

# 414 MAGAZINE

## PAMPERING IN THE PINK HOUSE

Written by Erin Sheehan

Little girls play dress-up with fake curling irons, brushes and bottles filled with water for hairspray. The setting is often in a pink playhouse or miniature dollhouse for their Barbie dolls.

Milwaukee ladies who have grown up can enjoy real life pampering in the life-sized, pastel pink Victorian style house that shelters East Town Spa, 718 E. Wells St. It's inviting and reminiscent of those youthful playdates we had as children. And it's just darn right cute.

Owner Nikki Schwark is a strong entrepreneur who always wanted to open her own salon. Her hard work and dreams have paid off in the successful East Town Spa. She recently opened her second salon, named after her two young daughters, Reagan and Ruby, at 915 E. Brady St. Schwark, originally from Mukguongo, credits her parents, who own a Yamaha Dealership, with instilling in her a business sense. Her husband Jeff, a Milwaukee Police Officer has helped build her dream salon by putting in many hours painting and finishing the flooring.

"Jeff is my backbone. This wouldn't work without him," she said. Entering the pink building and going to the spa entrance on the right hand side, guests are greeted with a colorful array of Aveda, Bumble and bumble and Redken Color products displayed on the small lobby's shelves. Mint and hair product scents fill the rooms' high ceilings.

The poster hanging behind the receptionist's desk reads, "No two curls are alike." That one-of-a-kind treatment is valued at East Town. Between the hair dryers' buzzing and phone ringing, you can hear genuine conversations between clients and their stylists.

"How are your kids? They must be getting big by now."

Stylists receive ongoing education in New York City and from trained staff members according to Schwark. This Bumble and bumble training ensures stylists are up-to-date with new styles and techniques. The knowledge and expertise is easily apparent when stylists and staff members take their clients through the products after each consultation or treatment.

Schwark said they have a pretty diverse range of clients, including male and female guests, college students, professional

executives and diverse ethnicities. Their downtown location is convenient for people to get to after work and on weekends between shopping or dining.

"We also have a lot of wedding parties or groups come in," said Schwark.

The unique building itself provides much to look at while you're getting your hair cut, colored or washed. Winding pathways, staircases and rooms with hardwood floors and fireplaces are a comfortable setting for a wedding group or if you come on your own.

The lower level houses one of the most distinct features with the wine cellar room, which is used for facials, waxing and massages. The low-lit cellar is intimate enough for one bed surrounded by exposed brick, candles and a wine rack. Soft music and light aromas fill this space for a whole body experience, regardless of the type of service.

East Town offers a special for new clients. The package costs \$73 for a hair, body, skin, nail and follow-up appointment experience. 414's tip is to go into the spa and pay \$69 in cash. General treatments for women's haircuts start at \$37 and men's haircuts start at \$27. Airbrush tanning services cost \$25 that lasts up to 10 days. Discounts for referrals are also available.

A multitude of massage services are offered such as the Swedish, sports or neuromuscular (\$40 for 30 minutes). There are also couples massages, momassage for moms-to-be and hot stone massage services. Facials are tailored to individual skin needs, including acne treatment. Waxing services vary, with brows starting at \$15 to a full leg and bikini wax starting at \$80.

"Milwaukee is growing," said Schwark. "It needs more fashion and style so people do not have to go to Chicago anymore. It's all right here."

It's all right there, in the pink house on Wells Street. So, go ahead, grab a few pals and play dress-up for some adult-friendly pampering. (414) 271-HAIR or [www.easttownspa.com](http://www.easttownspa.com)

Hours: Monday 12 – 8 p.m.  
Tuesday-Friday 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.  
Saturday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.