



Butterfly Studio Salon

Founder/hairstylist Kattia Solano talks evolution, renovation, and hair trends

WORDS BY VANESSA PASCALE

Butterfly Studio Salon in New York City recently received a gorgeous renovation or should I say, transformation as this is what butterflies do. “I just redid the salon again... Added more chairs, stations, better flow. Took down walls to allow all the natural light in. Invested in the best lighting—it helps for color,” says founder/hairstylist Kattia Solano. The renowned salon also revised their menu to include services tailored toward the on-the-go client. Their Paint Bar is a fantastic means to enhance your look or intensify your color without sitting in the chair for hours.

At Butterfly Studio Salon, they pride themselves on transforming a client’s hair. “I wanted a name that people would remember #1 and also feel good about it. I swear, I’ve never met anyone that didn’t like butterflies. And I love the transformation process of it, so we went with Butterfly,” Kattia explains.

I am in the bustling, bright, airy salon with Kattia who is preparing to transform my brunette locks to a sun-shiney blonde. As she explains the process to me (it will take two visits to achieve the Jennifer

Aniston hue I covet), she begins to mix the bleach. Kattia knew she wanted to do hair since high school, so once she graduated, she enlisted in beauty school. “It was in my blood,” says the third-generation hairstylist, whose grandfather was a barber and aunt was a hairdresser. She started out at a salon in New Jersey, where her passion for education led her to teaching in the hair industry. From there she went to Frédéric Fekkai in Manhattan for seven years where she assisted, worked on photo shoots with Kim Basinger and other

well-known 90s models and a list of incredible people in the world of hair. “I had a great time and learned so much.” Her next move was to New York City’s John Barrett Salon.

Ultimately, Kattia wanted to do editorial, but needed to make some money, so she began to work out of her apartment. “And then September 11th happened—that changed everything. No more traveling. I wasn’t traveling doing editorial and that’s when it changed for me. OK, I want to be a salon owner. There was 6 of us in this tiny little space and it wasn’t a legal salon. I looked for spaces and this came up,” says Kattia about her centrally-located, Flatiron District location. “That was in 2003 and it’s been almost 16 years. You do it because you love it, the passion for the art. I had to learn the business aspect, and asked the right questions to the right people.”

It’s almost two decades later and the salon continues to thrive – which is another reason for the renovation—they needed to add more chairs and stations for their growing staff. Some of her employees have been with her for 15 years. “That says a lot! That’s kinda rare in our business. People are always moving around.” What do you think sets you apart from other hair salons? “We really try to be a high-luxury service, but with a kind heart, making sure everyone feels comfortable. I think the culture is a big thing that keeps staff happy and loyal, and if they’re happy and loyal, that’s going to make the clientele happy and loyal, too, which we have. We have clients that have been around forever.” Kattia, who is big on education, also makes sure

to stay on top of what’s on-trend and happening in the world.

What hair trends are you seeing this season? “Short hair! Finally – which is kinda refreshing. The popular one I love, a lot of color. Lobs and bobs.” A hands-on owner, you will definitely find Kattia working in the salon—all day Tuesday-Thursday, and educating on Mondays and Fridays. And she is constantly working on their social media. “It takes a lot of time—it’s like a full-time job,” she says with a laugh.

Kattia patiently and expertly paints the bleach into my hair, then covers it with foil. “Tiny highlights will change the overall color and it will make it lighter. The teasey foils between will make it much brighter,” she explains. When the foiling is complete, you can barely find me beneath my heavy tin helmet. But the hours and new head gear are worth it, because once my hair is rinsed out, toned, treated, shampooed, and blow-dried, I am definitely blonder, and happy with my new hue. I return a few weeks later for the second process, which is not so drastic this time around. This visit, Kattia paints the bleach onto my hair and covers it with plastic wrap. Kattia then trims my blonde tresses and slices in some soft, face-framing pieces. The end-result is beautiful. I am blonder, I feel beautiful, and yes, transformed. **ML**

Butterfly Studio Salon is located at 149 5th Avenue, #2, New York, NY 10010. For more information, visit www.butterflystudiosalon.com or call 212-253-2100, and follow them on Instagram @Butterflystudiosalon.



What is your favorite part about your job?
“The fact that I can be artistic and creative and, at the same time, impact someone, make someone feel good about themselves, feel prettier, give a lot of confidence... And, that I’m doing what I love to do and that is to change and transform hair.”

