

THE next time you meet a confident young lady with a firm handshake and confident smile, there's a chance that she could have attended the city-based Ecole Solitaire's grooming workshop for women.

If the enthusiasm of the 20 young women attending the ongoing Ecole Solitaire workshop is any indication, it seems grooming is very much in.

The workshop, being held over a period of seven Sundays at the Le Meridien, promises to take participants through the entire gamut of

grooming, including table etiquette, business etiquette, social communication skills, personal grooming (hygiene, the use of cosmetics, perfumes etc), self analysis, goal setting, time management, career planning, non-verbal communication and health and fitness.

Ecole Solitaire chief Minocher Patel, a business management graduate has arguably been the pioneer of the grooming business in the city. *Pune Times* caught up with Minocher on the first

PRIDE AND GROOM



Rahul Chandawarkar

Sunday of the seven Sunday workshop and saw the trainer in his element. In his jocular style, Minocher

had his young audience in splits. However, the intention was not just to entertain but to drive home more serious

issues laced with humour.

According to Minocher, city-based

Grooming expert Minocher Patel conducting the grooming workshop for women at the Hotel Le Meridien

women like former corporate leader Lila Poonawala, former mayor Vandana Chavan and dancer Ewa Maria Cherukuru would address the young students and tell them what it takes to make it big. Says Minocher, "This interaction is crucial because these ladies are fantastic role models." Significantly, the Lila Poonawala Foundation has sponsored over 10 young women to the ongoing workshop.

Role models apart, Minocher is also using methods like video shooting, lectures, exercises and demonstrations to communicate the benefits of grooming in today's competitive world.

No idle talk this. The indication of how successful the workshop is turning out be could be gauged from the bright smiles and confident faces at the end of the first Sunday. Says Pournima Dere, a young software engineer, "I was very nerv-

ous and shy in the morning, but just a few hours at the workshop and I am already feeling a lot more confident."

Likewise, Manisha Advani, a marketing executive with a business management degree feels that the workshop will improve her grooming and presentation skills.

Or take Jyoti Otageri, a microbiologist, who admitted that she had even been unsure about what to wear to the workshop, but having spent a day interacting with fellow participants, she was feeling much more confident.

The workshop is not just restricted to working professionals. As many as four housewives are also trying to equip themselves with personality enhancement skills.

Says Monali Naik, wife of a merchant navy officer, "My husband and I socialise a lot and I am sure that this grooming workshop will do my confidence a lot of good."

— Rahul Chandawarkar

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