

# Au Naturel

*Schatzi's Design Gallery & Day Spa, LLC*

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*Schatzi's* is Raleigh's 1<sup>st</sup> full-service natural hair salon and your gateway to natural hair care beauty. *Au Naturel* newsletter, an essential part of our information sharing services, is a wondrous labor of love that is a joy to create and a gift to you our valued clients and to the public at large.

## CONTENTS

Salon Updates .....	1
Personal Reflections .....	2
Freedom in Not Knowing by Fr. Richard Rohr .....	3
Generational and Relational Challenges in Post-Modern America .....	4
About Us .....	9

## SALON UPDATES

Well, the autumn is dawning with the cooler and crisper temps that are reminiscent of state fair treats like cotton candy, candy apples and funnel cakes. I love this time of year, though I confess that every season has its respective charm. Within the salon, we are celebrating our eighth year of consistent service to the Raleigh and surrounding communities. We feel blessed to be in this position as longevity and consistency are coveted virtues within the business community. As I reflect on the years that have passed, I know that I have grown in my own faith and spiritual development. In the early years, I lost sleep many nights worrying about how to become bigger, better, faster, stronger. Now, I appreciate and know that longevity has been sustained by God and the community that supports us. When I've pushed the hardest to grow and expand, I've often received the greatest disappointments. When I make peace with the moment, however it unfolds, I've been blessed to witness small miracles materialize out of what seems like nowhere. When this happens, I smile in acknowledgement of grace. Some would be inclined to call these instances coincidences. But as Dr. Wayne Dyer states, coincidences are really universal alignment. When life coincides with our intention for some favorable outcome in our lived experience, it is favor and it is good. So, I give thanks. We have been blessed with many of these circumstances over the years.

To celebrate the eight-year milestone (though August is our official birth month), **we are offering two salon specials from now through the month of October: get a free deep condition or trim with any salon service for regular salon clients (valued at up to \$15) or get a 30% discount on any hair care service if you are a new or returning client who has not visited our salon within the past 12 months (valued from \$15 up).** Just mention the salon service at the time that you schedule the appointment. We look forward to serving you.

For this issue of *Au Naturel*, I've included a reprint of a devotional article written by Fr. Richard Rohr and a couple of reflective submissions inspired by it. I seek to inspire tolerance, within myself and others. As a result, this issue is a bit long; but then, that's what happens when I'm writing stream of consciousness. Feel free to select and reject as you feel it appropriate. Embrace the beauty of you.

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

As I reflect on what I want to share of this issue of Au Naturel, I'm basking in the wake of a conversation that I had with my youngest son. I wanted to share with him some of my observations regarding the PBS special that I've been watching lately: [The Roosevelts: An Intimate History](#). EXCELLENT!! I was so moved after watching episode five as to call my grandmother at 10:20pm to ask her about FDR based on her lived experience. To my delight, she and my aunt were wide awake as they had just finished watching episode five themselves. INDEED THIS IS MY CLAN!! 😊 We discussed the man with awe, reverence and respect. Grandma's recall never ceases to amaze me. Afterwards, I thanked God and the universe that she is alive and well and able to have such an engaging and frankly analytical conversation with me at almost 100 years of age. Aunt Joyce and I chatted about how he was a man whose lived experience was fashioned "[for such a time as this.](#)" I then marveled at how his own body personified the state of the nation: broken yet proud and ever hopeful. I almost cry at just how far American leadership has fallen from [the heights of great men](#). I feel impatient with and uninspired by leadership in our nation. So, I shared my thoughts and feelings with my son.

