APPEARANCES RUN SKIN-DEEP. Tucked away in a modest Poway strip mall between Kragen Auto Parts and Carpet Country, the Poway Academy of Hair Design boasts a recent $2.5 million renovation and a growing reputation as the “Harvard of beauty schools.” At 20,000 square feet, the academy is among the country’s largest beauty schools. But president Lynelle Lynch will tell you it’s quality, not size, that matters most to her.

“We’re setting the bar for beauty schools on a national level,” says Lynch, who oversees a comprehensive curriculum that caters to the high-end salon and spa consumer. The academy received the 2008 School of the Year Award from national cosmetology publisher Modern Salon Media for pioneering five-star standards in beauty education. “We prepare our students to walk into a place like La Costa Resort & Spa and get a job,” says Lynch, who is also president of Je Boutique College of Beauty in El Cajon and Bay Vista College of Beauty in National City.

At first glance, the academy resembles an upscale salon-spa: A reception area imbues a Zen-minimal aesthetic; shelves display numerous high-end makeup and skin-care lines; stylists wielding scissors and blowers work busily in a cluster of hair stations. But most of the learning happens behind the scenes, in a maze of classrooms and treatment rooms. In one room, freshman students practice styling hair on wigs resting atop mannequin heads. In another classroom, makeup artistry students learn the secrets to luscious lips.

“Our curriculum offers the most comprehensive professional training in all aspects of the beauty industry,” says Lynch. In addition to schooling in hair design and sculpting, makeup artistry, esthetics, holistic health, massage and spa manicuring, the academy also offers a business and marketing program. Lynch hopes that by raising the standard of beauty education—the academy is the only beauty school in the nation to employ an artistic director, as well as the first in the state to offer a master esthetics training program—the industry will benefit from an image boost. “It’s our mission to elevate the perception of cosmetology licensing and demonstrate that it is as advantageous as a degree from a four-year university,” she says.

With San Diego ranked as one of the top cities for spa-going, Lynch says the job market and earning potential looks rosy. “Making six figures in this industry is very attainable,” she says. “Students who receive proper technical and business training addressing the needs of today’s high-end salon and spa consumer can create a recession-proof career.”

Lynch is also proud of the academy’s affiliation with Cut It Out, an organization that builds awareness of domestic abuse and trains salon professionals to recognize warning signs and safely refer client to local resources. To learn more about the academy, go to sandiegobeautyacademy.com.

—J.B.P.
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EYE ON GUYS
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BARBER STYLE
CREATIVE cuts and finishes

JUST FOR GENTS
Hair & Skin PRODUCTS

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CLIPPERS & TRIMMERS

PRIORITY male
Hippie chic styles for men from Sandra Yu
Building for Hope

On June 23 and 24, hairdressers from around the country, joined by Vidal Sassoon, traveled to St. Tammany Parish near Slidell, Louisiana, to participate in Hairdressers Unlocking Hope, an initiative established by Sassoon and Mary Rector-Gable of behindthechair.com to bring hairdressers together with Habitat for Humanity to build homes for people displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Hairdressers Unlocking Hope was established in 2007 and has galvanized the salon industry to raise $1.5 million and to help, during its first phase, in the building of 10 homes. Now in its second phase, HUH is committed to building nine more homes.

MODERN Publisher Scot Stevens and Regional Sales Manager Katharine Cook, along with hairdressers from John Paul Mitchell Systems and Chicago’s Art & Science Salon, worked alongside the Habitat team and Sassoon on a home for the Honore-Journee family, who is relocating to Slidell after being unable to return to New Orleans.—Jan Hillenmeyer

Volunteer salon professionals have joined with Habitat for Humanity to build housing for people left homeless by Hurricane Katrina.

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WINNING SCHOOL
The competition was fierce amongst entrants in the first year of this annual win-the-cover contest, for MODERN’s sister publication, FIRSTCHAIR. Entrants were judged on innovative curriculum, graduation and state board passing rates, community and industry involvement, and the schools’ overall efforts to prepare students for careers in the beauty industry.

The winner was Poway Academy of Hair Design, in Poway, California. A model for other cosmetology schools around the country, extracurricular opportunities at the school include the chance to be a member of the Master Artistic Team, under the direction of Artistic Director Diego Ravignione. The current team members created the styles that are featured on the cover and inside the pages of the spring issue of FIRSTCHAIR.

To see more pictures from the FIRSTCHAIR cover shoot and to hear from the students that created the styles, visit www.firstchair.com.—Melissa Hill