



*The*  
HAIR STYLIST  
HANDBOOK

Techniques for Film and Television

GRETCHEN DAVIS

With Contributions by Yvette Rivas



# THE HAIR STYLIST HANDBOOK

Achieve professional-quality hair results with this full-color, comprehensive book from award-winning hair and makeup pros, Gretchen Davis and Yvette Rivas. In *The Hair Stylist Handbook: Techniques for Film and Television*, you'll learn how to create that sought-after “complete look” by learning the newest hair techniques that are in demand on film and television sets. Learn how to break into the industry, what products to use to achieve specific effects, how to maintain a look throughout the day, what quick techniques to use to achieve certain textures, and much more. With input from hairstylist Yvette Rivas, this step-by-step guide makes complex techniques clear, allowing you to achieve the most coveted results. Here, you will find:

- An extensive chapter on men's grooming techniques and hair products
- Specific techniques for dramatic and long-lasting hair color
- Lists of the best hair tools and instructions on how to use them to achieve different looks
- Information about how production schedules, cast, and crew are all affected and influenced by the hair and makeup team
- Details on how to run a successful and organized hair and makeup trailer on set

Whether you are a professional in the field, or a student looking to break into the industry, this book will provide you with secrets and information that you cannot find anywhere else.

**Gretchen Davis** is a highly sought-after makeup artist and writer for the entertainment industry, where she has worked for high-profile clients in film, television, and digital media as a personal hair and makeup stylist or department head. In 2012 Gretchen was nominated for an Emmy, highlighting her work on *Hemingway and Gellhorn*. Some of her clients have included Cate Blanchet—who in her Oscar's acceptance speech thanked Gretchen personally—Gerard Butler, Jonathan Groff, Russell Tovey, and Rob Lowe. Gretchen also keyed projects like feature films *Milk* and *Steve Jobs*, and NBC's *Trauma*. She has been featured in *SF* magazine, where critics praised her work on the film *Blue Jasmine*. She has also been featured on various blogs and in print articles.

**Yvette Rivas** is a freelance hair stylist with a long history in the entertainment industry. Her experience includes contributing to the design of dolls in the likeness of the Spice Girls, Britney Spears, Kate Winslet, and Pamela Anderson. Yvette has been a department head for films, television shows, web series, and national commercials. She is also a Primetime Emmy-nominated hair stylist for HBO's *Hemingway and Gellhorn*, and was recognized at the Oscars for her work on *Blue Jasmine*.

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TECHNIQUES FOR FILM  
AND TELEVISION

Gretchen Davis

With contributions by Yvette Rivas

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“On TV people look at your hair and then they look at your skin, and then they look at your clothes, and by the time they’re listening to what you’re saying you’re off the screen.”

Doug Coupland

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# Introduction

One of the things friends and even strangers ask us is: How do I get into the business? Many, if not most, think of hair stylists in terms of what they see on television: a celebrity artist or stylist making a beautiful actress more beautiful for the red carpet, or someone on “makeover” shows prettying up a normal-looking woman. New upcoming hair stylists know we work in film and television with famous actors and fantasize about us arriving in a limo at the trailer to work our magic on some “A” list actor or actress. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The reality is when working on a television show or film, the alarm clock usually goes off at 4 am, sometimes sooner, and sometimes, if we’re fortunate, as late as 5:45 am. It’s a bleary-eyed drive to crew parking, all the while fielding phone calls about this or that mini crisis. We’re in the trailer about an hour later, and after a 12- to 15-hour day hopefully we are done. Just another long day shared by our colleagues and other crew members, who are highly skilled vagabonds in the film and television industry.

But why do the hundreds of other stylists and artists toil—and yes, that’s the correct word, toil—in this business?

That’s what this book is all about: showing new artists what to expect on a film. What hair techniques are already known to work by others in the industry, and lastly what products are used to pull off the incredible characters expected in film and television or a web series.

To keep getting jobs in this business you need a skill set that’s highly sought after and highly respected. These skills also include thinking on your feet, common sense, and quickness. For the most part, the scripts don’t call for someone who can “fluff and puff” or “comb and blow dry” the characters.