He was quite familiar with FDR's legacy from his studies, so he was able to contribute his own analyses of his impact. After watching the special, I shared how I felt sad that inspired leadership seems to be a thing of the past. I honestly feel that our country has been captured. Why? Because Teddy and FDR fought *big bosses* from the day they entered politics until they died. They could fight this monolith because they were from that class, and they were not bought and paid for. If I ever wondered who killed the Kennedy's, now I know for sure. [Eisenhower warned the country to beware of the military industrial complex](#). When I watch the news today, I know that our country will be at war until it is eventually destroyed, for nothing more than greed. We naively believe there is some higher purpose, but in truth, it's very common and twisted. Why are we always fighting some entity that we once gave arms and support to? Why are we always fighting some masked madmen that we can neither see nor understand? Who is wearing the mask? Who are these people really? Sometimes I feel that I'm watching a very poorly orchestrated stage play. The murders are real but psychopaths are too. And we are fools to believe that they do not operate on a global scale. By the end the conversation, we had addressed numerous topics. He rushed to conclude his comparison of the psychological definition of *déjà vu* being evidenced in the inputs and outputs of Fibonacci's sequence, fractal geometry and the ways in which computers analyze bytes of data. It was an engaging discussion. And I listened and frankly marveled at his use of science to explain very abstract philosophical concepts. There was something very familiar about his reasoning. As he said "good day", I was compelled to ask: "Jamar, are you SURE you want to be a lawyer and not a philosopher?" He smiled and said, "Yes." And left. As I watched him walk away in the rear-view mirror, I prayed for God's protection over his life. His eyes are wide open. We raised him to be that way. I give thanks. And I pray for him all the same. Mostly, I pray for his *effectiveness*. Amen.

Well, I mention this conversation because it is more evidence of a resounding theme that is replaying repeatedly within my life, particularly over the past few weeks: "Freedom in Not Knowing." The concept has always hung in the background of my reasoning; but now, it is front-and-center. The next article in this issue is a re-print of the morning devotional that I read on August 31<sup>st</sup>. It very succinctly captures the spirit of my emerging internal struggle *to be* and *to accept* rather than *to know* and *to judge*. It is my natural inclination to want to compare people and ideas and times and yes, righteousness (of myself and those around me) in an attempt to compartmentalize reality and divine *what is* from *what ought*. But, the truth is that there is grace in *being* and in *acceptance*. I'm learning

to be more gracious. It's a struggle. Surely, it will be life-long. But, I aim to learn well, for here lies peace.

So for this issue, I've penned an article that further elucidates the concept of "freedom in not knowing" as applied to a recent experience that I had with my nieces. The concept is foundational to all aspects of life. I share it in the spirit of liberation and peace. The experiences highlighted will prayerfully serve as edutainment. This newsletter, as a result, is rather long and reflective. Many of our salon clients have garnered some aspect of my thoughts on these topics, though always practically applied to a given situation, whether it be Ray Rice, Michael Brown, Brangelina, Scandal, race in America or any of the other engaging salon topics. Some of our discussions are inter-laced within the context of this core article. So indirectly, the spirit of our salon dances across the lines of this issue through the prose and reasoning of the ladies we serve. And that is the extent of the hair talk that you will receive in this issue.

## **FREEDOM IN NOT KNOWING – BY RICHARD ROHR (RE-PRINTED)**

It seems that God is asking humanity to live inside of a cosmic humility, as God also does. In that holding pattern, we bear the ambiguity, the inconsistencies, and the brokenness of all things (which might be called love), instead of insisting on dividing reality into the supposed good guys and the certain bad guys as our dualistic mind loves to imagine. Such non-dual consciousness is our ultimate act of solidarity with humanity and even the doorway to wisdom. With this mind we realize, as Martin Luther wisely put it, we are *simul justus et peccator*, simultaneously both sinner and saint. Only the mind of God can hold these two together.

We read the story of humanity's original sin in Genesis. There Yahweh says, "Don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:17). Now why would that be a sin? It sounds like a good thing, doesn't it? We were actually trained to think that way.

In the seminary we took serious courses on "moral theology" to help us rightly discern who was good and who was bad. Unfortunately, this usually only emboldened the very judgmental mind that Jesus warned us against (see Matthew 7:1-2). Some then thought that this was the whole meaning of Christianity—religion's purpose was to monitor and police society in regard to its morals. Religion became all about morality instead of being a result and corollary of Divine Encounter. As such, this was much more a search for control or righteousness than it was a search for truth, love, or God. It had to do with the ego's need for certitude, superiority, and order. Is that what Jesus came for? Jesus never said, "You must be right," or much less, "You must be sure you are good and right." Instead he said, "You must love one another." His agenda is about growing in faith, hope, and love while always knowing that "God alone is good."

I guess God knew that dualistic thinking would be the direction religion would take. So the Bible says right at the beginning, "Don't do it!" The word of God is trying to keep us from religion's constant temptation and failure—a demand for certitude, an undue need for perfect explanation, resolution, and answers, which is, by the way, the exact opposite of faith. Such dualistic thinking (preferring a false either/or to an always complex reality) tends to create arrogant and smug people instead of humble and loving people. Too much "eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" might just be the major sin of all religion—especially Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The Bible's first warning has consistently been ignored.

