimal amount of money for you to purchase them. As far as salons go, these reusable bags can be used as a selling tool where as they are given to clients for purchasing salon products. These bags could be imprinted with your salon name giving you added advertising. Within the beauty manufacturing industry, more manufacturers are starting to use bottles containing higher percentages of post consumers recycled plastics.

**3) What green product could you not live without?**

The best and greenest item for any salon is microfiber cloths. These cloths not only replace paper towels that clutter landfills, but are meant to be used with only water saving the environment from harsh chemicals. Microfiber cloths have a waffle - type texture that traps in the dirt and dust. They are softer than cotton which makes them great for polishing surfaces. Also, the fibers are 1/100th the size of a human hair, so they can collect bacteria from any surface. They can be used over and over again making them good for the environment and economically sustainable.

**4) What impact do you think your hair care will have on the beauty industry?**

We have developed a look called "Twilights". Twilights are a unique, one-of-a-kind haircolor service that allows the hair to grow out in a natural fashion. This technique allows more time to elapse between color services. As the client's hair grows, Twilights remain natural looking without leaving the hair with harsh regrowth. This saves the clients time and money.

**5) People used to think about beauty and personal care as recession-proof or recession-resistant. It's not clear it's turning out that way. How are you dealing with that?**

We have noticed that clients seem to be stretching their time between services or foregoing certain services to maintain a low price. To reward our loyal clients we have had to become more creative by bundling services giving them a customized package which is 20% to 20% off our a la carte prices. In doing so, the client feels added value for our services. The biggest challenge is exceeding the client's actual expectations and giving them a higher perceived value.

**6) What hair care and color products do you prefer to use? We have developed our own product line called Michael Angelo Masterpiece Haircare.**

Our philosophy is to create products with multiple uses. One of our top selling products that is incredibly user friendly and eco-friendly is our Inner Fuel. This product is actually five products in one. It is a detangler, leave in conditioner, heat protectant, UV protectant and a hair strengthener which leaves the hair smooth and shiny, therefore saving our client's money and helping reduce our carbon footprint on the environment. Instead of manufacturing and packaging five separate products we can package just one that effectively achieves the results our clients are looking for. When it comes to professional haircolor, my choice is Redken because it produces the most natural effects.

**7) Are there key markets that you're focused on as you look to expand the brand, or do you plan to keep your focus primarily on existing?**

Currently, our key market is the mature professional to the more affluent socialites in our area. As we expand our brand we are focusing on the young college graduate/business professional just entering the workforce. We feel by matching this group with our newer stylists this group can afford their pricing structure while maintaining a professional look. As these young professionals grow in the business world they will help our business and client base expand. We believe in continuous advance training for our staff and maintaining the highest standards in customer service which will keep these young professional coming back.

**8) When you look to 2010 in leading the brand, what are the key priorities you're most focused on that will continue the vision and the success?**

As we look towards 2010, we look towards maintaining our professional edge and our uncompromising customer service. We are also expanding our studio, however with this expansion our focus will remain personalizing and customizing each client's one-on-one service. In order to stay successful we can never lose sight of our client appreciation. To accomplish this we will continue to focus on customized haircolor not just your everyday cookie cutter haircoloring found in many salons. To keep the client coming back you must develop your own professional edge by providing the client with an experience that can't be found anywhere else.

**9) What changes do you expect to make to the product line?**

We are looking towards changing our Michael Angelo Masterpiece product line's packaging by creating it using 100 % post consumer materials. This way we are helping the environment and reducing our own carbon foot print on the earth. We will continue to work on product formulas that combine ingredients that work in unison reducing the number of product a consumer will need to purchase to achieve multiple results. This will reduce consumer waste and help our environment.

Editorial Notes: Michael Angelo Rizzi is respected as a nationally celebrated hair designer and he is a Redken Certified Haircolorist. Michael has regularly appeared on stage the United States as a top Redken educator and platform artist. Michael Angelo has been published in Tampa Tribune, Tampa Bay Illustrated, Elle Décor Magazine and many other publications. By exclusive invitation, he recently spent two days in Washington DC working on creative haircuts, haircolor and hair designs for a new Passion International Stylebook that will be released and distributed worldwide in 2010. While there, he styled hair for a number of NBA Washington Wizard's Cheerleaders.

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