The actors are your canvas and in this book we will help you discover some of the skills and products you’ll need to succeed. And when you do, make sure you also buy a good alarm clock.

Gretchen Davis and Yvette Rivas



# CHAPTER ONE

## *Anatomy*

Movie and video hair stylists are creative forces to be reckoned with. Creative thinking outside the box goes a long way for this exclusive group of men and women. With individualistic artistic talent, hair stylists mold, shape, cut, and manipulate hair to create images that may linger for ever in your memory. In film, hair stylists are asked to do just about anything and everything. Those requests from actors, writers, directors, and producers span the spectrum from beauty to special effects through all media. As a multi-media hair stylist, you'll encounter many situations that require knowledge of facial anatomy, as well as the structure of the hair follicle. For example, you might encounter diseases, inflammation, burned or broken follicles while working with an actor. You could be asked to create or fit a wig, extensions, or visually reshape the head using these items. Sadly, problems often arise for hair stylists who are just beginning their career, and that's why it's important that professional hair stylists know how to solve unexpected problems quickly. Experienced hair stylists know how to correctly decide what styles, hairpieces, or products work best under different circumstances.

“The impulse behind our interest is the urge both to locate an invisible ‘self’ beneath the skin and to ‘read’ what the surface appearance tells us.”

Sandra Kemp, *Future Face*, p. 35.

Starting with the skeletal system, hair stylists should focus on understanding what is holding and shaping the head. The head in its most basic form includes your sensory organs: the nose, ears, skin, and eyes. The skull protects the brain. For hair stylists, the occipital and parietal bones and the crown have the most impact in determining cutting, styling, or applying hair-like extensions. Head shapes determine what styles work best for the individual.

The skull is often used by makeup artists for anatomically correct measurements for beauty or effects makeup.

The skull is in two parts.

The neurocranium protects the brain, and forms the base of the skull. Eight bones form the cranium: the occipital, sphenoid, frontal, ethmoid, two parietal and two temporal bones.

The viscerocranium is the facial skeleton. The facial skeleton consists of nasal and oral cavities, mandible, vomer, maxilla, palatine, nasal, zygomatic, lacrimal, conchae, and inferior nasal bones.

Medical science tells us the epidermis helps the skin protect us from diseases and other biological threats and retains water. Also, layers of fat in the skin help to retain energy while holding in heat. The skin is the largest organ of the body. Hair is made up of proteins and



**Figure 1.1** Skull anterior

amino acids. Hair grows down into the dermis, originating from the epidermis. As cells form, older hair is pushed outward. As hair grows it goes through keratinization, a process by which epithelial cells lose their moisture and are replaced by horny tissue. Proteins in hair are bonded by amino acids known as polypeptides, and polypeptides in different states allow us to manipulate hair by blow drying, using irons, or tinting, for example.

A professional hair stylist should know what happens to hair when cut, plucked, or chemically removed. Will the hair grow back quickly? Has the hair been damaged? Will cutting hair make it grow faster? There are several factors involved in how hair grows back, or grows back texturally different. Hair can also grow back much slower or not at all.

Hair growth happens in four phases. Anagen is the phase in which hair grows. Depending on heredity, environment, or chemical abuse, hair can grow at a fast pace, or stop growing at a certain length. This phase can last two to eight years. Catagen is a transition between active growth and rest. Telogen is the phrase at which hairs are dead, and shedding can occur daily. This phase lasts between two to four weeks. Lastly, exogen is a phase in which several hairs in one follicle are shed.

