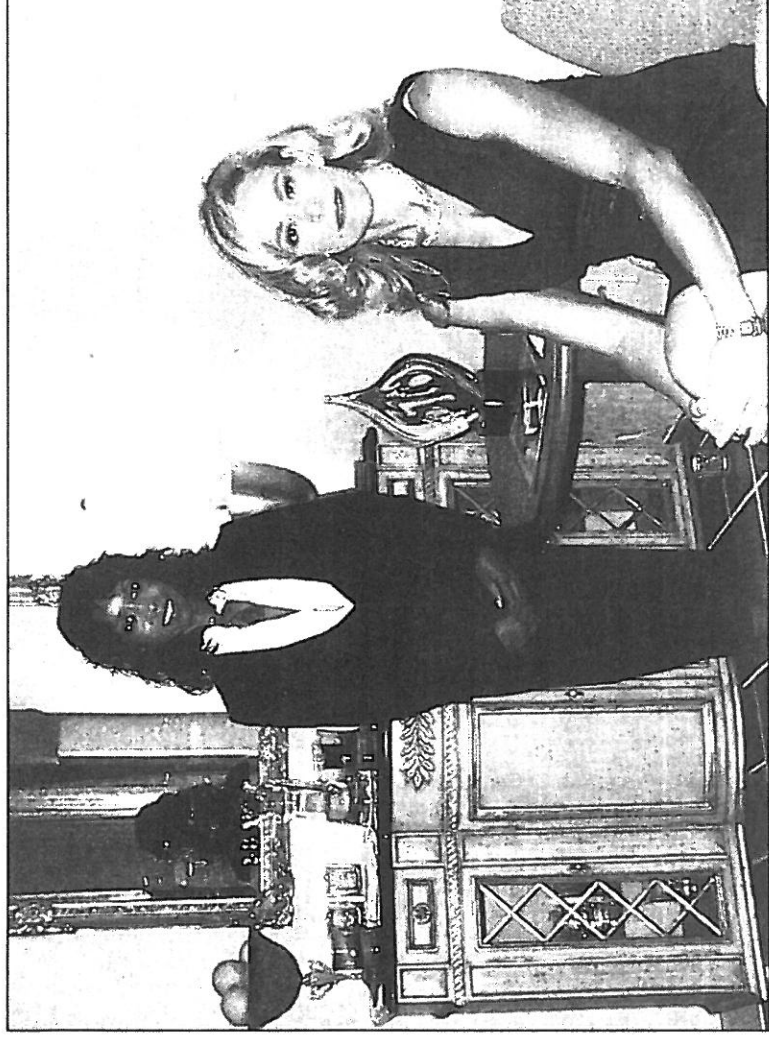


## THE THERAPY CENTER



JAN GAILLARD

Saphonia Gee, left, and Kim Thumel, co-founders of In Your Own Skin, a dedicated skin therapy center in Virginia Beach, won the International Spa de Beauté of the Year Award at a ceremony in New York City on Aug. 6.

# Co-founders are comfortable in their own skin care center

By Jan Gaillard  
Correspondent

## LYNNHAVEN

**P**artners Kim Thumel and Saphonia Gee say feeling comfortable in one's own skin is hard to put a price on.

The co-founders of a Virginia Beach skin care center recently landed the International Spa De Beauté of the Year Award sponsored by national trade publication DaySpa Magazine.

The award is presented to an establishment that personifies a dedication to esthetic excellence. Criteria includes not only quality of service and professional standards, but decor, community involvement and commitment to education.

Thumel and Gee operate In Your Own Skin, on Colonial Medical Court across from Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital.

The women received the accolade Aug. 6 in New York at the International Conference for Spa Specialists.

"It was a huge honor for us because we are so different," said Gee, a Chesapeake resident and esthetician. "The fact that our peers recognized it made it more special."

Added Gee, who handles business aspects, "We're really not a spa. That's the way the business has been de-

## About the business

In Your Own Skin is at 1825 Colonial Medical Court.

**Hours** 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays;

8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays;

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays

**Phone** 962-3655

**Web** [www.inyourownskin.com](http://www.inyourownskin.com)

finied, but everything we do has a benefit to the skin."

In Your Own skin opened in February 2006.

"There's spa and decor, along with resort and relaxation," said Gee, who owns a school, Virginia Institute of Esthetics. "Then there's the medical aspect, of treatment and correction."

The Beach center offers customized skin therapy services, including outpatient recovery from cosmetic plastic surgery and other procedures, massage, anti-aging hydrotherapies, and corrective facial and body treatments, Thumel said.

Clients who enter the muted browns, greens and golds of the hallways with antique wood beans are greeted by fresh orchids and a sense of Old World luxury with all the modern conveniences. What they can't see is the level of quality care Thumel and Gee worked for two years

to obtain as they lobbied in Washington, D.C., to require licensing for Virginia's estheticians.

"I wanted to change the level of education about skin care in Virginia," said Gee. "We wanted to influence what's happening today as far as skin-care products and ingredients and for the future."

The battle was exciting and emotional, Thumel said. "There was a lot of opposition. We not only got licensing, but a two-tier one, so it raised the level of education for esthetics," the Bay Colony resident said. "I really respect the delegates and senators who have to wade through all that every day, but they were fair."

Client Sherry Pitsilides appreciates the women's dedication to quality skin care and In Your Own Skin's atmosphere.

"They're not just fluff and puff," said Pitsilides.

"This spa brings a new level to the area because the individual protocols are so tailored. The products they have suggested are beneficial. I'm not 30 anymore, and I've been around the block. It's the first place I've been that the proof is in the pudding."

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