

The Bob Squad

We know what you're thinking. You know all about the so-called new-age bob. In fact, you've already cut dozens—make that hundreds—of these angular cuts over the past two years. Sorry, wrong number. This season's bob calls for classic precision-cutting techniques and skillful disconnected shapes that are a far cry from the forgiving textured haircuts that have ruled the beauty scene for so long. Our advice? Pump up your cutting skills and give your "been there, done that" haircuts a delicious new spin. Who should you target? All of those clients who are still sporting old-fashioned textured styles, of course!

Besides cutting a clean precision bob, whether straight or asymmetrical, Joico international creative director Damien Carney cautions that disconnected shapes are meant to add strategic lengths, texture and volume, while still visibly blending with the balance of the haircut. He notes, "This is where all master craftsmen and artists can flex their cutting prowess. It's much more involved than simply cutting two different shapes; disconnected sections must connect at some point, whether it's by length, weight or both."

"Asymmetrical cuts have also definitely hit mainstream," says Luis Alvarez, vice president of creative and co-founder of Aquage. "Models are the best barometer for hair trends; anytime they go for a cut, it's definitely a commercial trend. Lately, models have been excited about asymmetry. The back of the haircut has a strong, precise shape with the sides falling into asymmetrical lengths. The look blends beautifully and really adds a unique twist to every cut. Victoria Beckham is the queen of asymmetry at the moment; she looks fabulous."

With their need for frequent attention, the newest bobs also promise to plump up your books. "Textured shapes can grow out gracefully from a soft bob to a feathery mid-length style without requiring a single visit to the salon," explains Luke O'Connor, co-owner of Lukaro Salon & Spa in Beverly Hills and lead stylist for *The New Adventures of Old Christine*. "Not so for the newest bobs. These precision styles must be cut at six-week intervals, or they'll completely lose their shape."

TREND #2 NEW-AGE BOBS



Katie Holmes surprises fans by trading her lanky locks for a tousled, textured bob.



Just when you thought that Victoria Beckham's bob set the gold standard, this saucy maven flipped her style: a mussed, asymmetrical bob with layers, disconnected shapes and an icy blonde color to complement her cool personality.



A rare glimpse at Beckham's disconnected haircut, sans her signature side tuck.



Julie Delpy harnesses her inner Veronica Lake with these smooth waves.

TREND #3 BREAKING WAVES

Flip Those Lanky Locks

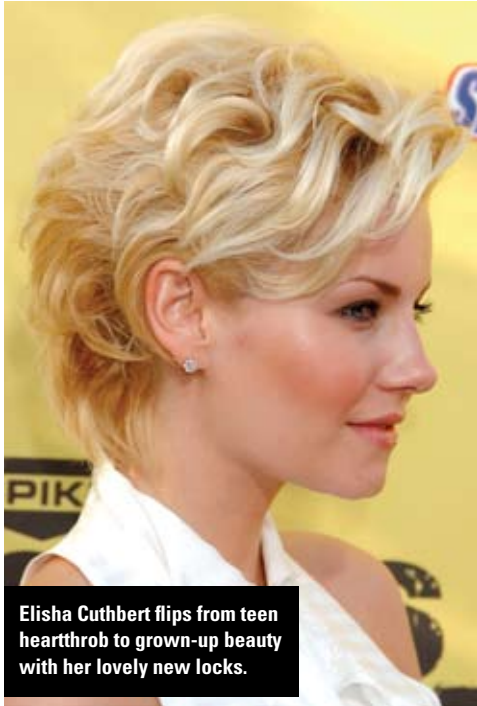
Lazy locks begone! While perfectly coiffed, smooth locks are an eternal trend, waves are in the forefront of dressy fashions. "Bold waves with hair-kicking undulations that play up texture is *au courant* for fall," says Yves Durif, owner of Yves Durif in NYC, the flagship salon for Profound Beauty.

Who are our muses for these smoldering retro looks? Just about any movie siren from the '40s will do. "For the most fashion-forward clients, you'll also be seeing Gatsby-esque finger waves, especially on bobs," predicts Donna Maggi, primo runway stylist and national performing artist for Nioxin.



With precise perimeter lines and sides that are often cut into longer, disconnected shapes, the newest renditions of the bob are ideal for women of all ages and with many different face shapes, as seen on Jenny McCarthy.