# HUMAN HAIR GROWTH

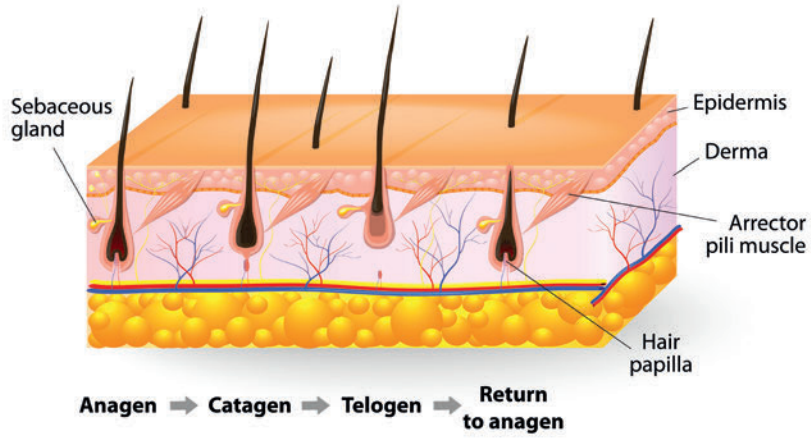


Figure 1.2 The skin and hair growth

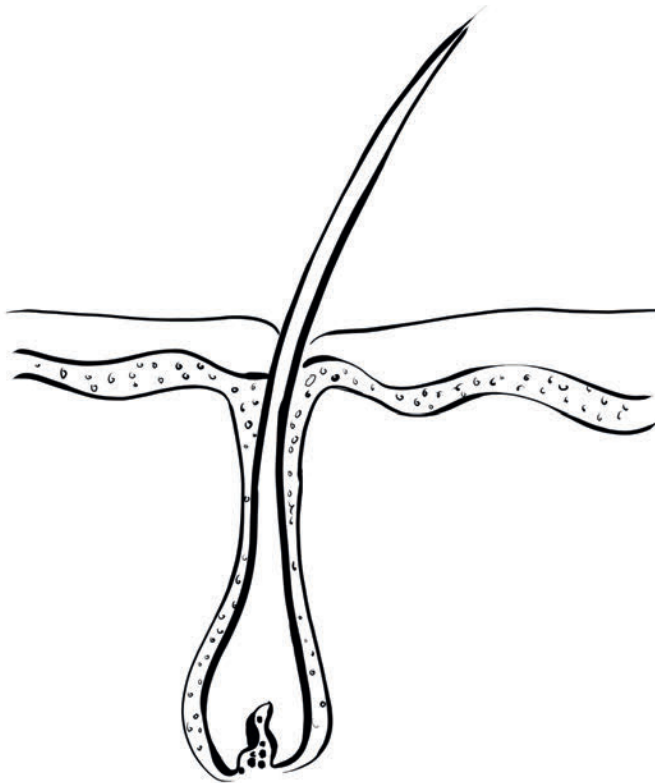


Figure 1.3 Hair structure

Hair is often admired for its color. But hair fibers have no color. Cells produce pigments called melanin, the same chemical that colors our skin. Cells (melanocytes) are found in the dermis (skin), but also in the bulb of hair follicles, so that pigments are distributed to growing hair.

How is this done? Simply put, keratinocytes produce hair fiber that contains melanosomes, that in turn form color.

