

Look and Feel Good at Aveda Institute

Written by Marcia Humphrey
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Right now, I am sitting in the reception area at Aveda Institute Minneapolis. My ten-year-old daughter, Arianna, is having her hair washed, blow-dried, and flat-ironed. No, I haven't abandoned the straightening comb(s); they are all stored safely under my kitchen sink (exactly where my mama used to keep hers). It's just that sometimes this mama needs a break from doing all that hair, and at only \$15 for the service-the price is right (you know that it's always about getting that deal and I figure this was a good one).

Not familiar with Aveda Institute? Briefly, it's a high-end beauty school that offers hair care, facials, and massage treatments, using their own (really good) plant-based products. Yes, their low-cost offering of the full salon and spa experience has only one small-ish catch: the stylists/students are practicing on you! But wait; don't let that tiny fact send you running in the other direction quite yet. You just may find that (at least a few of) the students know their stuff!

I pulled into the parking lot at about 8:30 am, and noticed a steady flow of cars arriving. I first thought it was the Aveda students, but later learned that other customers, who did not make appointments, were arriving early to get in line; they are seen on a first-come first-served basis. The inside of the building is spacious and has plenty of seating in the waiting area. It also features a retail area where all the (pricey) products are sold. On the opposite side, cute little bistro sets were available for customers to read, use their laptops, or sip the complimentary tea (licorice-flavored, my least favorite-but a lovely touch).

Who Should Go? Now remember, I told you they are practicing on you, and that's why it's cheap. So if you have severely damaged and fragile hair, don't leave your regular stylist to save a buck or two; I don't want you sending me emails and blaming me that the rest of your hair fell out! If your hair is basically healthy, you will be fine. Instructors are on the floor monitoring the students and check their work before the customer leaves. For me, it was a great place to take my daughter because I was curious if those high-end Aveda products would really make a difference in her usually dry hair. Guess what-it did!

At the end of Ari's service, the student-stylist escorted her down to the waiting area where I was waiting. She walked me over to the retail area, and showed me which three products she used on my girl's hair. She then explained what each did, and gently suggested that I purchase them. I appreciated the explanation, and although I did not purchase any on the spot, I plan to next time.

Other drawbacks of the beauty school? The young woman took around three hours to perform the service; it would have taken an experienced pro about one to two hours. I suspect it would take less time if Ari saw her next time. In addition, you are not guaranteed the stylist of your choice, but if you find one you particularly like, you can make a request. I was given a few names of some top students and plan to try them all! Could Aveda Institute Minneapolis be a bargain for you? If you have more time than money, as I often do, then it might be! Enjoy!

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