

THE CREW IN 1991



THE CREW TODAY (L-R) LISA SCHNEIDER, DEREK FERNANDES, RICHIE CARBONE, DIANE CAPONE-MAGNASCO, MONA SPANN, CLIFF BOUVIER

## Cutting it close

*Brookline stylists still bonding—three decades of collaboration*

**IN THE '70S, THEY FEATHERED.** IN THE '80S, THEY TEASED. IN THE '90S, THEY LAYERED. NOW IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM, THEY'RE STILL SNIPPING AND BLOW-DRYING THEIR WAY WITH THE TIMES.

In an industry known for fickle fashions and competing egos, they are an anomaly—six hairdressers who have worked as a team for over 25 years. For “the crew” of hair salon Crew International—Lisa Schneider, Derek Fernandes, Diane Capone-Magnasco, Mona Spann, Cliff Bouvier and Richie Carbone—it’s a matter of friendship, decades in which they’ve earned the nicknames that have labeled their cubbies:

“Resident Flower-Child” for Fernandes, a fervent believer in hugs and kisses.

“The Princess” for Capone-Magnasco, who wields a charm bracelet as heavy and crowded as a janitor’s key ring.

“The Queen” for finicky Bouvier.

And for Carbone, the youngest of the bunch at 42, “The Baby.”

“I can’t imagine ever working without these guys, we support each other in so many ways,” said Schneider, the salon’s owner. “We’re basically like a family.”

“In the ’70s, especially in our industry, it was wild,” said Schneider, in her native German accent and with a coy smile. “The movie *Shampoo* is not an exaggeration. If you were a male hairdresser and straight, that was a ticket to get you anywhere.”

### Shear Madness?

**THE YEAR WAS 1969**, a time when hairdressers could hold a smoldering cigarette in one hand and work a pair of shears in the other. The place: a Harvard Street salon called The Talk of the Town, where three upstart stylists—Schneider, Capone-Magnasco and Fernandes—first met. Shortly afterward, the three moved to another Harvard Street salon called Hair Cutting Company and rounded out their group with Spann, Bouvier and Carbone. The crew was born.

“It was the ’70s, I was so innocent and had no idea what was going on,” said Schneider, who was in her mid-20’s at the time. Though she declines to elaborate on what exactly was “going on” (the crew dissolves into giggles at the mere mention of the decade), she did concede: “None of us were angels.”

They were young, ambitious, and often worked a six-day grind to perfect their craft and pull in much-needed cash. When the day ended, the doors were locked and the lights turned low, the crew still had energy to burn. In the darkened windows of the salon, their group chemistry glowed like neon, drawing boyfriends, girlfriends and clients to an after-

hours party that never seemed to end.

“We’d be done with work at six, but sometimes we’d stay at the salon ‘til midnight, grab a case of beer, play backgammon and cards,” said Fernandes. “We just didn’t want to leave.”

The big reason was each other. They cannot say exactly what knit them so close, but point to a shared sense of humor, gregarious artistic temperaments and their international flavor (Schneider is German; Spann, Canadian-Indian; and Fernandes, Cape Verdean). Most likely, it was a unique intersection of time, place and personality that turned a job into a lifestyle and co-workers into confidantes.

“Together, we were the whole thing,” Fernandes said, reflecting on that time. “I was part of something that probably will never happen again.”

At the time, it seemed something that would never end. But when the salon’s ownership changed, the operation crumbled and Schneider and Capone-Magnasco made the tough decision to leave for a Washington Square salon called Pleasures. Only after they had split did the crew realize that a premise that had seemed so effortless in the past—three guys and three girls reveling in a best-

