

Brazil's Azzar, Haidresser to Princesses

Contributed by Marina Sarruf
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The Lebanese coiffeur Georges Azzar, who has worked for three years at one of Brazil's best known beauty salons, Jacques Janine, has already combed the hair of two Arab princesses, one from Bahrain and one from Saudi Arabia.

Habib, as he is called by his Brazilian clients, arrived in São Paulo in December 2001 to visit some relatives and decided to stay in the city.

Azzar was born in Lebanon, but lived in Paris for 16 years, where he worked in two salons, at Alexandre Zouari and Jacques Dessanges, and made contact with the Arab princesses.

"It was a client of mine who recommended me to a princess of Bahrain. In the first times, the princess travelled to Paris for me to do her hair, then she invited me to live in Bahrain and be her exclusive hairdresser," he said.

Azzar accepted the proposal and went to live in one of the six palaces of the royal family. He prefers not to disclose the names of the families and the princesses.

"I lived for three months in the Arab country. She had a beauty parlour inside the palace, where I dyed, cut and dressed her hair and that of her family," he says.

According to Azzar, the princess was a modern woman, had dark and long hair, but she decided to dye them blond and red. "She would do everything to look prettier for her husband. Beneath her veil existed a very pretty, intelligent and modern woman," he states.

After three months in Bahrain, Azzar decided to go back to Paris. Even so, he continued travelling to the Arab country, to care for the princess' hair. For three years, he would spend three weeks in France and one in Bahrain.

Still in France, Azzar also received an invitation to care for a Saudi princess' hair. In spite of being from Saudi Arabia, the princess lived in a palace in Cairo with her two daughters. "I went to Egypt about four times to do the princess' and her daughters' hair," he said.

According to him, the Arab women like to dress up very much; they buy luxurious and tight dresses, wear make-up and dye their hair. Only the husband, however, and the other women are allowed to see them uncovered.

"In the palace in Bahrain there were parties for the women almost everyday, there they could also stay without the veil," he tells.

In Brazil

Azzar was interested by the profession in his adolescence. "I started working as a hairdresser assistant in a salon in Beirut. When I was 17 years old I went to Paris to do a course and when I arrived I found out they had colleges for coiffeurs and I joined in, it was three years," he states.

As well as Brazil, Lebanon, France and Bahrain, Azzar also lived in Italy. He travelled for the first time to São Paulo in 1990 to visit a brother, who already lived in the city.

"I have relatives around the whole of Brazil. There are more people here than in Beirut," he states. He stayed in Brazil for

good on the second time he came to visit his family, in December 2001.

"I liked the country and the Brazilian people. I let go of everything in Paris and decided to move to São Paulo. My Lebanese blood was what made go on this adventure," states Azzar, who did not know one word in Portuguese when he arrived.

"Here in São Paulo all my family worked with trade, nobody had contact with professionals in my area, so I went after it myself," said the coiffeur.

According to him, his entry at the Jacques Janine was on chance. "I took the test as a joke and managed a position at the Morumbi Shopping Mall, where I worked for a month, and then came to the salon on Augusta street," he says.

According to Azzar, his plan is to stay in Brazil and have his own salon in the future.

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