

FLYING SOLO

'LIFE STYLIST' TEACHES ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Story by Kimberly Hundley :: Photos by Chad Koerber

If you've ever stood next to Johnny G while waiting in line at Starbucks or airport security, or you name it, chances are excellent that you've met him. He's a man on a mission to make everyone remember they are beautiful inside and out, and he's not going to miss an opportunity to ask the person standing next to him who does their hair.

In a city teeming with independent and chain salons, Johnny G has paved his own way as a solo artist of sorts, driven by passion and an ambition to be a millionaire someday so he can give back to the community. He's determined to do this by bringing Beverly Hills hair to Scottsdale heads, and eventually to the rest of the Valley.

"I don't consider myself a hair designer, but a life designer. I take into consideration everything about you—lifestyle, body, head shape. I want everyone to look and feel like a star," he says.

Not too many hair professionals have written an inspirational book of beauty tips and assurances that anything is possible.

Johnny spent four years writing *Creating Beauty From the Inside – Out: Every Woman's Guide to Success, Happiness and Fulfillment in life, Love and Career*. Nearly all his clients leave with complimentary copies.

"It helps the inner you come out," he says. "You have to be beautiful first before you can show it on the outside."

TRIUMPH OVER TRAGEDY

If Johnny G sounds more like an inspirational speaker than a stylist, it's for good reason. About 15 years ago when he was known as Johnny Grinsky and still living in his Ohio hometown working construction, a tragedy and a miracle happened in the same moment.

He was traveling on the Ohio turnpike when his tire rod broke. The car flipped twice, ejecting him through the sunroof then landing directly on top of his body, leaving only his head free.

At the hospital, doctors operated on Grinsky, who miraculously appeared to escape with only burns, severed tendons

and a gash to the head. Later they discovered he'd also suffered a mild stroke. After almost three weeks in intensive care, Grinsky began the long climb back to recovery. It took him a year to learn how to walk again and grab hold of things.

He had a lot of time to think.

"The accident helped me come to learn how life is a gift and there are no dress rehearsals," he says. "My motto is 'screw it, just do it.' You can do anything you want in life."

While lying in bed and throughout rehabilitation, Johnny says he could have given up lots of times. But in his mind's eye he'd begun to crystallize his goal to combine his enthusiasm for art and inspirational books with a new career—he'd always had a knack for styling his girlfriends' hair, but hadn't taken the talent for "hairdressing" seriously.

The stroke left him off balance on his left side with a trigger finger. Not ideal for training with scissors and blow dryers. But Johnny, a former competitive street



Johnny G collaborated on the salon's new look with designers Ram and Ruth Bassignan of Khalsa Construction. The Bassignans sourced everything from flooring to faucets in the Airpark. Their son, Cameron, was a client of Johnny's and now is handling his web presence and graphic design.

HAIR BY JOHNNY G
 10201 N. Scottsdale Road, No. 10
 480-235-4792
 HairbyJohnnyG.com
 Facebook.com/HairbyJohnnyG

GRAND OPENING OF NEW SALON
 5 p.m.-7 p.m. Thur., June 9
 (North Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting 5:45 p.m.)
 Enjoy Skinny Girl margaritas, champagne, and mini fruit cupcakes.
 Giveaways include a Beverly Hills makeover by Johnny G.



dancer, learned to compensate for his body's new limitations.

"My accident and my disability made me who I am today," he says, and recites his mission statement from memory: "I'm here to master the art of dreaming that all is possible so I can touch people's hearts and souls by expressing their uniqueness and being authentically me."

Johnny didn't just learn to style and color hair, he excelled at it. After moving to Arizona, he worked at Beauty First, a national franchise on Shea Boulevard, where he memorized every detail about the Goldwell color line, even the page numbers in the educational material. He won Goldwell's national color contest and a trip to London to train at its prestigious academy.

Today he continues to update his skills with routine trips to the J. Beverly Hills Training Academy of celebrity stylist Juan Juan.

The Johnny G tagline, "Bringing Beverly Hills to Scottsdale," seems to have struck a chord with his target clientele. His personal Facebook page has 4,000 friends, and Johnny is in the process of transferring them to his official new business page, where he holds contests and shares encouragement and product advice. He knows exactly how many "likes" he has at any given time (144 as of press time). A new website is due to be launched any day as well.

So far, 2011 has been a banner year for the Johnny G brand. Not content to be fully booked at his salon suite on Via de Ventura and Hayden, Johnny moved to a more

central location on Shea and Scottsdale in May, designing the new suite to reflect his ultra-modern style.

Always enthusiastic about in-depth consultations, he's now developed an imaging program on his iPad that is light years beyond pointing to Jennifer Aniston's hair in a magazine.

"I can take a picture of a client and show them how bangs or different colors or lengths would look with their face shape," he says. "The technology has been around for years, but I'm taking it to the next level."

A second chair sits in the new salon, and Johnny plans to hire an assistant and train them in the "Hair by Johnny G total experience." Within a year, the new life stylist will be on the floor building his own clientele, and another assistant will step into the apprenticeship.

"I'm going to start opening different concepts like this, maybe in Chandler and Arrowhead," Johnny says.

He looks around at the glittering floors and sleek lines of his new salon. "This is my passion," he says. "I'm living the dream." ■

Editor's Note: In the small-business world, many entrepreneurs are in the solo stage, either by design or because they're still taking their dream to the next level. Every aspect of the business—from marketing to execution—falls solely on them. This is the first installment of "Flying Solo," a spotlight on inspirational one-person shows.



Johnny G's next-generation "look book" incorporates iPad images of actual clients. Using an adaptation of the Color Fusion program, he can show clients in seconds what they would look like with different hairstyles and colors.