TREND #4
VERSATILITY



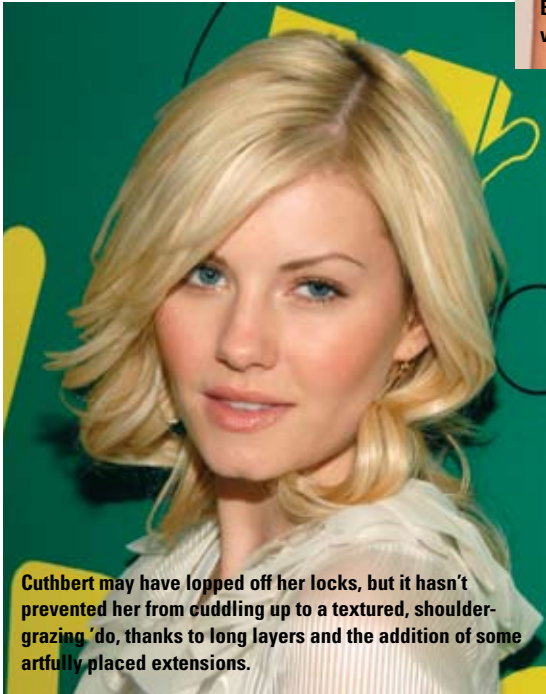
Elisha Cuthbert flips from teen heartthrob to grown-up beauty with her lovely new locks.



Even short hair can sport a faux updo when layers are cut at strategic lengths.



Nicole Richie's picture-perfect bob has length along the perimeter and long, graduated layers, making it perfect for switching-up styles.



Cuthbert may have lopped off her locks, but it hasn't prevented her from cuddling up to a textured, shoulder-grazing 'do, thanks to long layers and the addition of some artfully placed extensions.



Why settle on a single style? Twisted and chic, this mussy addition turns a smooth bob into a stylish updo in minutes.



Richie's textured bob seamlessly blends with similarly textured extensions.

Don't Fence Her In

The "What Is Beauty?" survey—commissioned by Clairol and conducted by the Harris Poll—concludes that indie-loving women crave beauty that expresses the many facets of their personalities. "Individuality is one of the biggest trends going," confirms Corby. "You can go into Barney's and find every length of skirt, every cut of top, and every flare of pants because women are demanding choices in how they look, and subsequently how they feel about themselves."

Also according to the "What Is Beauty?" survey, for 7 out of 10 women feeling beautiful also hinges on having a good hair day. And what feels great one day may cramp her style the next. Corby, who twists the strands of Rosario Dawson and Lindsay Lohan, knows firsthand about the importance of building versatility into every style. He relates, "I prefer bobs with long layers, or even one-length cuts, because you have enough material to create a variety of looks based on a single haircut."

Photos: Elisha Cuthbert (Clockwise from Left): Gregg DeGuire/WireImage.com, Jamie McCarthy/WireImage.com, Theo Wargo/WireImage.com; Nicole Richie (Clockwise from Top): Jeffrey Mayer/WireImage.com, Jeff Vespa/WireImage.com, Marsaili McGrath/Getty Images

TREND #5 EXTENDABLE STYLES

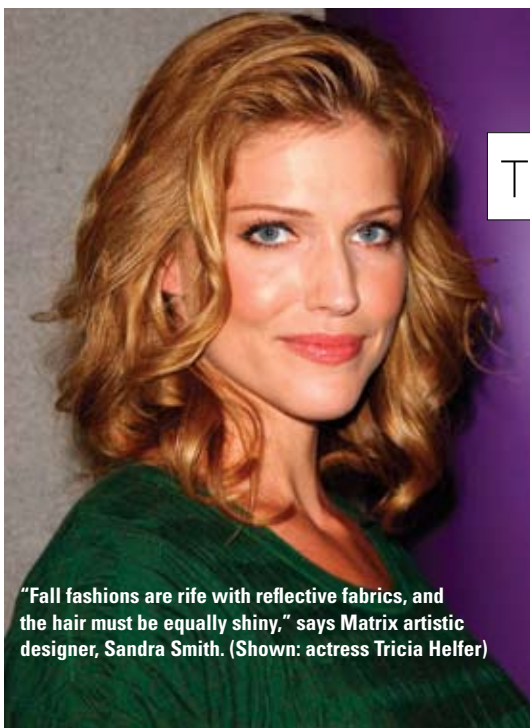


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Stretch Your Styles

Ahem. If you've been avoiding mastering the art of extensions, it's time to face the music. Eating a few words—"I don't do extensions and I never will"—is far more palatable than having a big bite taken out of your clientele.

But before you get all worked up as you imagine yourself slaving over 18-inch strands for hours on end, get this: Unlike seasons past when hipsters craved yards of fairytale hair, today's extension designs typically target believable looks (moderate length and/or thickness), substance (texture) and versatility (style and color). Whether strands are clamped, bonded or pinned-in wefts, the resulting hairstyles allow clients to enjoy all lengths of hair without going through the angst of trying to grow a mane of their own (which usually meets with defeat, anyway). The next big step being taken in some posh salons: custom-blending hair additions on the spot that perfectly match the client's texture and colorations.



