

Monsters And Critics

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Curly hair specialist, Shai Amiel, reveals top tips for hair maintenance

By April MacIntyre Feb 2, 2010, 6:03 GMT



In this world there may be worse things for a woman to endure than a bad hair day, but that list would be small for the countless curly-haired women who have spent years of their lives in search of just one miraculous stylist, haircut, coloring products, tips and techniques that would finally set curls free and their wide heads looking sane, soft and sexy – say like Minnie Driver or Sarah Jessica Parker to name a few.

Amiel in action, flipping over client to snip Bonsai-style photo by ©M&C

All they want is to be “normal.” Curly hair specialist, Shai Amiel says there’s a simple solution. It starts with accepting your hair will never be ‘normal.’

“Curly hair is not like straight hair. It can’t be cut the same, colored the same, washed the same, conditioned, styled or even dried the same as “normal girls.” However, it can be coveted like none other.



Amiel knows this because he has women come from all over the West Coast and the Country to his beloved Capella Salon in Studio City, (near the Studios in Los Angeles.)

They make the trip because Amiel was one of only two people trained in the U.S. to cut, color and tame the curly headed by the famed Lorrain Massey.

It all starts with the right cut. Amiel cuts each hair individually and precisely and only the hairs that need cutting. Although a native of Tel Aviv, watching Amiel's gentle and almost meditative process is reminiscent of watching the Bonsai tree artists of Japan shape the exquisite leaves to grow in their natural and unique shapes.

"It takes years to learn how to do that," Amiel, who is also a Bonsai hobbyist says. " But your cut will only take a half an hour and hold its shape for a very long time."

Here are a six of many tips from Amiel for Monsters and Critics:



1. Curly hair has to be washed differently: Amiel only uses sulfate free shampoo (the sulfate adds lather but also problems for curly girls).
2. Put your attention primarily on washing your scalp and not the hair.
3. Run your conditioner over your hair. Be careful not to glob it onto your scalp. Comb wet hair only with conditioner in it.
3. Don't dry your hair with a regular towel. Use paper towels or a cotton t-shirt to blot the hair dry. This will hold your curls in and keep the frizz out.
4. After you put product in your hair don't touch your hair until it is 100% dried to avoid frizz.
5. After hair is dried, scrunch hair only. Don't comb.
6. If you use a blow dryer, keep it 12 inches from your head.

Shai adds, "And above all, if you can, get the right cut. If you're going to color or highlight your hair know that natural, glorious looking curly color is a specialty. Curls don't take to color the same way that straight hair does. It's about mastering the color on individual strands of hair and not streaks and sections of it."

“There is a world of women out there who would love to have natural curls,” Amiel laughs. “Where’s the justice? There’s no reason why those who have the curls shouldn’t be able to set them free, flaunt them and feel fantastic.”