## Head Shapes

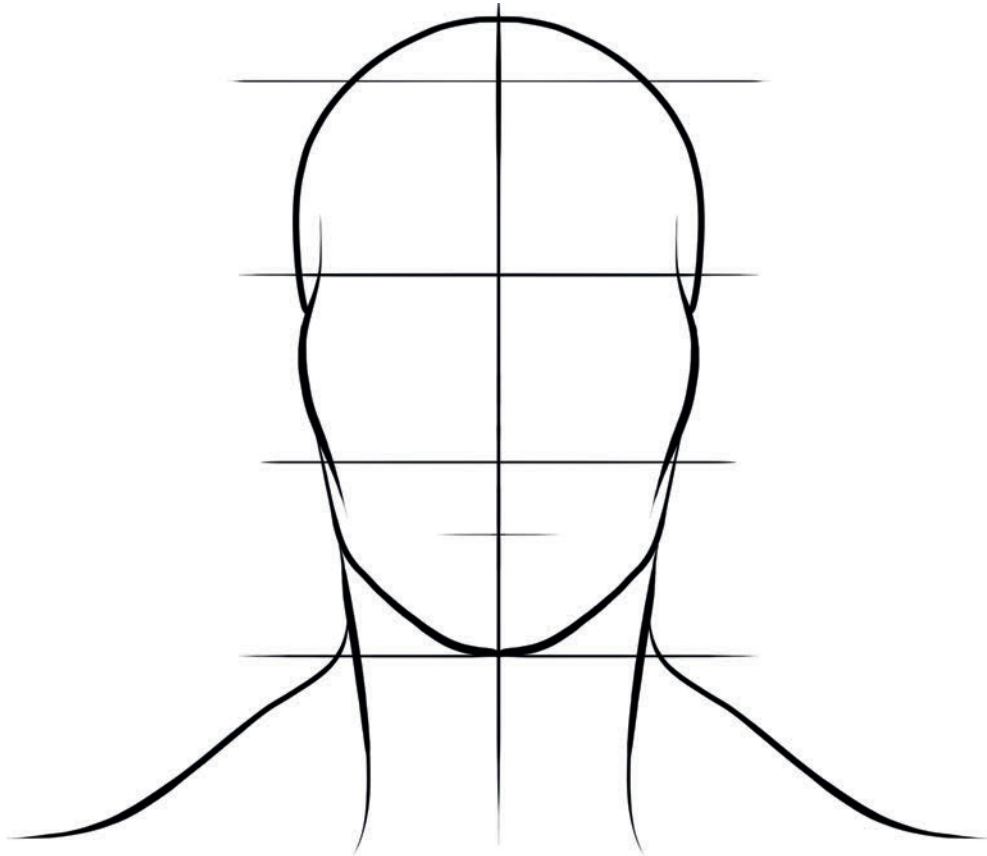


Figure 1.4 Proportions of the head

“There is certainly no absolute standard of beauty. That precisely is what makes its pursuit so interesting.”

John Kenneth Galbraith

Men’s and women’s face shapes are generally the same. Men tend to sway towards a more macho appearance, and their hair styles and facial hair will often reflect this.

“It’s not uncommon for people to have a combination of face and head shapes. Most importantly it was observed that the proportion of the features were nearly identical on everyone regardless of sex or nationality.”

William L. Maughan, *Drawing the Head*, p. 60

Skeletal, head, and neck shapes will influence the way you cut, style, or color hair, although for film and television you’ll probably be styling most often for a specific character. For example, the crown or top of the head is seen in a variety of shapes. A flat top (crown) would need more volume on top. How the head curves downward forming a parietal ridge determines head shapes such as round or square. Jennifer Stanfield, makeup artist for films like *San Andreas* and *The Hobbit* trilogy says, “When creating looks for period pieces, head and face shapes can differ. Fuller appearances are achieved through shading, highlighting, hair color, extensions, and wigs.” Your personal evaluation and experience will be a deciding factor in the final outcome.

