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BIGGER

Hair extensions will continue to set the trend in 2012. *Sophie Hines* gets the lowdown

While some trends creep in gradually, big hair really entered the fashion world with a bang when *The X Factor* style queen Cheryl Cole championed the look back in 2010. During 2011, style sweetheart and future queen, the Duchess of Cambridge continued to sport thick, glossy locks, making it the most-demanded look for many hair salons.

If there was any doubt that big hair would continue its reign in 2012, then the Spring/Summer catwalk shows proved otherwise. Although sleek, lacquered hair was a strong trend for the season, big, bouncy blow-dries also made an appearance on many high-profile runways from Versace to DKNY, suggesting this will remain a popular commercial look for the year ahead.

Get the look

Of course, there are plenty of mousses, sprays and gadgets out there to help create big hair, but as Dayle Adams from Flip-In Hair points out, most people need a little extra help to achieve the desired look. "Realistically, there are few people who can achieve the big hair look naturally," says Dayle. "If you want to get the style, it's best to use real hair extensions."

Darren Fowler, Clipso salon owner, is a fan of Racoon International and agrees that extensions are the ultimate way to create big hair, and says volume has overtaken length as the main reason clients choose extensions. "We find partial placement for volume is more popular right now as opposed to full head applications for extra length," explains Darren.

The key to volume is increasing the natural density of the hair, according to Great Lengths ambassador Paul Falltrick. "Applying extensions though the main width

HAIR BY PAUL FALLTRICK



THE BETTER

of the head will add that extra bulk the hair needs to look full and thick," says Paul, who recommends styling extensions using natural movement rather than a poker straight finish to make the hair look effortlessly volumised.

"Root lift around the crown area will increase the overall effect of natural body and using a large bristle brush encourages the hair to bend into a soft wave through the ends for an everyday finish," continues Paul.

When it comes to more formal, evening looks, hot tools like heated rollers can be used to boost volume even further, giving it a more defined and glamorous feel.

Dive or thrive?

Despite a tough financial climate, the extensions market remains a flourishing one, with many women seeing their grooming schedule as the last thing they want to neglect.

"During the economic downturn, we haven't seen any drop in extensions popularity in our salons because clients still want to spoil themselves and look the best they can," says Steven Goldsworthy who stocks Balmain in his Wiltshire salon. "Even if they're missing out on other things, their hair is still priority."

This is not just true of permanent extensions, but also the market for short-term transformations. The temporary hair extensions market is doing well, as many people who don't want to commit to the cost of permanent additions will choose this alternative option.

As well as the lower cost, this form of extensions allows quick application and experimentation for clients. Halo ambassador Alexander Turnbull explains: "Temporary extensions work wonders for creating quick-fixes for special events and adding glamour to party hair. They are becoming hugely popular as people want more options with hairstyles especially with regards to length and volume."

With demand clearly still strong, introducing an extensions service into the salon is a great way to attract new customers and drum up more business from loyal clients.

Which celebs are influencing the extensions trends?

"Our younger clients request the Kim Kardashian look – glossy hair that's full but not too thick with long layers to add natural movement."

Skyler McDonald, Balmain Hair ambassador

"On a regular basis, we are still asked by clients about the two-tone styles made popular by Alexa Chung and more recently Caroline Flack. We can recreate the look using hair extensions, either by choosing extensions to perfectly contrast the undertone of the hair, or by personalising the hair extensions to create the desired tone."

Michael Young, Hairaisers ambassador

"Kate Middleton's long chocolate brown hair with a little movement is a big trend, which can be enhanced using temporary extensions to help with length and volume."

Dayle Adams, Flip-In Hair

"Cheryl Cole is recognised by clients as the ultimate icon for thick, volumised hair. Cheryl's full-head application of extensions shows the volume that can be achieved!"

Paul Falltrick, Great Lengths ambassador



PHOTOGRAPHS: REX FEATURES

Feleny Georghiou of Connect Hair System recommends careful consideration of suppliers and a conscientious attitude to training if the venture is going to succeed.

"Not every extension system is the same, so it is important that if you are going to make the investment you partner with a company whose reputation is firmly established," says Feleny.

"Plus, if you are to succeed in this competitive industry then comprehensive training is imperative".

Encouraging your team to showcase the extensions service in their own hair is a great way to publicise the product, demonstrating to clients the versatility of extensions.

"Educate clients on the wonders of adding just a few extensions for volume," says Feleny. "You would be surprised how many

clients think that extensions are just for building length and are for WAGs, but that's just not the case."

An extensions service also provides a valuable opportunity for retail sales. Clients should be educated on how to maintain their extensions to keep them looking supple and natural. Darren recommends thermal defence sprays to protect hair and extensions from heat styling, detox shampoos to effectively remove pollution and product build-up, and intense hair masks to revitalise and rehydrate both natural and extension hair.

"Being confident in your product recommendation means a client happy with her healthy-looking hair and the salon benefitting from healthy retail sales," concludes Darren. **HD**

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FIVE MINUTE FOCUS

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Flip-In Hair is hand-made from 100% human hair and can be curled, straightened and heat styled. Choose from 43 different colours, which include single block tones, as well as two and three blend pieces.

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Flip-In Hair offers long hair in an instant without the risk of any damage. There are no clips, no glue, no weaving and it takes just seconds to fit it and remove it.

Available through professional salons, where your stylist can colour match your own hair to perfection. This hot hair accessory is already a celebrity favourite.

For more information visit www.flipinhair.co.uk.

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