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Porto Designers Create National Award Winner

May 14, 2007 (RALEIGH, NC) –According to *Salon Today* magazine’s panels of judges, Samuel Cole Salon in North Raleigh, designed by **Michael Perry** and **Clark Hipolito** of Porto home furnishings in Raleigh, has the second most beautiful and innovative interior of any hair styling salon in North America.

The salon’s owners Jack and Joelle Ray, recently learned that their remodeled and renovated salon has been named First Runner Up in *Salon Today’s* annual “Salons of the Year” décor competition, placing it second only to the grand-prize winner, Fekkai Beaute De Provence Salon in New York City.

“Samuel Cole was a special project,” Perry said, “not only because it allowed me to bring sustainable practices to a commercial space but I had to create a space that my wife would want to go to since she has been a client for years! It is a real honor to be first runner up. Since it is my first salon, being second to Fekkai was a real surprise.”

Located at 240 Newton Road in Raleigh, Samuel Cole Salon officially unveiled its new, modern, curvilinear interior in February of this year. The award-winning interior features sleek espresso-colored cabinetry, a polished Pakistani onyx reception counter, a glowing shampoo station with sculptural porcelain bowls from Germany, and both bamboo and cork flooring.

The remodeling enlarged the salon from 1400 square feet to 2800 square feet, which gave Perry and Hipolito ample room to use custom-designed cabinetry to create separate and distinctive areas for styling services, retail, and reception. The overall design concept also strikes a balance between “urban chic” and “warm and inviting” by juxtaposing the more sleek, modern

aspects of the interior with such elements as a pale blue ceiling and the honey-hued flooring.

The "Salons of the Year" competition focuses on new and newly remodeled salons. According to the magazine, judging takes place in three phases. First, the editors review each entry, which consists of photography and essays. f8 Photo Studios of Raleigh provided Samuel Cole Salon's photography.

The panel of editors and art directors then evaluate each entry in more detail and narrow the field down to 20 salons. Finally, the judges view seven to 10 photos of each and score them in five décor categories. The salon with the highest score is the grand-prize winner and will be featured on the June cover. The next highest score is first runner-up. The second, third and fourth runners-up follow the same progression. The remaining salons are designated "Salons of Distinction."

As first-runner up, Samuel Cole Salon will receive a full-page feature in the magazine's June 2007 edition. The salon is also scheduled to be featured in *American Salon* magazine this summer.

Perry, Hipolito and partner Emily Barrett opened Porto in Raleigh's North Hills shopping center two years ago, offering interior design services as well as fine home furnishings, accessories and original art. They will open their second location in Chapel Hill's Eastgate Shopping Center in June.

Clark Hipolito is also principal of The Art Company, an interdisciplinary design firm that specializes in various phases of interior design, including faux finishes and other special painting effects. His work was recently featured in *Waterfront Homes & Design* magazine.

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