## GENERATIONAL AND RELATIONAL CHALLENGES IN POST-MODERN AMERICA

To feel that you have a strong grasp of the foundational premise of this article, you may want to read an [interesting article on postmodernism by Dr. Mary Klages](#). But if you don't have that kind of time, the following quotes aptly summarize the framework on which I will build my argument:

*Modernity is fundamentally about order: about rationality and rationalization, creating order out of chaos. The assumption is that creating more rationality is conducive to creating more order, and that the more ordered a society is, the better it will function (the more rationally it will function). Because modernity is about the pursuit of ever-increasing levels of order, modern societies constantly are on guard against anything and everything labeled as "disorder," which might disrupt order. Thus modern societies rely on continually establishing a binary opposition between "order" and "disorder," so that they can assert the superiority of "order." But to do this, they have to have things that represent "disorder"--modern societies thus continually have to create/construct "disorder." In western culture, this disorder becomes "the other"--defined in relation to other binary oppositions. Thus anything non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual, non-hygienic, non-rational, (etc.) becomes part of "disorder," and has to be eliminated from the ordered, rational modern society....Postmodernism, in contrast, doesn't lament the idea of fragmentation, provisionality, or incoherence, but rather celebrates that. (Note: While there is a qualitative difference between modernism and modernity, it is insignificant in the context of my essay, so I won't elaborate on these nuances.)*

### Generational Challenges

This article was inspired by my two beautiful nieces Jasonet and Jada, their older sister Jasmine and their cousin Alexis. I got together with these teenage ladies for a Girls Cultural Awareness Labor Day Week-end hosted by my ever-beautiful and most gracious Mom. Jasonet's sweet 16 birthday occurred this summer and was a real wake-up call to me. I've honestly been so squarely focused on my own motherly (and wifely) responsibilities, my business and my work life that I've totally abdicated my responsibility as an aunt. Evidence of my disconnectedness was most apparent when I had the following conversation with the ladies, as paraphrased from our week-end together, which began seated around boxes of pizza and soda:

**Schatzi:** Well, I know y'all will be going to college soon and the opportunity for time like this will be limited, so I feel I have to introduce you to some cultural gems (i.e. films) that you must know about as a black woman. For example, you're going to see many images of black love your whole life. This one is my favorite black romance: *Love Jones*. I think this film is an honest portrayal of love and romance. You'll likely hear the "love jones" reference the rest of your life. You might as well have an idea what they're talking about.

So, we engaged. Commentary during the movie and afterwards bolstered my belief that the movie was well received.

Keeping with the love and romance theme, I thought of interjecting a bit of comedy to diversify things. I asked: "Do you all like Eddie Murphy?" There were general nods and then they questioned whether we were to watch some of his more recent animated titles. Sorry, ladies. No. I'm going into the archives in his early heyday. Next up to bat: *Coming to America*.

So, we engaged and discussed briefly. After this film, it was pretty late on Saturday evening so, I left the Smart TV to them and excused myself to slumber. After rising late, I made breakfast for everyone and was honestly disappointed that NO ONE was as down with grits as I was! ☺ Can't make a pot of grits for one person. After breakfast, I said "How should we engage now?" More movies? They agreed. Then to my surprise, I heard:

**Jada:** Are these all going to be "old" movies.

**Schatzi:** *Considering that Jada's about 14 years old, I asked: What do you consider "old."*

**Jada:** Before the 2000s!

**Schatzi:** If you could have been inside my head, you would surely have laughed. My mind was reeling. Prior to her response, I had mentally envisioned "black and white" movies when she said "old." I was NOT AT ALL ready for the pre-2000s reference. So suddenly, my mind was hitting fast-forward past many of the movies that I considered sharing. I was frankly embarrassed at how disconnected I was. So, I sheepishly said, "Well, maybe" while eagerly searching their faces for feedback. I honestly didn't want this to be a "polite" week-end *where they try not to hurt old Aunty Schatzi's feelings*. Then, I heard.

**Alexis:** Please! NO documentaries!! *And there was a general nod of concurrence.*

Again, I was disappointed. There are some real treasures in the documentary film world, but I conceded defeat...for today anyway.

