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Lord of the Lanesborough?

The mystery man buying up our top hotels

Bringing up baby

How to produce the perfect child

Little MISS Sting

Meet Mickey Sumner, Trudie and Sting's model daughter

WIN A DAY OUT AT THE GRAND NATIONAL PLUS Alain de Botton, Amy Winehouse, Harold Bloom & Sarah Jessica P

There's something in the hair

The newest hair extensions have turned a tacky trend into a clever way to cheat. Whether real or synthetic, nowadays they need to be invisible, says **Molly Gunn**

Thanks to Victoria Beckham, Kate Moss and Claudia Schiffer, there is currently nothing sexier than a long, flowing, tousled coiffure. The catwalks for spring/summer 2004 reinforced the trend; hair simply has to have length right now. At Gucci, Versace and Christian Dior, models paraded locks that tipped the waist. Was the hair their own? Do we care? The answers are 'No' and 'No'.

These days, sporting long hair doesn't mean actually growing it. Trends are so fickle that there's just not time to grow your hair. The only way to get long hair quickly is to have it artificially extended. Every celebrity under the sun has hair extensions these days, from Victoria Beckham to Britney Spears and, more encouragingly, from Kate Moss to Gwyneth Paltrow. Even respectable ladies such as Lulu and Emma Thompson are having them done, proving that extensions don't make grown-ups look like porn stars.

Twenty years ago, the only places in London you could get your hair extended were the Afro-Caribbean salons, but now the town is bursting with hairdressers who will oblige. Long hair can be acquired in an afternoon - and got rid of just as quickly.

'Extensions offer an instant lift and are a sure-fire glamoriser,' says celebrity hairdresser James Brown, who has added extensions to the locks of Kate Moss, Nicole Kidman, Liv Tyler and Catherine Zeta Jones. 'It used to be a star secret, but now there are so many salons offering the service that they're commonplace.'

The salon that first brought extensions to the masses was Antenna on Kensington Church Street. Salon owner Simon Forbes pioneered the hair extension using the synthetic Monofibre, which he wove into the locks of Boy George, Madonna and Cher, among others, in the early Eighties. Antenna still does more hair extensions per week than any other salon in the world.

Victoria Beckham, who has been championing the look tirelessly for years, gets hers done at Connect in Chalk Farm, as do Martine McCutcheon, Lulu, Carol Vorderman and Joseph Fiennes (who had them done for a role). In a recent interview, the former Spice Girl joked that her stylist, Ben Cook, calls her 'Babs' - short for babushka - because her brown, real-hair extensions come from Russia. Many salons use hair imported from Russia, Europe or Asia, although others, including Antenna, swear that using synthetic is best.

Whether real or synthetic, the golden rule of hair extensions is to get them done properly. Britney Spears recently came a cropper with a set of messy, glue-ridden extensions with fake ends unblended. Jordan's peroxide, straw-like hair was another shocker after her emergence from *I'm A Celebrity*.

'Extensions can be great but they need looking after,' says James Brown, who advises his clients to wear plait to bed to prevent the extensions from matting. The thought of Catherine Zeta Jones snuggling up to Michael Douglas in bed with Pippi Longstocking-style braids is a diverting one.

Britney Spears



Emma Thompson



Victoria Beckham



Gwyneth Paltrow



Where to get your hair extensions

Long hair can be acquired in an afternoon - and got rid of just as quickly

Antenna Pioneers of synthetic hair extensions. Clients include Kate Moss, Elle Macpherson and Madonna. From £145, at 27A Kensington Church Street, W8 (020 7938 1866).

Connect Famous Chalk Farm salon where Victoria Beckham and Jordan go. From £50, at 5-7 Adelaide Tavern, Adelaide Road, NW3 (020 7483 3845).

Daniel Hersheson Stylist Gil sources hair from Brazil for clients including Kylie Minogue. From £400, at 45 Conduit Street, W1 (020 7434 1747).

Errol Douglas Simone Raymond uses synthetic or real hair on clients

including Emilia Fox. From £50, at 18 Motcomb Street, SW1 (020 7235 0110).

Janet Ginnings Uses hair imported from Italy on the likes of Caprice and Ivana Trump. From £250, at 45 Curzon Street, W1 (020 7499 1904).

Mark Glenn Specialises in hair extensions for fashion clients and people with hair loss. From £300, at 12 Lancashire Court, W1 (020 7495 6969).

Neville Hairdressers Anne Anderson works using real hair. Tina from S Club is a client. From £150, at 5 Pont Street, SW1 (020 7235 3654).

