

## ***Hair Trends: History Repeats Itself***

**By Nancy Coss**

History does, in fact, repeat itself. While many factors influence the trend of the day, trends of the past can reveal the future. Prior to the 20th century, class, religion, age and marital status played a huge role in dictating hairstyle. With the turn of the century, improved communication, more money and the confidence of individuality, styles now are dictated more by fashion and lifestyle. While designers copy what is happening historically, hair fashion mimics fashion.

One of the most constant “sure things” about the trends of today is that there is no set requirement. Women will wear what they want and what looks good. Women choose different fashion for different occasions of their lifestyle, and hair must be multi-functional enough to be changed from the completely conservative to the ridiculously sublime. Hairstyles must be versatile enough to be changed daily to complement this switch from corporate executive, wife, mom and community player. A trip to a local mall, theatre, soccer game or evening gala will find the same woman looking completely different.

Originality prevails and that is what makes this millennium so exciting. Never before have stylists

had as many options to perform their craft and express their talents with such a challenge. This new decade also brings a return of truly finished hair, although the end result might be tousled or geometric, and women are using all the tools and products available to create these different looks.

The placement and application of many harmonious and contrasting colors will create texture and dimension more than the cut. A major difference in the return of any past look is the ever-present and increasing popularity of using chemicals such as hair color and texture services to create a look. No longer are shears the only artistic tool. Sometimes all three together form the final work of art. Up until the last decade, consumers considered hair color a luxury. Today, color is a necessity, a constant in every wardrobe of style. The color techniques and design are so customized and multi-faceted that they require application by a salon professional. In the coming year, expect many shades of complementary colors and a cut full of texture. Structured and geometric looks with very contrasting colors will prevail. The next decade will continue to see independent thinking, multi-lifestyle consumers making opinionated decisions about the hair fashion they choose as they use it to express their identity.

In looking to the past, it is obvious that history repeats itself, but always with slight updates and change. Sleek head-hugging styles or carefree looks, each new trend reveals pieces of the past just as it does in fashion. Yet, with every decade emerges a different feeling.

**“The immediate trend for 2003 is the return of romanticism.”**

### **Pre-20th Century**

In ancient times, Greek and Roman fashions were simple. Clothing was functional, not fashionable. Practical and serviceable garments were the rule, however, even in these times women still favored adornment. Many pins and pieces of jewelry were used to secure the folding and draping of the fabrics and as ornaments. Earrings, necklaces and rings made of gemstones were popular. Hair was typically braided and most often kept covered.

Medieval times brought changes dictated by a rising Christian influence. Clothing covered a good portion of the body but was made from fine, decorative fabrics. Veils and hats were very popular, thus diminishing the need for styling hair.

The 150-year era of the Renaissance brought about many changes. Clothing became more rigid and women began uncovering

their hair. Elaborate styles were adorned with luxurious veils and beautiful jewels. Around 1600, styles in general became more voluminous: hoop skirts, pleats and puffed sleeves. This elaborate trend was also seen in hairstyles.

The Elizabethan era was a time when fashion began to be dictated by social class. Even then accessories adorned the hair. Hairstyles were often drawn away from the face and a hairnet-like headdress known as a “snood” was worn, while fashionable Italians wore a balzo, a gathered bag often made of fancy fabric and looked like a roll worn over the hair.

In Georgian times, ladies wore much fancier gowns than in the past, many with hoop skirts. Petticoats became very popular. Stockings and shoes were made from rich fabrics—elegance was the look of the time. Hair was beautifully dressed, most often curled and piled high on the head, an elegant effect that mirrored the fashion.

### 20th Century

The first significant trend of the 20th century was the result of World War I. Prior to then, most women’s styles were upswept and elaborate ... very sophisticated. The new political and social freedom felt by women was now being reflected in their choice of hairstyle. Hemlines rose and the hair followed. The convertible was

introduced and the “bob” was the perfect style, blowing in the breeze. Film stars and cartoon character Betty Boop wore this popular style. Bobbed hair was in vogue then and is still the most classic cut today.

Finger waves also became popular. Not everyone looked their best with sleek flat styles, and the finger wave solved this problem. In these early years the chemistry of the permanent wave induced women to experiment with shorter styles and keep the now popular finger waves more long lasting. It made a statement about women and their new level of confidence.

Female movie stars really became role models in the 40s. Everyone wanted to be a “Jean Harlow blonde.” Was it really true that “blondes have more fun?” Hair color was very experimental and somewhat unsuccessful, and blonding was still a challenge. Most often the hair fiber was so compromised that it broke. Garbo set the stage for the classic pageboy, and Veronica Lake debuted the “peek-aboo” look. The 40s overflowed with glamour, from hairstyles to cosmetics. Women were becoming independent and have a mind of their own.

The next major trend emerged in the ’50s. Pin curls gave way to the roller. The popularity of the roller afforded women the opportunity to style shorter hair in a softer look. Hats were discarded in

favor of new hair designs. Hair became the accessory. The styled look supported the classic sheath that is now popular.

Throughout the 60s, more structured, bouffant styles were worn. Women wore very teased hair that stayed in place for the better part of a week. Many women protected their styled hair while sleeping by wrapping it in toilet paper or sleeping on satin pillowcases. Hair was styled once a week, and a “Friday hair

**“Hairstyles must be versatile to accommodate a multi-functional lifestyle.”**

appointment” at the beauty salon was coveted. Updos were the evening and gala attire, while hairpieces were a popular addition. Rock and roll was here and the bubble was about to take the limelight. Originality and individuality took a backseat to commonality.

The 70s brought a more prosperous and carefree lifestyle, thus the desire for carefree hair. The curly, no-care look was in, and perms took on a new dimension. The Afro was the rage. Wash-and-wear were the buzzwords for style. And the never-to-be-forgotten haircut was the “wedge,” made popular by Olympic figure skater Dorothy Hamill. To this day, the

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wedge is remembered and still sported by the devoted.

Interestingly enough, celebrities can create a signature look that becomes timeless. Marilyn Monroe is still remembered for her styled blonde locks, and who can forget *Friends*' "The Rachel" in the 90s, which popularized straight layers.

Into the 80s, curls prevailed in many art forms. The wilder, the bigger, the better! Articles could get lost in the teased out curly mess, cemented in place with enough hairspray to "stop a bird in flight." Most styles overwhelmed their owners. These looks could not be said to be design, but lack of design.

As the 90s approached, so did the consumers' desire for individual expression. Women were tired of copycat looks and were encouraged to be themselves. This also changed the direction of fashion designers. Oscar de la Renta was heard saying that today's designers can no longer design just one collection for the woman with money. Now, the consumer dictates what she will wear; the consumers who buy designer fashion are not necessarily the wealthy, but women with a choice. Trendy, funky and punk was no longer just seen on the heads of the rock star or the high school dropout. Now, even the soccer mom wants just a small slice of avant-garde.

### **Individuality Prevails**

The new millennium brings an entirely new set of rules.

Consumers will purchase and wear only what appeals to them and fits with their focus. Hairstyle must complement the fashion in balance of color, weight and complimentary design. Today's consumers are highly educated people, especially about what makes them look good. They have choices and make educated decisions.

The hairstyle trend will always complement fashion, and as long as there are multiple ranges of fashion going on simultaneously, a range of hairstyles will be worn to create a harmonious presentation of today's women.

The next decade will continue to see independent thinking, multi-lifestyle consumers making opinionated decisions about the hair fashion they choose. Individuality will prevail. **PMPR**

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