

Business on a small scale

Every other Tuesday: People at work for themselves

Mechanic fights sexism, opens shop of her own

By **CHRISTINE VAN DUSEN**
cvandusen@ajc.com

Catherine Simpson has come a long way since co-workers put a dead rat on her work table, welcoming her to the “man’s world” of auto repair in 1992.

“I didn’t want to complain,” says Simpson, now 34. “I had a goal in mind.”

In October of 2000, she achieved it, opening her own shop: Catherine’s Automotive Repair & Service in Atlanta.

What once made Simpson an anomaly and an outcast is now contributing to her success.

“In general, this industry has a bad name for itself, unfortunately, treating customers badly,” says Russ Sauer, who works in Simpson’s shop. “They’re coming here, maybe looking for something different.”

Simpson’s shop isn’t much different from most, really. The white-walled waiting room is of the typical bland variety. But instead of Popular Mechanics or a



BEN GRAY / Staff

Catherine Simpson, shown with her dog, Maggie, no longer works on cars because of business demands.

years-old Reader’s Digest, there are shiny, new magazines on the table: Vegetarian Life, InStyle, Rosie.

A calendar in the break room features a monthly photo of a classic car. Absent,

► Please see **MECHANIC, D6**

