

Master Artistic Team member
Keith Skipper and Student
Melissa Salakar from Poway
Academy of Hair Design
in Poway, CA

A Cut Above

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT PICKING THE
RIGHT SUPPLIES

SCHOOL OF THE YEAR!

CHECK OUT THE WINNER'S
THREE FRESH STYLES

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FirstChair's first annual School of the Year contest brought in fantastic entries from schools around the country. With so many innovative programs and great ideas coming out of these cosmetology schools, our top three represent the best of the best.



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Making the leap from student to stylist can be challenging—but help is on the way. Learn about all the different tools you have at your disposal, all you have to do is ask. From apprenticeship and training programs, to finding mentors, to getting the most out of going to industry trade shows, you'll find all the tips you need for sweet success.
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As you step into the salon, make sure you have your hands wrapped around the best equipment you can afford. Here's a look at what you need and how to get the best bang for your buck.



On the cover:
Photo: Akin Girav
Hair: Keith Skipper
Make-up: Gabriela Balderrama

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First Chair Awards { School of the Year 2008 }

This was our first time conducting the School of the Year awards, and we're so excited about how many great entries we received! It was very difficult for the judges to come to a decision, but these three schools go above and beyond in giving their students extra opportunities to make contacts in the industry and in the community, advanced and innovative curriculums, job placement guidance and business and marketing skills—all this in addition to ably preparing them to pass their state boards. It all adds up to students that are ready to succeed and thrive in the industry.

We shot our cover and the images here at our winning school, Poway Academy of Hair Design, in Poway, California. Four of their Master Artistic Team members took part in the shoot (one as a model, three others as stylists), creating three distinct looks for us under the guidance of their artistic director, Diego Raviglione. Student make-up artists at the school, who are enrolled in the Make-Up Designory affiliated program, completed make-up for the models. The great work they've done is definitely a testament to their school and a preview of the up-and-coming talent in the industry!

To see more pictures from the photo shoot and to hear what the students have to say about their school, go to firstchair.com.



From left: Poway students Santiago Godoy, Valerie Rivera, Keith Skipper, Melissa Salakar, Victoria Nguyen and Lauren McPhail.

Poway Academy of Hair Design

Location: Poway, California
Owner: Lynelle Lynch
Website: www.sandiegobeautyacademy.com
Years in business: 16
Number of students: 220

>According to a local salon owner
"The [extern] program that Poway Academy has implemented has been very well organized. The placement of the students is a 'speed meeting' opportunity where a select group of salon owners conduct brief interviews and the students have a chance to show what they are made of. Afterwards, students are carefully matched to their externship, which is a win/win. The salon receives their world's salon experience and the student gets to view their work ethics, people skills and hair knowledge."
—Gayle Fulbright, owner, Headlines for Hair, Encinitas, California

The judges:

- Mary Atherton, editor in chief, MODERN SALON
- Laurel Smoke, editor in chief, SALON TODAY
- Melissa Segars Hill, editor, FIRST CHAIR
- Lisa Doyle, assistant managing editor, SALON TODAY
- Elizabeth Yong, senior editor, MODERN SALON

>According to a graduate

"Poway Academy offered me many different opportunities to help me become a better student. I first joined the Design Team, which allowed me to go around the San Diego area and volunteer for fashion shows, high schools and services for the less fortunate. I continued my training by trying out for the Master Artistic Team. This consisted of five members that receive extensive training with the renowned artistic director of Poway Academy, Diego Raviglione. I was so lucky to be selected as one of the members. I was able to learn defined hair cutting techniques, hair coloring techniques and participate in creating a trend collection and photo shoot. This team was a great stepping stone toward my success."
—Felicia Taite

>What sets them apart

Innovative curriculum. They are the only school in the San Diego area and one of only six schools in the United States to offer the Sassoon Academy School Connection Program. They also incorporate Milady's Business Fundamentals Program, which addresses accountability, retail, sales tracking, goal setting and marketing. Their make-up curriculum is from the Make-Up Designory (MUD). They are the only educational institution outside of New York and Los Angeles to offer an advanced certification professional make-up program at this level and are the only MUD affiliate in the nation.

Staff. Artistic Director, Diego Raviglione, is the former Graham Webb corporate artistic trainer with numerous editorial, platform and runway experiences during his career. He joined the school staff to help students explore their artistic side, learn advanced techniques and gain inspiration to go beyond just preparing to pass the state exam. He leads the Master Artistic Team in working on semi-annual trend collections, fashion shows and local designer advertising campaigns and editorial shoots.

Job placement. The Career Services Department offers a detailed program that encompasses helping students select a salon or spa, interviewing skills, developing a resume and holding career-oriented classes that foster and encourage professional relationships with the salon industry through the school's Advisory Committees. Based on the school's professional relationships within the industry, the academy has an extensive lead/referral base for students to access upon graduation. They also offer lifetime placement to graduates.

Real world experience in the salon. The academy's externship program gives students a true taste of what working in a salon is like. The school has partnered with carefully evaluated salons and spas to allow nail, esthetician and cosmetology students to get practical experience in the salon or spa setting under the supervision of licensed professionals in



Rivera, Salakar and Nguyen (who's also a Master Artistic Team member) served as models for the shoot. Godoy, Skipper and McPhail each carefully designed the styles and colors for their models, completing their prep work before the shoot. To see the stylists' finishing the work and read their take on the looks they created, go to firstchair.com.

the field. The partnership allows students to learn from the best, while creating the opportunity for partner salons and spas to mentor and mold potential future employees.

What the judges say

"The Sassoon Connection Program is a real bonus for students." —L.S.

"This is an amazing school. They deserve recognition for their 'extern program,' and their active participation in the industry." —M.A.

Photos: Akin Girav
Hair: Santiago Godoy, Lauren McPhail and Keith Skipper
Make-up: Gabriela Balderrama, Molly Godfrey and Michelle Sain