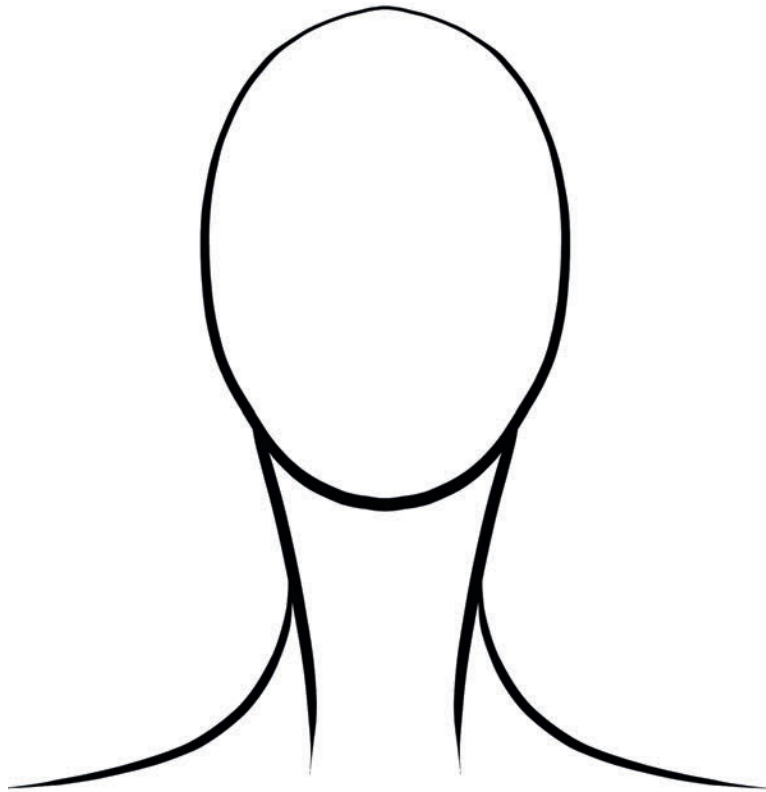


Figure 1.5 Oval

## Oval

Oval shapes are considered the ideal head shape. Most wigs and hair styles will work well with this shape, as will facial hair such as moustaches, goatees, and one-day beard growth.

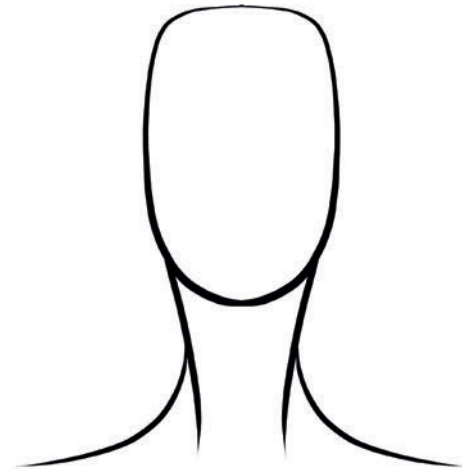


Figure 1.6 Square

## Square

Men love this shape, so hair styles, cuts, and wigs should emphasize a strong jawline. Beards shaped with hard lines at the edges will deemphasize the jawline. Haircuts and facial hair can be short but shaped to balance forehead and jaw.

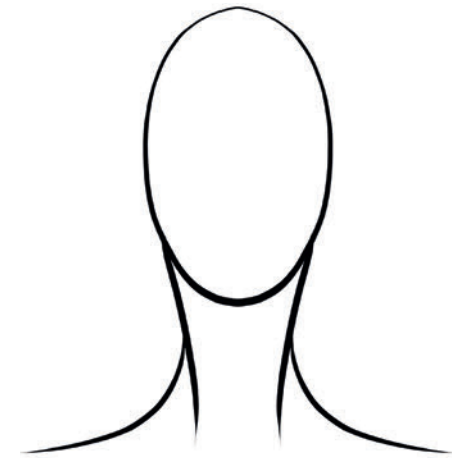


Figure 1.7 Oblong

## Oblong

This head shape looks best with wigs or haircuts evenly styled. For women, texture around the face and bangs look good. Men can be styled shorter on the sides but not shaved. Blend sides shorter, versus the top, which can be slightly longer. For beards, men should be trimmed and groomed. Beard or facial hair should give the appearance of a shorter face shape.

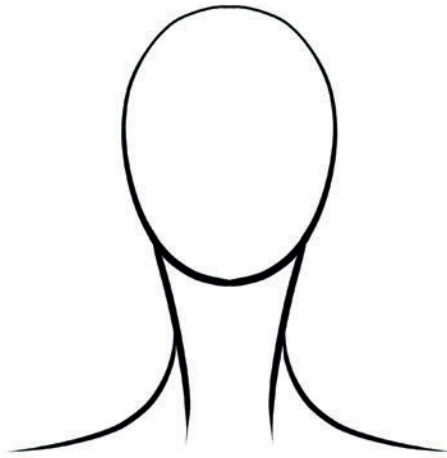


Figure 1.8 Round

## Round

Round shapes should have volume on top, with longer, soft, textured hair on the sides of the face for women. On men, beards and moustaches should be shaped to slim the face. Round shapes can also take crisp outlines from facial hair. Necks should be kept hair free.

