

Dare to dye your hair

BY JENNIFER PATTERSON
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MONTREAL — In these days of minimalism and uniformity in fashion, a woman's hair colour is her greatest accessory and can set her apart from the rest.

The latest trends — whether a daring splash of fuchsia or a more subtle mahogany tone — suit the stylish woman who wants to be noticed for her own distinctive look.

Hair expert and colour technician Maria Tabardel, owner of Salon L'Ultime in Montreal, says women are increasingly daring to be different.

"Women today try to attract attention to themselves. They don't want to be neutral anymore. They don't want to go unnoticed."

"Colour is a good way to express oneself, to send the message, 'This is who I am,' in terms of personality," says Tabardel, who wears an indigo-violet hue in her own dark, tousled hair.

Choosing the right hair colour depends on three things: skin colour, eye colour and natural hair colour.

From there, you can determine whether they suit cool or warm colours.

The key is to complement the woman's natural colouring, rather than attempt to transform her look altogether, says Tabardel, who started her career at 19 as a colourist for L'Oreal in Montreal and became one of the first hair colour specialists in Canada.

Her years of expertise have made her a witness to many trends in hair colouring.

In the past, women who dyed their hair wanted it to look natural. Often they wanted to cover gray or appear to be naturally blond.

These days the opposite is true.

A glance through the fashion magazines reveals women with sharp contrasts like golden hair on a black woman.

As a result, the natural look takes a backseat to natural products, like Aveda, that don't harm hair.

"In fact, it's pretty contradictory," admits Tabardel. "We've never worked with such natural products to produce artificial effects."

Other natural products include Colourshines by Sebastian, Punky Colour Gelle by Jerome Russell and Glitzology.

Tabardel agrees that understated fashions have influenced funky new hair trends, like bright, avant-garde highlights.

"What we often do now is a base colour with a few highlights — not like the large chunks of highlights we saw before — but a few highlights in a very different colour like blue, pink, mauve



UNNATURAL BLOND: Hyper-blond tones might appear artificial, but the Sebastian hair product that created this look is all-natural.

or, of course, blond. We do all the range of colours imaginable, from one highlight to many."

And it's not just younger women spicing up their looks in this fashion, she says.

If it's done right, an older professional woman can look elegant and sophisticated with a hint of pink, says Tabardel, whose clients include influential Montreal lawyers who want blue tints.

The trend for bright highlights began more than a year ago with coloured hair mascara, which women of all ages dared to try.

The mascaras were messy and greasy and didn't show up on darker

hair, says Tabardel.

Still, professional hair stylists couldn't ignore their sudden popularity.

"They gave us the idea of doing the little highlights, in a more discreet, refined way, to suit all kinds of people."

Tabardel, who is known for her own signature style, says the most satisfying thing is when people ask her clients, "Did Maria do your hair?"

Colourists tend to make suggestions to clients according to their own taste and experience in the trade, says Tabardel.

"As I do colours very differently than other technicians, it's easy for others to recognize my work."