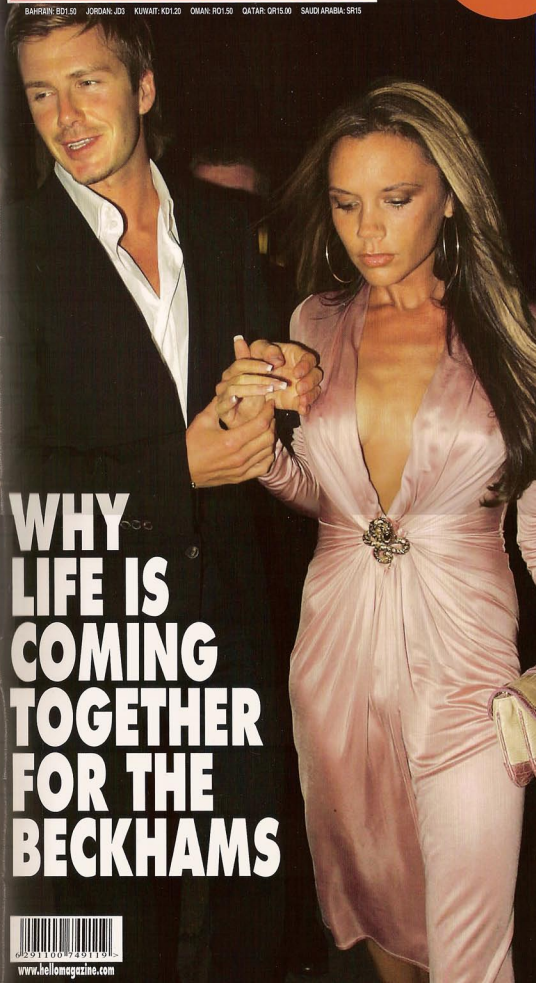


# HELLO!

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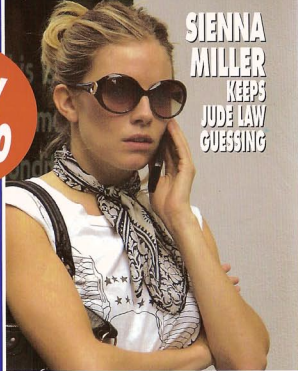


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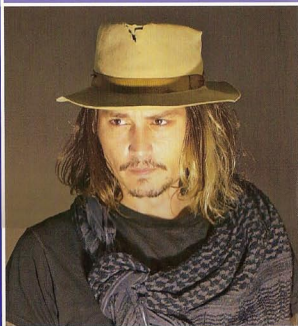


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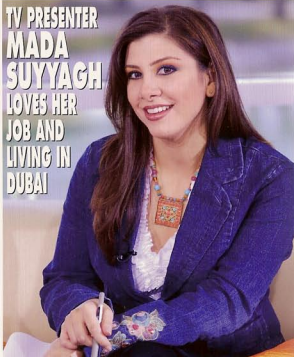
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Yuko

BEAUTY

## *Playing it straight*

If your locks are corkscrew crazy, wavy or cursed with a frizz, hair straightening may seem like a tiresome chore. Yuko, the latest hair-straightening technique from Japan, offers permanently super-sleek hair. HELLO! tries it out.

Hair trends come and go, but the straight look remains as popular as ever. In fact, for most hairstyle gurus, the poker-straight look is the winning choice. Jennifer Aniston and Demi Moore, to name two, are fans of Yuko. And, although the wild tresses of stars like Debra Messing and Nicole Kidman are striking, they haven't peaked this season.

Undoubtedly, many naturally curly folks would trade in their ringlets for a walk on the straight side. Unfortunately, despite most anti-frizz styling products working wonders for unruly curls, they do require the use of styling tools and if you're going to DIY, you run the risk of damaging your hair. "The problem with straightening your hair is that it becomes addictive," says Julie Powell, owner of The Gold Salon, Dubai. "Everyone wants straight hair, and what should be a once-a-month exercise often becomes a daily routine. In this climate, where people go from extreme heat to air-conditioned environments all the time, the hair becomes damaged. Blow-drying and straightening daily just exacerbates the problem."

Before Yuko, many frizzy-haired girls made the choice to go with chemical straightness. Unfortunately, subjecting the hair to these harsh chemical products is damaging in the long term. And although modern relaxers and home treatments are less invasive than the traditional methods, they still require the use of temporary straighteners and blow dryers to get perfectly straight hair. This brings you back to square one. Julie, who began working in the hair industry 16 years ago, believes that Yuko is the way forward for hair straightening. "Unlike other straightening methods, Yuko restores the condition of the hair—leaving it silkier and straighter than ever before. The beauty of it is that Yuko is actually a hair treatment and the straightening is a side effect, so it's great all round," she explains.

