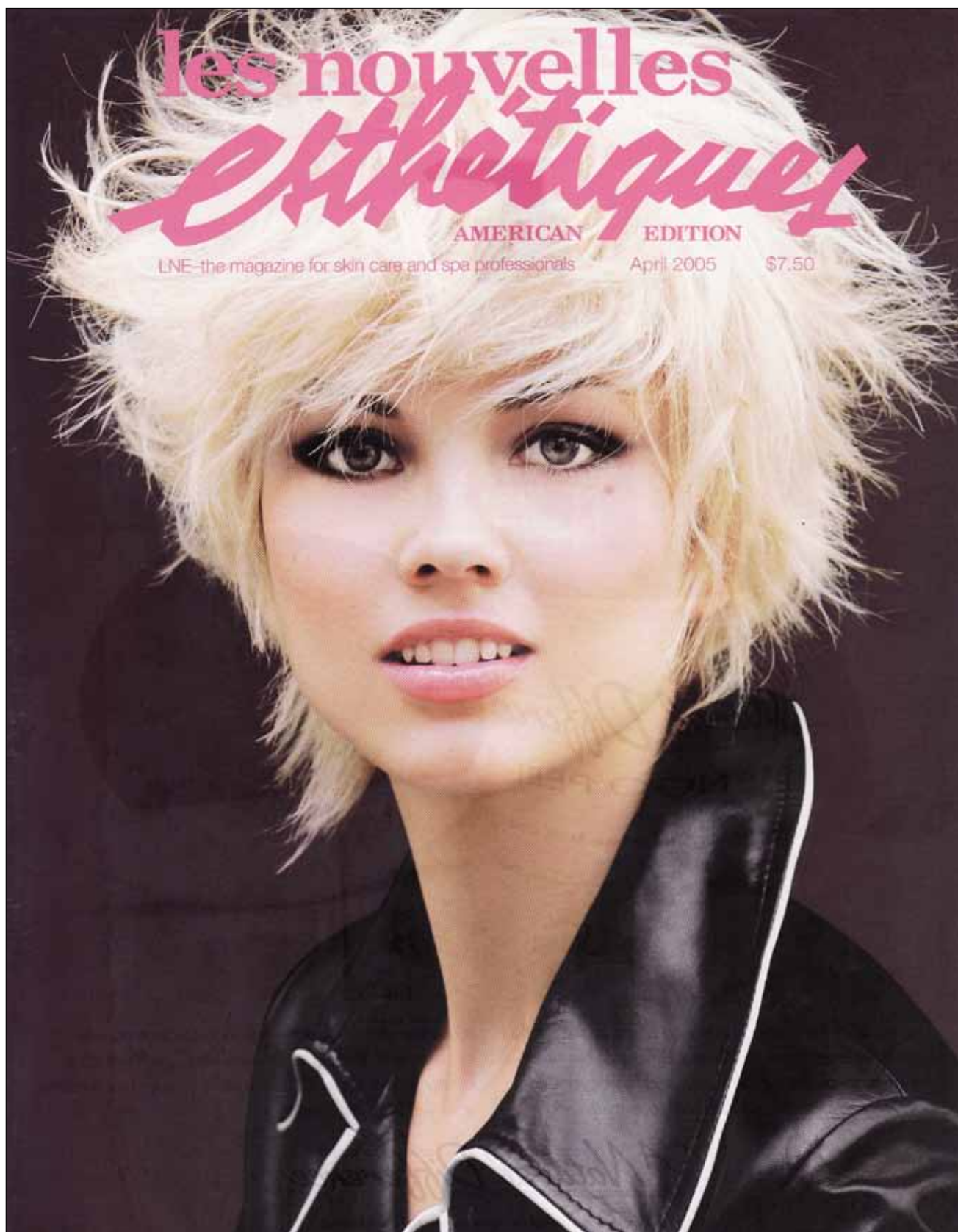


Feature Stories by Alina Zhukovskaya



spa of the month | Salon Nordine & Day Spa, Reston, VA



NORDINE ELABASSI lives the American dream. He came to the United States from Morocco in 1982 and started out as a shampoo assistant in a salon. He didn't even speak English ... but with determination, he learned the language and the business, too. In 1997, he opened Salon Nordine & Day Spa in Virginia. And later, fulfilling his American dream even further, he opened a second location. And then a third ...

Staff

Elabassi employs a growing staff of more than 35 salon and spa professionals. He credits his day spa business' success to "surrounding myself with the best people in the salon and spa industry while then taking care of

those people." Elabassi feels that with the best salon professionals in the industry, his salons and day spas truly offer superior services that exceed clients' expectations.

Three is a charm

Following the Fairfax and Gainesville locations, Elabassi opened his third salon and day spa in Reston, VA. The mission of this location is to combine modern technology with ancient beauty philosophies.

"It has been a dream to be in Reston," comments Elabassi. "It is one of the best, upscale markets in the Northern Virginia and Maryland outside-of-Washington, D.C., area. My goal was to own one of the best

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spa of the month | Salon Nordine & Day Spa



spas in the country. I wanted to make it like a destination spa, but in town."

Elabassi personally decorated this spa, taking multiple trips to Morocco to select furnishings, fabrics and other decorative accents. Everything, from the hairstyling stations to the columns accenting the front desk, has been exquisitely picked to reflect the luxurious atmosphere of Morocco.

As clients enter this new spa establishment, they are embraced with soft, soothing sounds, calming light, spacious rooms and intriguing Moroccan accents. The top floor houses a salon area, featuring state-of-the-art hair color equipment, shampoo chairs with built-in back massagers and an array of the best hairstyling products.

Elegance in spa tranquility

Besides housing all of the hairstyling and hair color stations, the top floor also features the famous Private Spa Suite.

