

The Details Hair Options

Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon.-Sat.
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Hair Options

Lorraine McDonald makes wig shopping an enjoyable experience.

By Carla Jean Whitney

Owner: Lorraine McDonald

What is it? It's a full service wig shop, with a twist. "Hair Options is a place where, basically, women can come and be themselves," McDonald explains. She recalls being afraid as a child to try on wigs during visits to a shop in Five Points West. At Hair Options, McDonald encourages customers to get comfortable and try things on, whether they've lost hair because of a medical condition or they're experimenting with new styles.

History: McDonald loved her years working at Cache, an upscale women's boutique at the Riverchase Galleria. But when she went through a divorce, everything around her changed. A wig shop across the way was looking for part-time help, so McDonald began working there as well as Cache. "I started working with cancer patients, and I just loved it," she says. Over several years, McDonald was promoted to management and the shop was sold to a Canadian corporation. The company operated the store like any other retail store, but McDonald thought customers deserved more individualized attention. In June 2006, she began providing that through Hair Options.

Faith is a factor: "This is a manifestation of a vision of faith," says McDonald, who considers the shop a ministry. "Every day before I open

the doors, I pray over this store." Becoming a small business owner has affected her faith, as well, by increasing her dependence on the Lord.

What makes it unique: The store feels more like a boutique than a traditional wig shop. Overstuffed couches invite friends to relax, and McDonald keeps flavored coffee brewing in the back of the store. Customers can sip and munch on sweets as they browse dozens of high-quality, synthetic wigs, many available in up to 49 colors.

Staff size: Hair Options is a one-woman operation.

A day in the life: "It is always an adventure. You can never really plan a day in the wig shop," McDonald says. A divorcee whose hair is breaking because of stress may visit, in need of a cry, chocolate, an understanding ear and a new ponytail. A child with cancer may come with her mom. McDonald will invite the girl to eat chocolate, dress up in a feather boa and try out her hair options. "Every day here, my problems are put into perspective," McDonald explains. "I'm quite fortunate."

What's ahead: McDonald would like to get more involved in area hospitals, making doctors aware of what the shop offers their patients. She also hopes to expand the products she offers to include theatrical wigs and high-quality men's wigs. 