**Schatzi:** Okay, no documentaries. (In my mind, I had also deleted some pre-2000 choices rather rapidly.) How about this? I name the artist and you select who you want to see.

**All:** Okay.

**Schatzi:** We can do entertainment or biographies. What about Jordin Sparks and Whitney Houston?

**A voice in the group:** Whose Whitney Houston?

**Schatzi:** *More confusion ensued within my own spirit as I asked: You haven't heard of Whitney Houston? All four ladies looked at me and shook their heads. I honestly felt very old.* My soul ached at the thought of what [masterful artistry](#) they have yet to experience. So I thought, if they don't know Whitney, I'll forget about entertainment for now and go into biographies. I then said, Will Smith. You have to know who that is.

**All:** Yes.

**A voice in the group:** Is it Seven Pounds? We've seen that already. Hitch?

**Schatzi:** No. And No. I then said, Ali. *Blank stares.* Muhammad Ali.

**All:** Who's that?

**Schatzi:** Okay, now I KNOW I've abdicated my responsibilities. I guess you don't know who Malcolm X is either. *Shaking heads. No.* Okay. Do you know who Dr. Martin Luther King is?

**All:** Yes.

**Schatzi:** *Secret sigh of relief.* Okay, well you can't know who MLK is without knowing who Malcolm X is. Absolutely can NOT!! Do you know who Denzel Washington is? *General nods—no excitement.* Okay, turn on Netflix and find the movie.

After a few minutes, Ali started and I considered how they would receive Malcolm X. Not even 1 minute into the movie, I heard:

**Jada:** Is this a boxing movie? *with obvious attitude and disappointment.*

At this moment, I realized I was being tested. You see, I raised boys. They're pretty easy to please and NO ONE at home questions my movie choices. The men in my life love to watch movies with me. THEY LOVE WHEN I SELECT THE MOVIES BECAUSE THEY KNOW IT'S GOING TO BE GOOD!!! I had never experienced the constant chatter and questioning about every little thing. I thought: *Is this what I've missed in not raising a daughter? God sure had me pegged right on that one.* Inwardly, I smiled though. Jada is a petite pixy, with the attitude of a diva and a heart of pure gold. I've seen her shame my own mother with only a lowered head and downcast eyes, for the crime of *talking about people.* She's a sweetheart.

Anyway, I considered her question and responded, No. It isn't. He was much more than a boxer. But, it was his craft. After about 30 minutes, cousin Alexis was sleep on the recliner, Jasmine left the room to go back to bed and Jasonet and Jada, *politely tried not to hurt old Aunty Schatzi's feeling by watching the movie.* I suddenly realized that this week-end would not be at all what I expected. I was pleasantly surprised towards the end of Ali however when Jasonet looked at me and announced, "I like this man. Muhammad Ali." And suddenly, I was redeemed if but for a moment.

Eager to introduce them to Malcom X, I conceded temporary defeat after being unable to find it on Netflix, and vowed to return every month until I was satisfied that I had made a dent in their respective levels of cultural awareness. For the rest of the week-end, I left the controls to them so that I could observe their entertainment choices. [Tyler Perry's Temptation](#) was next up to bat. The movie was soul stirring, extremely well done and honestly made me feel sick. I was "taken over" as my girl Denise often says when emotions get the best of you. The subject matter was raw and very adult, and they watched it mostly unperturbed while multi-tasking with Instagram, Facebook or whatever texting medium they employed. The rest of the week-end was music videos, comedy routines (very adult) and animated or teen films.

To summarize the week-end, it was nice girl time though I didn't share all that I had hoped. But, I'm undaunted. I'll be back next month with a whole new list of possible rejects that I have since purchased: Malcolm X (*they don't have a choice about this one...*), Ray Charles, Akeelah and the Bee, The Great Debators, Soulfood, Something the Lord Made (*or this one.*), Gifted Hands and the Secret Life of Bees, to name a few. As for the Matrix, I'm debating that one. I took my kids to see it while they were in elementary school. But, they had the familial and social grounding to understand it from their age-appropriate perspective. I'm not sure about that selection for these ladies. We'll see. I've also got to negotiate a strategy to slip in documentaries like Capitalism: A Love Story, The World According to Monsanto and What the Bleep Do We Know. In fact, they may require this type of elevation of consciousness before I can share the Matrix... But as my husband says, sometimes a thought is not fully grasped at the moment. It may take years and with a flash in time, a reflection is fully integrated, and a core message becomes enlightenment...