"This location allowed me to do something first-class and what can be more luxurious than having your own spa area?" says Elabassi.

This one-of-a-kind private suite features a fireplace, a steam room with a shower, a Jacuzzi, two massage tables, a small refrigerator for refreshments and two top-of-the-line pedicure chairs with built-in massagers. Here, in private, clients can receive any massage, body treatment, facial, manicure and

pedicure services they desire. They can rent the suite for a half or full day, while getting treatments as needed and while also being available to enjoy their own privacy without the spa staff.

The lower level of this Reston establishment is where most of the spa services and treatment rooms are located. Embracing the tranquil music, clients follow an elegant staircase down to a separate spa reception area and room. On this floor, clients will find separate manicure stations, a pedicure room that features chairs with built-in back massagers, spa treatment rooms and the special Marrakech lounge.

The light, airy cream and beige earth tones in the spa area have a calming effect. Aromatherapy candles enhance the soothing atmosphere. Bouquets of fresh flowers are placed throughout the spa area to add soft accents as well as life and energy. The spa features an array of beautifully decorated facial, massage and wet treatment rooms. The concept was to create a luxurious spa environment that is extremely discreet, yet not dark and closed-in so that each client has as much room as possible. All of the treatment rooms are oversized for the comfort of its staff and clients. The spacious dressing rooms are complete with lockers, mirrors, chairs and plenty of light.

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The Mediterranean theme is carried out from the very detailed Persian rugs to the Moroccan cushions in the lounge. Everything, from the plush carpeting to soft, comfortable couches, adds to the relaxing and rejuvenating experience everyone looks for in a spa. In addition, guests can enjoy a wide range of complimentary Moroccan-style refreshments such as wines, coffees, teas, lemon or cucumber water as well as exotic fruit and nut mixes.

The day spa recently launched "spa retreats" for corporations, clubs and organizations to escape at this Salon Nordine & Day Spa. The spa also provides catered food for all groups.



A boutique was born

For those who can't resist the pages of *InStyle*, *People* and *Lucky* magazines, Salon Nordine & Day Spa offers the convenience of its Blue Velvet Boutique, where the spa offers personalized shopping services, a twist on classic wardrobe designs and unique fashion accessories. Jill Lawson, the owner of this special in-spa boutique, personally selects designers that offer contemporary gifts, jewelry, accessories and clothing. Lawson makes home and office deliveries while working with spa clients' schedules to keep shopping fun.

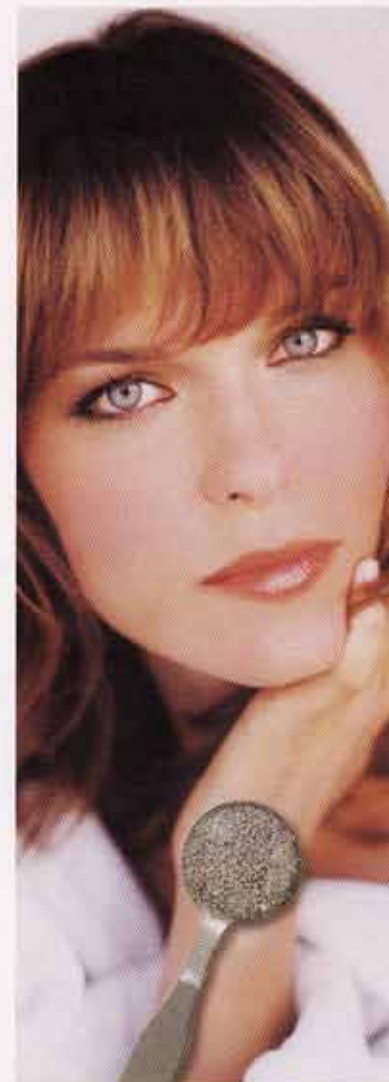
Giving back to the community

Supportive of its clientele and community, Salon Nordine & Day Spa generously gives out complimentary "mini spa day" packages and "full day at the spa" gift certificates.

"I like to thank our most loyal clients with gift certificates to show our appreciation of their patronage," Elabassi says. This generosity extends to the community as well. He often donates gift certificates for a complimentary manicure or massage to charitable organizations for auctions and fundraisers.

Not only does Salon Nordine & Day Spa offer its clientele a terrific blend of service and retail, the spa also offers its employees terrific

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career opportunities. This day spa offers a broad array of unique employee benefits including a two- to three-week paid vacation, health and dental insurance, a 401-K plan and a Christmas bonus based upon annual performances. Advanced education and incentive travel award programs are also offered.

Building new relationships

Elabassi knows that letting people know about his exotic day spa salons is an essential part of doing business. He knows the value of marketing, advertising and PR and has used his knowledge to make Salon Nordine & Day Spa a successful business.

Elabassi and his staff do their own professional photography sessions to showcase the talents of the salon and spa artists. Local and regional advertising, with a strong emphasis on the top regional consumer magazines, is used. Elabassi has begun to more aggressively use advertorials with national consumer beauty and fashion magazines. In addition, in-spa signage with colorful counter cards advertises to current customers who visit. Finally, seasonal newsletters and fliers are sent out to clients and the community.

It all adds up

Elabassi recognizes the fact that the creation of a great team with a terrific set of unique, upscale spa facilities is vitally important, but a strong investment in a comprehensive marketing, advertising, promotions and public relations program pulls it all together! Among all of its accolades and recognition in national magazines, the day spa was recently featured in both *Washingtonian* and *Northern Virginia Living* magazines.

With an eye for intrigue and the desire to be the best, Elabassi and his team have definitely made Salon Nordine & Day Spa respected as one of the best in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area as well as in the United States! Here's to the American dream! ■

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