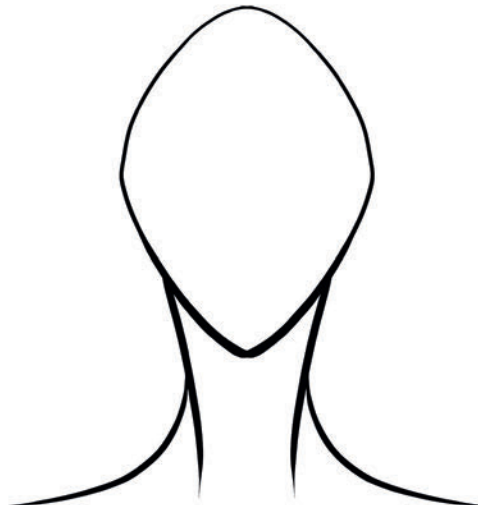


Figure 1.9 Diamond

## Diamond

The head shape is narrower in the forehead and chin. Wigs and hair should be styled longer and wavy with fullness at the chin. Facial hair should be trimmed to square off this shape, although it can be elongated with sideburns.

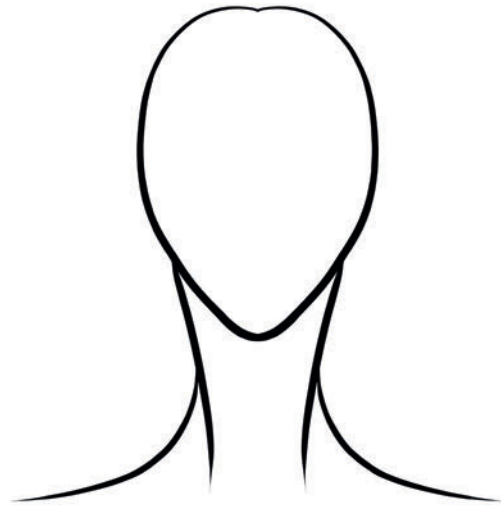


Figure 1.10 Heart

## Heart

Longer styles with texturing are flattering to this shape. Hair should be swept over the forehead slightly. Men often sport facial hair shaped to give a stronger jawline.

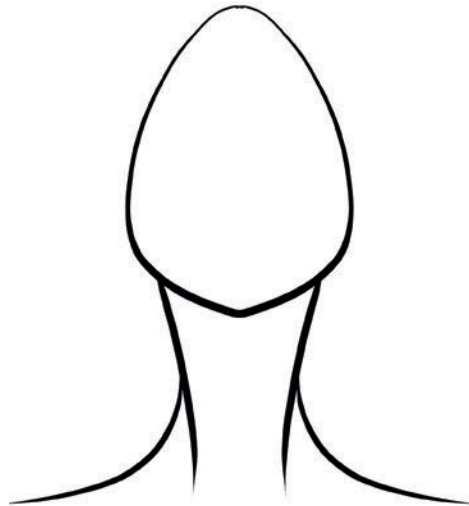


Figure 1.11 Pear

## Pear

Foreheads are smaller compared to the jawline. Wigs and hair styles should have volume on top and over the forehead.



Figure 1.12 Triangular

## Triangular

This shape is wider on the forehead and jawline, and smaller on the chin. Short styles look good. Beards help to strengthen the jawline, taking away from the narrow chin. Facial hair can be grown longer in length.

## Hair Textures



Figure 1.13 Different hair textures

It's really hard to "type" hair textures. Most people can exhibit several textures of hair on their heads. Hair can be coarse, tight, fine, curly, natural, nappy, or cotton candy, just to name a few different textures. Flat irons, weaves, and extensions all come into play in how a person's hair looks and feels.

Yvette explains: “If you don’t have confidence in your ability to work with all hair textures, you’ll be afraid to tackle the challenges facing you in the hair and makeup trailer.”

