

# Salon's a cut above

Hairdresser's 43 years have been shear delights

By LEIGH GLENN  
Times Correspondent

PINELLAS PARK — Cool breezes waft through the lace-framed windows in the Alice Rigby Beauty Salon and lift the sweet scents of shampoo and conditioner and the pungent odor of perm solution into the air. Mrs. Rigby is rolling the hair of her afternoon perm appointment.

She has seen teased hair and beehive dos come and go and has seen her profession change with the times, such that now hairstylists must learn about AIDS prevention. For the most part, though, little has changed in the salon she opened 43 years ago.

The 10-by-10 room that is her shop was added onto her house at 7645 57th St. N in 1947. Her home was built by

THE STORE  
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One in an occasional series

her father, Harold Brennan, the first mayor of Pinellas Park.

The shop is home to some fish and plants. Unlike large salon franchises, Mrs. Rigby has one sink, one hair dryer chair, a chair for styling and four other chairs where customers may sit if she gets backed up.



Times photo — KATHLEEN CABBLE

Please see **SALON** Page 7 Alice Rigby rolls Marge Miller's hair for a perm.

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Mrs. Rigby is a Florida Cracker, born and reared in Pinellas Park. "I've always liked to cut hair," she says.

She parlayed this interest — and her desire to be her own boss — into the salon.

She has a strong, steady clientele of older women who have frequented her shop for years. Most of her new customers are referred to her by the regulars.

Martha Kelley has lived in Pinellas Park for 33 years. For 21 of those years, she has been a patron at Mrs. Rigby's salon. Mrs. Kelley used to drive her neighbor to the salon, and that's how she found out about Mrs. Rigby's haircuts.

"She's the only person I have found in the last 21 years that knows how to cut naturally curly hair properly," Mrs. Kelley said.

Besides, she also gets a chance to swap family news.

Mrs. Rigby has seen dramatic changes in the way people do their hair and a big difference between the older and younger generations.

"Young people don't get their hair done anymore, and if they did, they'd get all these weird curls. They might not appreciate my saying that," she said, lowering her voice. "But, honestly, the way some of them wear their hair . . ."

She points to a brunette in a hair-styling magazine whose hair is a variation on a '60s bob with choppy, uneven ends. "You wouldn't have to be a beautician to give a hair cut like that," she said. "A child could do that."

As for the hair-in-the-eyes look: "If you can't see the eyebrows, I think it takes away from the beauty of the face," she says.

Then Mrs. Rigby sighs. "To each his own."

Younger people are not the only ones with the offbeat styles, Mrs. Rigby says. She said the older women "are getting hair cut like men. They're not really feminine."

She used to do manicures, facials, pedicures and scalp treatments, but because of a lack of demand has quit offering these services.

"Today . . . if they're going to get a permanent, you might not see them until the next time. And people really don't get their hair dyed. They do their own hair," she said.

"It's much easier to put it (dye) on there (at home) and sit down and watch television and go wash it off in an hour," explains Jeanne Mason, who's getting the perm. "And by the time I drive all the way over to here . . ."

"Well, just think," Mrs. Rigby cut in, "you get to look at my crazy

magazines. And you get to listen to all my gossip . . ."

"Oh, I miss that," Mrs. Mason said.

Like many hairdressers, Mrs. Rigby gives advice if patrons ask for it — and even if they don't. She likens her job to that of a psychiatrist.

"Oh, the things we hear," she said, squinting her eyes as though telling her stories might burn someone's ears. "You get it all. I tell them what I think, and they tell me what they think."

She still enjoys her work after all these years. "I wouldn't want to do anything else.

"A lot of my customers say, 'When you gonna retire? You've worked long enough.' And in the next breath they'll say, 'But don't retire until I die. You can't retire until I'm dead.' In other words, I'm gonna live to be 250 years old. I'll live forever."

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