And so the saga continues. I anticipate a year-long sojourn to truth. By the time I'm done, they should be heading off to college, hopefully more aware of the "*old people*" who shaped their legacy, and armed with some hopefully greater degree of pride in self [and knowledge of the world that doesn't always show up on mainstream media.](#) (The link is a "must-see".)

To analyze the week-end, it was as much a learning experience for me as hopefully for them. I entered the week-end with one vision of how we would relate and had to morph to accommodate the

generational reality. I realized that I tend to be highly ordered and somewhat predictable. When I watch a movie, I don't multi-task. I analyze. But for them, there was constant chatter, multi-texting and numerous questions when they missed the central point of a given scene. It definitely took some getting used to. (*Maddening is a judgment, so I won't use that word.*) I realized that they are all quite used to each other. I'm the outsider. So, I had to adjust to what felt like chaos theory in action. I had to conclude that the knowledge I'm trying to share will emerge through osmosis rather than a more direct call-response method—thus my commitment to a monthly event. I also began to appreciate the challenges of generational differences in Post-modern America. Their reality is one of constant stimulation. They process bytes of information transmitted over several media simultaneously and they're easily bored with one-dimensional ANYTHING! My natural inclination was to judge their reality but I had to guard against that. As my Mom said, "I know why the old people thought we were crazy in the 60s." There's some perspective for you! It's called LIFE. So, I'm down with whatever. The truth is that they will have to be just as they are to function in the future. So, whatever THEY ARE is right because, the future is theirs. As for me, I'll find myself even more "on the periphery" than I already am. I still don't even have a smart phone! Or even a remote desire to have one...

### **Relational Challenges**

With that said, there's another reality facing black women in the context of love and relationships and that's *options*. I have FAR more female friends and relatives who are unmarried and are NOT in a serious relationship though they would like to be. I advise them to look outside of the black arena, as I know I would not hesitate to do so in their same situation. But in light of this reality, I frankly worry about how my nieces will engage. As my own son explained to me when I tried to get some perspective on black male choices in Post-modern America, he said, "Mommy, many black women are shallow and materialistic. They want you to have all your stuff together before they'll even give you the time of day. They're not interested in going through the struggle with you." Then he gave me a very telling example from his own life. I thought that interesting as my son hates generalizations. So, I threw that back at him and said, "That's not true of everyone. I was nothing like that." His response would make a mother blush but in all he concluded, "That's why you don't see me with anyone." In my non-scientific discussion with other women in the salon on this topic, I heard similar sentiments expressed by mothers with sons. By others, I heard honest concern about the advice that some of their friends are giving their daughters on love and courtship. The focus is very ego-centric and money-driven. It's frankly disturbing. I understand the concern as there are far too many women *taking care* of men and often being left holding the bag. I understand the caution. But, a woman's natural inclination is to be a help-mate. What happens when that function is eroded by independence and self-sufficiency or by the desire for those qualities in her mate?

As I reflected on my own son though, I was honestly relieved that he's not with anyone because "brother ain't ready!!" TRULY! He's my son and I admit it. He's a portrait of contradictions. I keep waiting for him to find himself. But it will not happen when I want it to. It will happen in his own time. His age belies his social maturity. After representing NCCU at a mock-United Nations program organized by several HBCUs, he told me how much he enjoyed the experience. He didn't have a laptop as his was out of commission due to some beverage that he left next to it on the floor by his bed. (*Like I said, he ain't ready.*) Anyway, it didn't matter because his mind is like a trap. So when other people were on their laptops trying to find the facts to counter central arguments, he simply recalled earlier statements made and countered with his ever-expanding knowledge of philosophy and political science theories as well as current events and history. By the time he relinquished the floor for their scheduled break, he was bum-rushed. In his words, "All of these ladies came up to talk to me at once! I was so embarrassed!" I laughed and retorted, "Son, there's nothing more attractive

than an intelligent man.” Poor thing. He ain’t ready. And that’s okay. When he is, someone will be richly blessed.... But, she’ll have some work to do to get him “right.” (*There’s that judgment again!!*) My time is ‘bout up. ☺ Chic will have my blessing though...and my prayers! Anyway, I reflected on the fact that the room at the mock-UN event was clearly dominated by women. He was one of a few guys represented. And such is the plight of black women.