“To eliminate this instant negative between you and the person in your chair, start a conversation that’s honest and upfront. For example, ask, ‘What products do you like to use?’ ‘Are there products you need to use I should know about?’ ‘Your hair looks great. Give me some knowledge about your hair.’ Soon your client will feel a lot more comfortable, knowing you will take good care of the hair.”

In general, texture is broken down into different categories. There are hair stylists who use charts describing textured hair. Those systems are useful in deciphering all the ranges of textured hair, yet words used to describe hair typing can be interpreted in a number of ways, making the topic a little confusing. Because of ongoing debates about hair typing and hair textures, I feel approaching each actor as an individual works out best, especially when working in film, which requires split-second decisions. Feeling the hair, asking questions, and observing the individual are the some of the tools you’ll need to become a competent hair stylist. Over time you will begin to recognize all the variety of hair textures and what products to use. Below are some examples of those tools. We include a demonstration of working with the tightest to the loosest of curls, followed by straight, fine, coarse, and male hair textures.

**Yvette:** “First rule: Do not comb, or brush through curly hair. Second rule: When styling anybody’s hair with heat, be sure to use a heat-protective product first. People assume that tighter curls or hair that is coarse can tolerate high heats. This is not so. Hair can break and burn when temperatures are set too high. Third: Maintain good hair by using product systems for your hair texture. Example: Dry hair works well with No Poo (no-suds shampoos).”

### Quick Change: Five-minute product and styling decisions for textured hair



If needed, rewet hair using Evian water spray. Only mist enough to get your desired effect. For dry, damaged hair, apply and leave in the conditioner. Then, using your fingers, massage the conditioner around the coils. Follow with a moisture creme to help put water back into the hair.

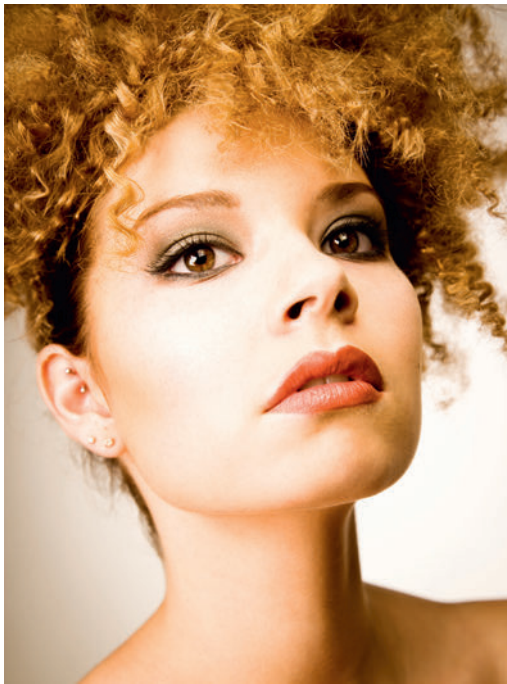
**Figure 1.14** Style curls by misting with Evian. Apply leave-in conditioner



**Figure 1.15** Apply a leave in conditioner and let dry naturally. Finish with Bumble and Bumble Spray Shine



**Figure 1.16** Bumble and Bumble Spray Shine or leave-in conditioner. Finish with a Bumble and Bumble Spray Shine for luster.



Mist sections of hair with the Evian spray. Next, warm a pomade in the palms of your hands. Then, bring the product down the hair shaft from root to ends for each section. Hit the hair with a dryer equipped with a diffuser. Follow with an anti-frizz product and small curling iron. Wrap the hair in sections around the curling iron.

**Figure 1.17** Mist, pomade, dry with diffuser, and curl, wrapping the hair around the iron

**Suggestion:** Do not spray a product like Bumble and Bumble Spray Shine directly onto the hair. Apply a small amount in your hands, then using your palms and fingers work the product through the hair.

Fine curls respond well to mousse products. Apply the mousse throughout the hair using your fingers. Air dry. This can be done the night before shooting the next morning.

**Figure 1.18** Fine curls