Nyumba Michael Charalambous has done Saffron Aldridge, Christina Estrada and Lady Helen Taylor. Looks totally natural. From £60 (for consultation), at 6-7 Mount Street, W1 (020 7408 1489).

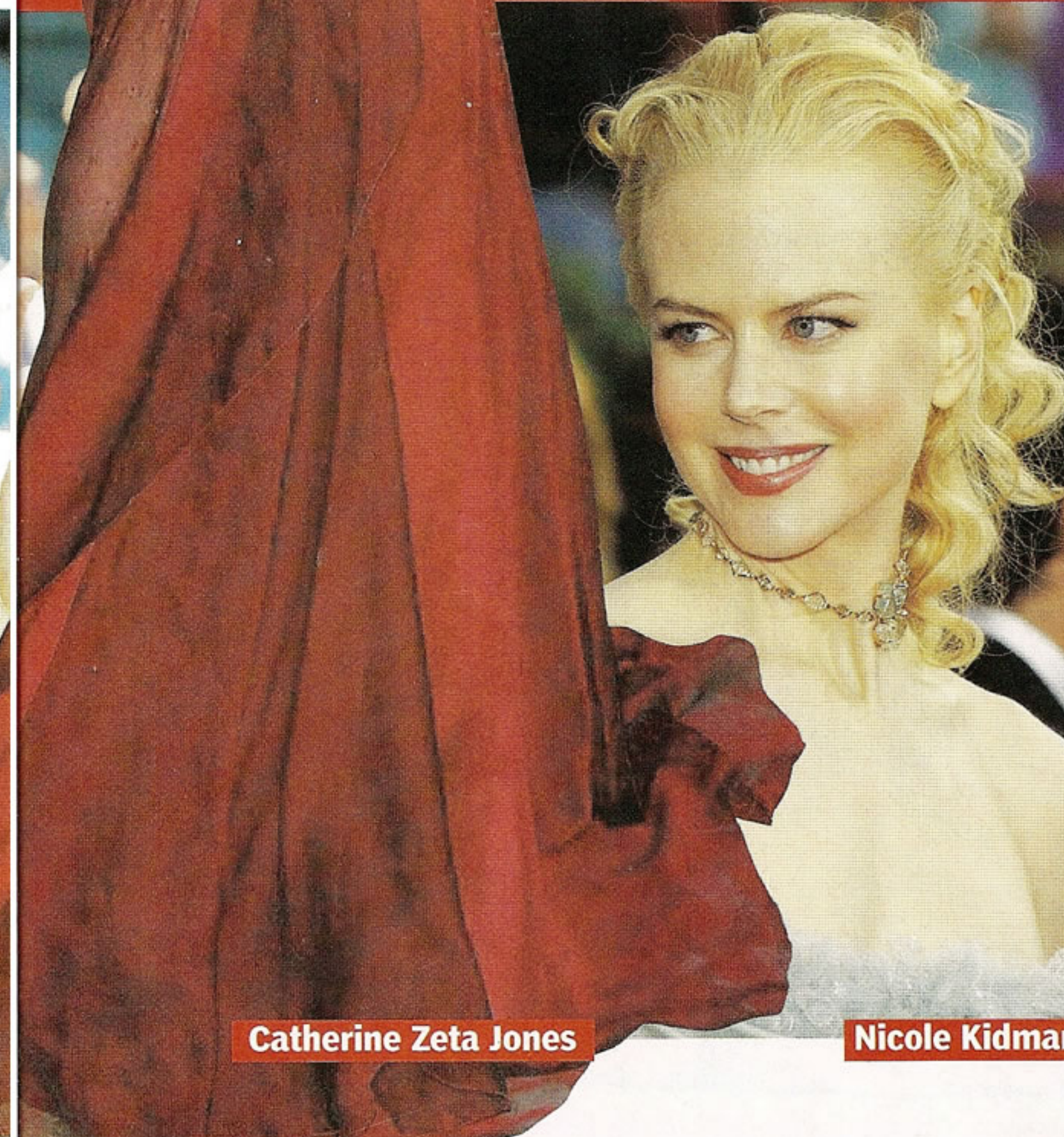
Paul Edmonds The salon uses mainly Indian hair for clients including Lucy Benjamin. From £200, at 166 Brompton Road, SW3 (020 7589 5958).

Real Stylist Glenda Clarke uses European hair on Elle Macpherson and Tara Palmer-Tomkinson. From £295, at 6-8 Cale Street, SW3 (020 7589 0877).

Liv Tyler



Catherine Zeta Jones



Nicole Kidman



Helena Christensen



Claudia Schiffer

Retna. Alpha. Famous. Rex Features. Sharon Mackie. Bigpicturephoto.com