

# customized care

Tia May triumphs over the toughest cases with determination and blendable treatments.

by Kelly Svoboda

**Tia May**  
La Mirage Salon & Day Spa  
Green Bay, Wisconsin

**vocation:** therapist and owner

**age:** 42

**years in the room:** 22

**specialties:** acne and anti-aging treatments

Like many young girls, Tia May grew up beautifying her Barbie dolls, and her passion for beauty never waned. After going through a divorce, with two young sons, she took the opportunity to turn her passion into a career. She returned to school to study esthetics, a move, she felt, that was a solid investment in her future because, "People are always going to care about the way they look and feel."

Her hunch paid off and she developed a reputation for treating acne patients and those looking for anti-aging treatments. She particularly loved the hard cases because, she notes, if you put in the effort, "you get the best results."

In the beginning, one of May's biggest challenges centered on her skin care products. "I struggled to find exciting products," she says. "I wanted to add new elements."

Then May met Kathleen Carney, the founder of Skin Blends, and the fit was perfect. Both women are from small Midwestern towns and devote plenty of time and energy to their passion.

Plus, they both recognize the value of blendable products that can be customized for clients based on the therapist's analysis.

"When I met Kathleen, my practice took off," says May. "Their products let you really help your clients, because they give you endless possibilities."

Her customized care has helped establish her salon, which opened 15 years ago in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and serves a diverse array of clientele, including local students, older residents and a high percentage of men. She relies on her staff to provide the same quality of care, but admits her biggest challenge is dealing with turnover from disillusioned newbies.

"The schools forget to tell them that they need to promote themselves, and they come here thinking they'll have a brilliant clientele," she says. "But that takes lots of hard

work. Graduates will have a couple of hard years ahead of them. Once they get over that hump, then they'll be fine."

Her responsibilities as an owner are balanced with her work as an educator for Skin Blends. That requires presenting classes and demonstrations at shows, visiting other spas to teach the Skin Blends philosophy and educating at the training center in California.

Among all of her achievements, however, her greatest rewards still come from personal contact with her clients, says May. "My favorite thing about my work is the end results. When you help somebody, you improve their self-esteem and how they view themselves. It's so fulfilling." ■

## five things that make my day

- **Eyelash tint.** I don't like mascara because my eyes are sensitive. So I use this semipermanent dye so my lashes always look great.
- **Spicy and exotic food.** My favorites are East Indian, Thai, and even Mexican or Italian if it's really flavorful.
- **Travel.** The destination doesn't matter. No matter where you go, you meet people who change your life. I'm never disappointed.
- **Washing my face.** It's the first thing I do when I wake up, and the last thing I do before bed.
- **SkinBlend's Hydrator.** It's a unique concept—a clear, jelly-like product that you apply before moisturizer. Moisturizers just seal in the moisture you already have, so if you apply this beforehand, it's like a drink of water for your skin.



## rituals for renewal

"I like to read and meditate. They're both easy to do, especially when I'm traveling.

"When I meditate, I just lie down and close my eyes. I usually see a white light, and I block out all sound. Whatever thought comes to my mind is the one that is most important at that moment; something that I need to take care of. My meditation lasts 30 to 40 minutes, but it feels like five. I started meditating when I underwent hypnosis to stop smoking a long time ago. It worked for me, and I've been doing it ever since."



## confidential to new colleagues

"This industry can be overwhelming. People lead you here and there and tell you what you should do. It's important to keep your fundamentals at heart—you can't go anywhere without the basics of esthetics. It's the key to what you do, and how much money you make. And don't forget—education, education, education!"

## in my room

- **Music.** I like Eastern music or sounds of nature, like sounds of the rainstorm. It gets me in the right frame of mind to help clients; they can sense moods through your fingers.
- **Aromatherapy.** I always try to include citrus essence because it's an antidepressant, so it's uplifting for everyone.
- **Hot towels.** It's important to get just the right temperature, so I check them periodically. A cold towel is unpleasant, but a towel that's too hot can raise blood pressure.
- **Comfortable cushions.** I always want the client to feel at peace. I keep extra cushions around in case I need to raise the neck or ease pressure on the back.