

HELLO!

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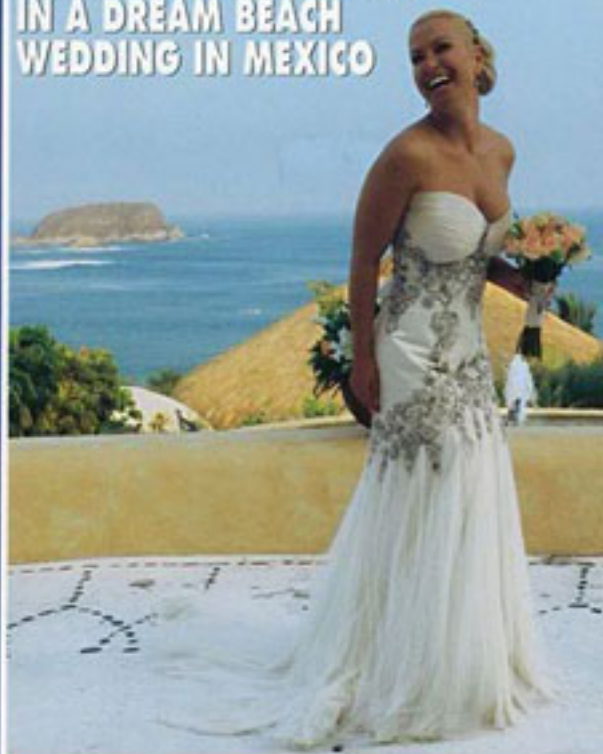
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Growing to great lengths

If you've always wanted to grow your hair that extra inch, or are in need of some volume and added body, then natural hair extensions could well be your answer

Celebrities worldwide have created a trend for long locks, but if you look closer, many have added subtle extensions to achieve a glamorous, yet natural head of hair. A favourite among the Hollywood set are Great Lengths. Considered to be the 'Rolls-Royce' of hair extensions, the hair is 100 per cent natural and has never been chemically dyed or damaged.

If you've opted to add inches like actress Cameron Diaz, then you'll be confronted with a number of options. Julie Powell, the manager of The Gold Salon in Dubai, has been working in the industry since the 1980s and has been distributing Great Lengths, extensions here in the region since 1998. "We've trained and educated over 50 salons in the region about Great Lengths," adds Julie, who is now considered the region's specialist.

As a first step towards adding extensions to your locks, all good salons should offer a complimentary consultation to allow you to assess all the options. "For us it's all about the consultation," Julie explains. "People can phone and ask for what they want, but we recommend coming in as we need to see whether or not hair extensions will suit their lifestyle. Not everybody is suited to wear hair extensions and we can establish that during the consultation. At that point we show them the kind of work that we do and they can witness it first-hand at the salon when other customers are having work done."

There are only a very small percentage of women who aren't suited to hair extensions and Julie admits she very rarely turns people down. "If someone's hair isn't suited to hair extensions we can work on the hair to make it stronger, after which they can choose to have extensions added in." For fine, damaged hair a keratin-boosting Tanagra treatment is recommended to strengthen natural hair before adding to it.

The next step is to decide on a style. Great Lengths offer three different types of 100 per cent natural hair and three different forms of bonding, which are

designed to minimise damage to your own hair. "The hair is a canvas and we need to look at how the hair hangs and all the different colours in the hair in order to choose the right extensions," explains Julie. "We have three different types of hair; natural, curly and Kashmere hair. Kashmere is unique to us and is considered one of the best in the industry.

"All our hair is ethically sourced from India," says Julie. "The finest quality hair in the world, without a doubt is Indian hair. In India the women are taught from a very young age how to take care of their hair, to brush it in a certain way, to braid it perfectly and oil it. They don't go to salons or colour their hair, which is why it's the best."

So after selecting the correct colour and texture, the extensions need to be placed amongst your natural hair so that the bonds aren't visible. "We don't use any glue to attach the bonds. Glue expands and contracts differently to our natural hair and can expand too much after being in the water and the extensions can easily come out," explains Julie. Instead, Great Lengths work on patented keratin human hair bonds which are 100 per cent natural. As keratin is found naturally in the hair, the bond reacts to the different elements just as your natural hair would. "David Gold, the creator of the keratin human hair bond, makes the bonds so small that they are now the smallest in the world." This makes it ideal for all sorts of hairstyles as the bonds feel light and are not visible.

A 'full head' of extensions usually consists of up to 150 pieces of hair, which can be added by an experienced technician in about 90 minutes, while you relax to music or watch a DVD.

"A good extension job shouldn't fall out immediately after application," Julie stresses. It's worth paying that little bit extra for hair extensions too as they can last up to six months and if done cheaper you run the risk of spending more money in the long run to repair the damage. "We've had clients come to us with their hair in plastic bags after a bad application," reveals Julie.

Once in place your extensions last up to six months, providing you brush the extensions correctly. "We never recommend more than six months because your natural hair grows, taking the bond further down with it and making it more visible," explains Julie. "In many cases clients won't brush the extensions properly and the hair gathers at the bond. We always recommend they purchase a



Famous Italian actress Monica Bellucci is a fan of extensions, especially Great Lengths and uses hair extensions as a means of adding volume to the hair, rather than length.



Cameron Diaz wowed red carpet paparazzi when she attended ex-boyfriend Justin Timberlake's album launch with flowing dark locks.



Jessica Simpson was such a big fan of hair extensions that she decided to create her own clip-on extension range. Alternating between long and tousled curls to straight and slender, Jessica's extensions add body to the hair.



Kate Beckinsale said good-bye to her short choppy bob that she shot to fame with in the late 90s for big, bouncy curls similar to those of Victoria Beckham, pre her blonde phase.

professional hair brush and we always send them away with a leaflet on how to brush and maintain the hair."

You don't need to use specialised products on extensions and can stick to your own shampoo as the hair is 100 per cent natural. You can continue to use hair straighteners and curling tongs with extensions too. Julie concludes, "Once applied you

can go swimming and wash your hair and leave it to dry naturally. There aren't restrictions in terms of tying your hair back and going out in the pool.

If you have second thoughts or find that you want to change your style, hair extensions can be taken out just as easily as they are put in with a release serum. "The release serum is perfectly natural and is just the anti-solution to the keratin

bonds. A few drops are placed onto the bond and it crystallizes the keratin so it literally just slides out of the hair and all we have to do is gently brush the strands out."

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