"Fall fashions are rife with reflective fabrics, and the hair must be equally shiny," says Matrix artistic designer, Sandra Smith. (Shown: actress Tricia Helfer)

TREND #6 FRINGES



Matrix celebrity stylist Mark Townsend fueled the fringe trend when he added this feminine touch to actress Reese Witherspoon's haircut.

Actress Bai Ling puts an urban spin on her full fringe.



Beauty on the Fringe

Whether longish and provocative or short and sexy, fringes are one of fall's favorite fripperies for hair. Why? A full fringe can change up any hairstyle; accentuate the eyes and cheeks; de-emphasize long or protruding foreheads; elongate short foreheads by cutting deeper-set fringes; and close the curtain on two of the most common facial flaws: forehead creases and squint lines.

"Reese Witherspoon's bangs caused more than a ripple of excitement at the Academy Awards, but it still took a while for it to filter down to the woman on the street," says O'Connor, who notes with more than a little glee that catwalks and crosswalks are also intersecting. "After Gucci and Chloé models wore such bold bangs on the runways for fall, many of our clients are finally saying, 'What the heck, let's just do it.'"

Clients who simply can't overcome the fringe factor can still rock a bang every now and then via wefts or clip-on additions. "Because our background is in film, we also use tape-on bangs for actresses who want a totally different look for a special event, but can't do anything permanent while they're in the middle of a film project," says O'Connor.

TREND #7 GLOSSY, GLOSSY HAIR

Go for the Gloss

There isn't enough natural hair luster in the world to compete with the amped-up metallics and glam iridescence seen on the fall runways. "Hair has been rather matte for the past few seasons, but shine has returned with a vengeance," says Maggi. Her style consensus: Without extreme shine, hair will place a distant second to fall's glimmering fashions.

Where to begin? Start by testing top polishers and choose a few that produce extraordinary—and we mean extraordinary—shine on different hair types. Explore clear tints and processed glosses that make hair light up like a beacon. And always recommend products that support patent-leather shine from the first drop of shampoo to the final spritz of holding spray.

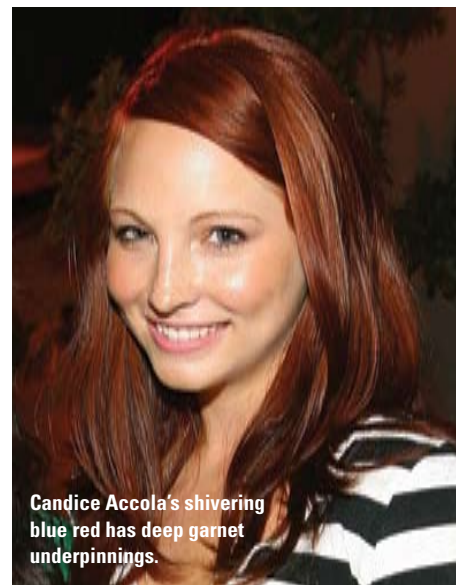
TREND #8 COOL HUES



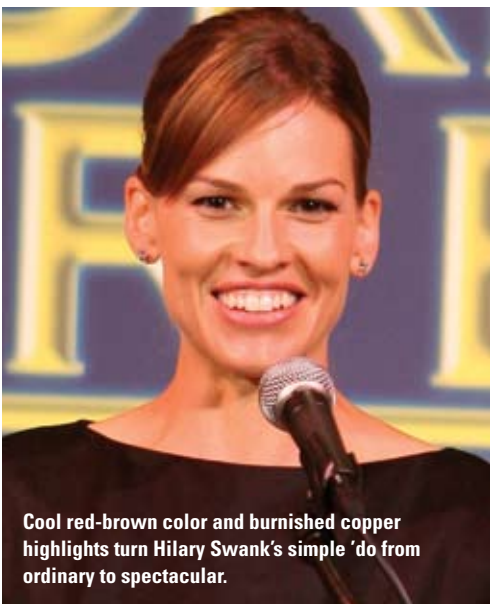
Cate Blanchett's silver beige color with a smudging of a slightly deeper family tone at the base defines the new pastel blonde for fall.



Catherine Zeta-Jones keeps her cool with a glossy, deep espresso hair coloration that has hints of indigo and slate.



Candice Accola's shivering blue red has deep garnet underpinnings.



Cool red-brown color and burnished copper highlights turn Hilary Swank's simple 'do from ordinary to spectacular.



Kerry Washington's titanium-fueled raven hair shimmers under any light.

Caution: Cool Snap Just Ahead!

You know the usual fall suspects: caramel blonde, warmest auburn and golden brown. While warm tones are eternal, a cold front is overtaking the color palette. Chilled-to-the-bone hues; glints of metallics; and blocks of neutral-to-ash family tones that are ignited with flashes of copper, mauve, or even yellow, will be accessorizing your fashionistas' fall wardrobes. "Whether it's blonde, brunette or redhead, you need to cool it down," advises Soniya Sheth, Redken's senior director of global marketing for haircolor and chemistry.

