

## Interview with Doris

Good afternoon. My name is Doris, and yes, I do hair. Yes, of course, you already know that. I love, love, just love my job. It's the customers; they all have stories to tell. They come here sad or tired or just wiped out, and they leave transformed. You know any other professions that make people feel so great so easily? Didn't think so.

I've been doing this, oh gee, I can't remember, about fifteen years now. I'm right next to the barber. A lot of men, still, they do come here. I do a bit of a better cut than they do next door, but we're buddies, so don't tell him.

Mostly I do women. Lots of women. I know them all, their husbands, boyfriends, lovers, friends and enemies. Once they get in my chairs – well, as expected, they just love to talk. Part of what makes living in a small town worthwhile, don't you think? You need a haircut? Looks a little long in the back. Sure, some other time.

My favorite, and most interesting clients, are the elderly set, women of a certain age. They're in their 80s and 90s. We should be so lucky, don't you think? Oh yes, and I do all the people in uniform. They don't gossip as much, as you can imagine. Mum's the word, eh?

If you sit in my chair you can watch the whole world go by – just outside there. Saturdays and Sundays, we have the farmer's market on Saturdays, and gee, I would think, maybe 40 to 50 bicyclists come out here on weekends. Go on, go on down to the Bovine, there's a line out to all tomorrow. You can't miss 'em. You don't bicycle? What do you do? Oh, this interview is about me, of course. Have a seat.

How did I get into this business? By accident. Found myself in the family way – just out of high school. My mom, bless her heart, she paid for eight months of beauty school. The father? Barry? Useless piece of ... oh, that's right, this is a family newspaper.

My son Joshua, he's eleven now. He's a good boy. He'll follow in his Mother's footsteps and learn a trade, I'll make sure of that.

I open in ten minutes. Usually my customers come in, in rapid succession, so I can't talk for much longer.

Secrets? Honey, of course I keep secrets. Bartenders and hairdressers, they know everyone's secrets, it's an unwritten code. And no, I can't tell you any of them. Go ahead, ask Robert over at the Western. He'll tell you the same thing.

The older set, they do like getting their hair dyed. Sometimes white and gray hair, it can go yellow and not look very good. My expertise is highlights. No, they don't go in for streaks like Susan Sontag. I do a lot better job than that. When they leave here their hair looks nice.

Winter? I love the winter out here. Rain comes down in torrents, just outside my window, right here. But people still need haircuts and styles, don't they? Doesn't change much for me.

Yes, there are people I will not help. How can I say this? It's my shop. See the sign? I can and do refuse service sometimes. I say no to anyone who bad mouths our ladies, of course, and anyone who wants to bring a dog in here. That Mrs. Willis, for example. Can you imagine the gall? Sometimes people with attitude, people with big cars, do not necessarily mean big tippers. I mean, honestly.

Look out there. See? The loaded down bicyclists? They're the ones I admire. I give them free haircuts. Oh ma'am, if you bicycled up and down the coast for a month, wouldn't you want to feel beautiful too? Thought so.

Yes, I do children, though they do wiggle so. Mrs. R, no, I can't do you early. Please wait. Five minutes, ten? Now, please don't rattle your cane at me, go get a cup of coffee, I'll be here. Take this, then. Keep the change.

Yes, I do children, though they wiggle so. I use my sharpest scissors. Why? Because I have to be fast. In and out in a jiffy, candy or a treat. I make their mothers sit outside or go to Toby's. Everyone does better under my practiced hands if they're alone, ma'am.

Have you seen the latest? Asymmetrical cuts, eyes obscured by hair. That's not my style, but what the customer wants, eh? You could use a little trim, like I said.

I figure Joshua and me, we'll be here another ten years. Get him through Tomales High, yes, it's quite a good school, right now he's at West Marin, just up the street. Does he come here right after school? You better believe it. You have children? A husband? What kind of work does he ... oh, that's right, this interview is about me.

I'm a therapist, doctor, bartender and beauty expert, all wrapped up in one. Give me your downtrodden, your sad people. Everyone deserves pampering! Makes people feel good, proud of themselves. Me? And what do I do if I want to be pampered? Joshua's too young for that. When he's at school, and if it's one of my off days, I wrap my head in a towel, fill the tub with lemon balm, and soak for an hour. Then I'm ready for whatever God brings my way. You believe in God, ma'am? I sure do.