### ***Double Standards***

After a recent discussion with a salon client, she confessed that she’s honestly “jaded and bitter” about the options available to her. She’s my age and has “not been in a significant relationship EVER. She hasn’t been in ANY relationship since 2004.” I honestly felt her pain. I wondered how she restrained the desire to give it away out of both legs. Right or wrong, that’s honestly where my mind went. She further lamented the fact that many commentators within the community encourage highly educated women to “*lower their standards*” by marrying a laborer or a semi-skilled worker rather than to be alone. But, she acknowledged that intellectual affinity is as important to marital bliss as sexual compatibility. I was honestly reflective about this topic for two weeks after talking with her. It has truly troubled my spirit of late. And if I’m honest, I’ve felt heart-broken about it. I don’t live this reality myself; but, it impacts the women of my life. So, I am compelled to consider the reality of it all. It was against this backdrop that I heard [about the hateful things said to a “black” female celebrity about her marriage to a white man](#). Sister was a virgin until age 29, yet one critic had the nerve to call her a whore. [Other sisters are 40-year-old virgins](#)—God forbid! If I may be so crass as to quote a woman that I met at the bus-stop one day: “If God didn’t mean for men and women to fornicate, he wouldn’t have made it feel so good!” (I laugh every single time I recall the aplomb and fervor with which the sister woman made that statement. It *still* cracks me up!) Then, my girl Meiko shared the [recent story of a Hollywood actress being mistaken for a prostitute for displaying affection publicly with her white boyfriend](#). In these instances, why are black women accused of being whores because they were with white men? Does the wider society believe that a black woman cannot be attractive in her own right without needing to *sell her assets* to gain a white man’s attention? I shared these views recently with a client in an inter-racial marriage. She laughed as she recounted how upset her ex-boyfriend was on discovering that she was married to a white man. Yet, he was the one who had decided that they needed to “see other people.” It’s an interesting double standard in our cultural milieu. On the other hand, it makes me wonder what white women are called by men within their community for being with black men? I imagine that our legacy of property rights and old British law no doubt is responsible for a logic model which always heaps insults on the woman for daring to deviate from the “norm.”

Needless to say, I don’t Tweet, Facebook or really follow the news much. Because when I do, I’m unsettled. So, I err on the side of peace of mind. I’ve concluded that this disordered, seemingly chaotic imbalance in social relations is essential to right the wrong of this warped cultural disease called racism that is the legacy of every American citizen. Many women will have no experience remotely similar to these described above, but there are far too many that do. So, I consider and conclude that if racism must die because white women feel the plight of Mom’s like Trayvon Martin’s and Michael Brown’s, then God is a poet. If fear of being alone is so pervasive as to propel many black women into the arms of black women where they are still having black children by polygamous black men, then God is a poet. Balance will be restored but when it is, it may not look anything like we expect it to. But, it is life. And God is not mocked. Did he not bring back the Native American in full-force and call him/her Mexican. Same blood line, different name. The wrong is being righted as we speak. I accept it and I give thanks.

So to conclude: I'm learning to embrace generational and relational challenges, which I am want to label "chaos" but which in reality demand no label whatsoever. It demands only acceptance. It's not my comfort zone by any stretch but in truth, order is a judgment and a value system that is not always God-inspired. Sometimes the entire apple-cart needs to be over-turned before we can appreciate that applesauce tastes pretty damn good and has a place and value in its own right. So to life in Postmodern America, I say: Bring it!! In the interim, I'll pray for *freedom in not knowing*, i.e. peace.

## ABOUT US

As the first natural hair salon in Raleigh, NC, *Schatzi's* is a *one-stop shop* for all of your natural hair care needs. With a warm and nurturing ambiance for clients to "Embrace the Beauty of You," *Schatzi's* is located in the Park on Millbrook Condominium complex, near the intersection of Six Forks and Millbrook Rds.

*Schatzi's* design gallery provides services that nurture natural hair with talented Board licensed stylists who are happy to guide you through and beyond the transition process. Our two-floor art gallery is provided courtesy of local artist Jasmine Hawthorne.