### Straight to the point

"The first thing we always do is assess the hair," explains Gina Gretalda, Yuko specialist at The Gold Salon. "We need to see if the hair has been damaged by bleaching, in which case we won't perform the procedure." The ideal candidate for Yuko should have fairly healthy, chemically-virgin hair (never been bleached), that is frizzy, coarse and at least four to five inches long. Usually, these types don't get great results from temporary straighteners and generally have to spend hours blow drying and straightening their hair every day just to make it look right. "Yuko can help these clients to achieve a look in five minutes, which they probably couldn't imagine before," says Gina.

Yuko treatment is specialised and only 40 per cent of optimistic clients are accepted. "I approached the idea of permanent straightening with a degree of trepidation, possibly because I'd learned to love my perm-style bouffant," says HELLO! guinea pig Lucy Hasson. Resigned to a life of big hair, Lucy had accepted her rampant hairstyle. "I learned to endure my hair and the fact that it required straightening for a night out and that it took a lifetime to blow dry and, despite all



Looking super sleek  
"My hair is in the best condition ever"

Before Yuko Lucy found her hair was a frizzy nightmare

efforts, it would still expand in volume the moment I stepped outside into the humidity. Increasingly I have found myself tying it up to avoid blow drying, which is not ideal." Therefore, the opportunity to undergo Yuko came as a welcome break for Lucy.

People who have had highlights are not automatically disqualified from having Yuko; it depends on the amount of bleach present and the time since the highlights were done. "This is all part of the assessment. Very often we send people away and tell them to come back in a year," says Julie. "However, some people colour over their highlights and don't tell us. I can't stress enough how wrong this is. We are always very firm with our clients and explain to them that not being honest about your hair history can have detrimental effects. We are in the business of improving hair, not ruining it."

### Step by step

With hair history out in the open, the procedure can begin. "After an assessment, the course of action is quite long and arduous. Depending on the hair length, thickness and overall condition, it can take between six and eight hours," explains Gina. One of the great things about Yuko is that it doesn't damage the hair. Although chemicals are applied, they are supplemented with proteins that bring health back to the hair. "This was the worst bit of the treatment," says Lucy. "The mixture, or 'medicine' as it was called, had a bad smell." The liquid, which contains nanobase – a moisture-retaining solution – protects the hair from any negative side effects of Yuko.

After the nanobase solution is rinsed off, the hair is ironed with special Yuko-patented irons, set to seal in moisture once the hair's cystine bond is broken – allowing the hair to be straightened. In conjunction with the ironing, a nanthrough mixture is blended into the hair. The amino acid and aloe extract in nanthrough repairs the damaged areas of the hair. When heat is applied with the iron the moisture and nutrients are sealed into the hair, making it healthy.

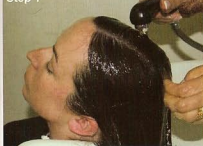
When the hair has been completely straightened, (around three hours depending on the thickness), a neutraliser is applied. This is left on for about 10 minutes and works as a fix for the hair. "It fixes the elasticity and keeps it straight," explains Gina. Following the neutraliser, it's homework bound with a blow dry, trim and style to finish with. Seven hours later and the curly strands have been replaced with smooth tresses.

### Lucy's verdict

"After the treatment, there was a two-day period where I couldn't do anything with my hair. Putting it behind the cars, tying it up or getting it wet were all strictly prohibited. During this time I had nightmares about waking up with a perm, or with no hair at all! However, a week on, my hair is still poker-straight and in the best condition ever. In the interests of research I have experimented with blow-drying and not blow-drying, but the results are the same – long straight hair without a ringlet in sight. I'd definitely do it again." **H**

TEXT: CATHERINE LANGLEY  
PHOTOS: VIKRAM GAWADE AND ELEANOR SAYER

Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Washing the hair

The nanobase solution is applied

The ironing commences

### Fact file

- Pros: The treatment is ideal for wild, curly or frizzy hair.
- Cons: If you have thin, limp hair, Yuko is really not for you, as it tends to reduce volume.
- Where: The Gold Salon, Al Attar Tower, Dubai. Tel: (04) 3211423
- Cost: Dhs 3,000