What will you need to chill out? Besides pumping up your icy color inventory, you should stock up on pure pigments and heat-processed glosses to ensure that all of your clients give you the cool shoulder this fall.

Makeover, Make Under

Translating the trends for your clients.

Before whipping out your silver coloring wand, Sandra Smith, Matrix artistic designer, reminds stylists that it's important to match the trends to your clients' personalities. "When talking about trends, it's only natural to get excited, but unless you have a true fashionista on your hands, you can win over more clients by doing hints of trends," she says. "If you change someone from warm blonde to cool brunette, for instance, she may feel like her hair is too dark. To avoid this, you can put dark underneath the hair or do baliaage [fine, freestyle painting] on top."

[Note: Sandra Smith will be teaching "Makeover-Makeunder" at Matrix Destination, June 1 to 3, 2008, at Las Vegas' MGM Grand Hotel and Casino.]

TREND #9 GRADUATED COLOR PANELS



With her smudged base, seamless panels of color and iridescent highlights, Heather Graham becomes a favorite color muse for fall.

Building Blocks of Color

Linda Yodice, co-director of Paul Mitchell's PM professional color, advises leaving single-process tints to the amateurs who stroll the drugstore aisles in search of cheap color. "Professional fall haircolor is brought to life with seamless panels of multifaceted, vibrant hues," she relates. "Imagine a beautifully cut diamond and how it sparkles in different lights and you've pegged the biggest fall trend. Depending on your perspective and how the hair is styled, the haircolor will change from subtle red to a fiery copper, or a cool black to a more metallic hue.

How do you achieve the look? Aside from topping every head of colored hair with processed glosses, Scott Cole, co-director of Paul Mitchell's PM professional color and Intercoiffure fashion director, advises, "Strategic panels of haircolor should be applied to the hair to accentuate the haircut." In the case of an angular bob, for instance, the color may be deeper at the nape and become subtly lighter as shades from the same family are added as you work your way up the head. "The panel partings can be as thin as ¼ inch to as thick as 1 inch, depending on the thickness of the hair and the design of the cut," he explains.

TREND #10 PANELS AND WASHES OF HIGHLIGHTS

Becoming Foil Deprived

Professional beautyphiles have spoken: Finely woven foil highlights and in-your-face frostings are so last season. "When a new client walks into our salon with heavily frosted hair, my first impulse is to grab her arm and say, 'Oh dear! Let me fix that,'" says Rona O'Connor, Goldwell colorist, educator and co-owner of Lukaro Salon & Spa in Beverly Hills.

"We've been floating in highlight land for quite a long time," agrees Corby. "To match the overall feel of beauty and fashion this season, we're using less foils and more vibrant colors in targeted areas, such as dark brown with panels of spicy red, or soft pink or silver tones washed over cool beige. Top celebrities are already wearing these color designs. Because they're also style-worthy for the masses, clients will want to have them done, too."

With the light dimming on finely woven, foiled highlights and chunky frostings, freestyle painting is also taking center stage. When referring to pastel blondes and even richer reds, O'Connor remarks that subtle applications of mauve highlights over cool blondes, and even garnet or ruby over rich red, give these classic colors a luscious new twist.

Sue Pemberton, Joico's international Vero K-PAK color artistic director, also paints a vibrant picture for fall. "Bold pops of color are being made client-friendly by using softer tones," she relates. "Although, in my opinion, you'll still be seeing brighter, more intense colors—and it will be on the street."

"Advancement in color technology and artistic vision is definitely bridging the gap between street and haute couture," agrees O'Connor. "Bold colors that were once considered punk are now eye candy for stylish-minded women because the application is much more subtle and creative. It's done in a way—e.g., transparent colors—that bridges the edgy and the natural for a more sophisticated result.

"With Debra Messing, for instance, I keep her base color a level six, but it sometimes looks like a level seven or eight, depending on the angle," O'Connor continues. "That's because I make the front lighter, the back darker underneath, add ruby highlights and overlay the hair with transparent canary yellow mixed as a gloss." Canary yellow? "Absolutely!" she avows. "I love to mix pure pigments to create my own looks. All professional colorists should imprint their signature techniques on every color design."

As Sandra Smith, Matrix color designer, so succinctly puts it, "It's no longer about how many foils you put on the head; it's the placement that counts."



Rona O'Connor, celebrity stylist, Goldwell educator and co-owner of Lukaro Salon & Spa in Beverly Hills, injects actress Debra Messing's red-red auburn formulation with sparks of copper and canary yellow that play peekaboo with bright studio lights.