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‘Hair Games’ to find the city’s best stylist



Photos by Alan H. Hicks

India Rochelle Rice, left, and Katrice Thompkins organize The Hair Games, a styling competition scheduled for June 8 in University City. “The premise of the show is similar to ‘The Hunger Games,’” said Rice. “Only one will emerge.”

8 hair stylists,
makeup artists
compete for title

The organizers of the The Hairs Games on June 8 say their competition shares a few similarities with author Suzanne Collins’ “The Hunger Games” trilogy.

“The premise of the show is similar to The Hunger Games,” said India Rochelle Rice. “Not exactly, but similar.”

Competitors in both contests display vivid costumes before the masses – with every detail – from hair to toenail polish – examined.

And success is important to both sets of entrants in their respective worlds. It’s the stakes that are different.

In the fictional “Hunger Games” books and films, to win means to stay alive. Winning The Hair Games means securing a yearlong reign as the best stylist in Charlotte.

The contest, now in its second year, takes place 6-9p.m. June 8 at the Hilton University Place in Charlotte. Audience tickets range from \$25 to \$35.

Dreamed up by Katrice Thompkins, 43, of Arbor Hill and India Rochelle Rice, 43, of Highland Creek, the event is intended to draw friendly competition from the hair stylist and makeup artist communities.

Thompkins and Rice have 20-plus years of experience each in the beauty business.

Thompkins, who owns 5th & 57th Styling Studios in University City and Statesville, grew up in Queens, N.Y. She sharpened her skills on the kinds of unique opportunities that come from living in a large metropolitan area.

Want to go?

What: The Hair Games.

When: 6 p.m. June 8.

Where: Hilton University Place, 8629 J.M. Keynes Drive, Charlotte.

Details: www.thehairgames.com.

Once, the makeup artist scheduled for the televised Christmas in Rockefeller Center special hosted by Al Roker didn't show up. Thompkins was plucked from her salon at the last minute to do the makeup for Roker and his musical guests, Mary J. Blige and Missy Elliot.

The singers were so grateful, Thompkins remembered, that they rewarded the stylist with the chance to sing backup for them during the show.

"Only in New York can you do celebrity makeup and then sing backup at the lighting of the Christmas tree," she said.

Rice, who owns Rochelle Salon Suites in University City, studied cosmetology in the Bronx, but turned to the business side of beauty, earning her MBA in business administration. She moved to Charlotte in 2008.



The duo decided last year to stage a contest that would showcase the talented stylists in the community and allow them to stretch their creative wings.

They spread the word throughout the community, capping the number of contestants at eight.

Stylists will show up early to create unique looks backstage on up to 10 models. Other professionals in the business will judge their work in four categories: performance, execution, originality and time.

Audience participation will make up the fifth category. Last year's audience swelled past 500, mainly with colleagues and their clients cheering on their favorites.

"We give them the flexibility to do whatever they want to do; however, we need it to be suitable for ages 5 to 80," said Thompkins. "It's a family show."

Many of the contestants will choose a theme to showcase through their models.

"Last year's third-place winner's models were dressed as drinks," said Rice. "She had a lady dressed up as a piña colada, another as a screwdriver, and another as a martini with an olive. It was fantastic. It was colorful."

| Lisa Thornton |