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Keep These Things For A Newsletter

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SALON AND PERSONAL UPDATES

This summer has been flying by like a whirlwind. I hope you have been able to enjoy the beautiful weather and the temporary reprieve from COVID isolation. I recently visited my UNC office which closed down in March 2020. The calendar on my wall said "March 2020" as did the other calendars throughout the office. It reminded me of something straight out of an episode of "The Twilight Zone". We have permission to return to the office now but with things going backwards and kids at home for the summer, many staff are waiting for the fall to make the shift. With that said, it seems that the proliferation of the Delta variant has us moving backwards towards increased isolation, though government officials as well as many members of the public have decided that we aren't going back to where we were in March of last year.

That means, that we will likely have to adjust to post-COVID reality for the long haul. I never stopped wearing masks in public though I am fully vaccinated. With such a high percentage of the population unvaccinated, unmasking logic just didn't make sense to me. And now, the CDC also sees that the logic doesn't hold up. With the pandemic has come the resulting change in language and culture. Many people speak about the rarity of break-out infections. But, I don't think they are as rare as they suggest. When the J&J vaccine came out, the news said that it was only about 60% effective BUT IS 100% effective in preventing serious illness or death. That's what I remember hearing and that's why I chose this vaccine. I wanted one shot only, and I didn't mind the notion that my body's immune system would still need to be "on point" to fight the virus. So when I hear the seeing surprise that vaccinated people are becoming infected, I think the scientists and politicians are being disingenuous. But, that's surely no surprise. With that said, I pray that you (the reader) and your family are well and that you remain healthy. I likewise encourage all to get vaccinated. My friend recently tested positive as one of the "rare" break-out infections. Her thoughts: "I'm glad I was vaccinated. I can only imagine what type of havoc COVID could have wreaked on my body in the absence of the vaccine." Ultimately, we all must do what we are comfortable with. But know that within *Schatzi's*, we will continue to honor our [COVID protocol](#). Nothing has changed in that regard. Many of my own clients have asked to forego the mask because they are vaccinated. My response is: "So am I. But I need you to put/keep it on. Thank you." The bottom line is this: I cannot police every person coming through the door, and I don't know where they have been. So, I would rather err on the side of public safety. I do not want another shut down. It's for this reason that I don't understand the "Re-open" people who REFUSE to wear a mask. That logic makes no sense. But, that's the order of the day, isn't it?

So it is with a heart full of thanksgiving and hope for the future that I wish you peace and blessings.

Embrace the beauty of you.

EMBRACE THE BEAUTY OF YOU.

Easy Senegalese Twists: Summer Protective Style–Vol. 2



Who says Senegalese twists have to be tiny? The photo to the top left is a Covidly-correct image taken of my summer twist style. I put in these twists after having modified the Havana Twists discussed in the [Spring issue of Au Naturel](#). I confess that I meant to take a more fetching photo. But I HATE TAKING PHOTOS!! I took this photo on the plane before our departure for a summer break in Jamaica. I recalled that I was to take a photo for this issue of Au Naturel WHILE MY HAIR WAS STILL FRESH but was so busy doing laundry, packing and cleaning prior to departure that nothing went quite as planned. When I took this photo, I had every intention of taking another one soon thereafter without the mask. But by the time we got to our Airbnb, bought food, and prepped for the evening, I was whipped. The next few days were a whirlwind of swimming, partying and relaxation. By the time I was seriously of a picture taking mind again, I had been swimming for a while, and the freshness of the style was gone. So, this is as fresh as it gets. Sorry about the lack of decorum. Many summer braid styles emphasize baby hair and smooth edges, but I've never been a stickler for that type of detail when it comes to my own hair. I don't have baby hair and I'm not trying to get it. My "baby hair" is as kinky as the rest of the hair on my head and I'm NOT going to try to pull it up into a braid or twist and stress out my edges like that. So, it is what it is. I modified this style from the Havana Twists by twisting with three strands of the [yarn braid hair](#) rather than eight. (Note: The yarn skein has a continuous line of "hair" that has about eight strands of "hair" therein. See photo below of a line of "hair" with the strands separated at the end. A regular yarn skein-for crochet or knitting-has between three and four strands of wool or cotton in each line of material. Please DO NOT put together three LINES of the yarn to make your twists. In reality, you will need to separate a line of yarn hair making it about half its original size.) Yes, I said eight! Havana is intended to be jumbo. This modified look is intended to be as natural-looking as possible. That's how I have always rolled. The style has served me very well for this summer. I won't bother to attempt a "how to" article as the internet is replete with examples of DIY videos.



Just search and get started. The middle photo is my pulled back twist look which is still holding up nicely after swimming at least three times and getting caught in the rain twice. I like the freedom so much that I am likely to repeat the style next summer.

Incidentally, the number 1 style that I have seen all summer is large box braids. No surprises there. There are modifications with creative parting, color and sizing but, the theme is the same. I'm glad to see that people have let go of micro-braids. We never did them in our salon. Impractical and abusive to the hair! The photo of Jhene Aiko is a nice image of the classic look. I personally don't really like to wear braids because I don't like to take them out. My twists can be undone in about an hour. That's convenience! And crochet braids are not well suited for swimmers. So, voila! Summer twists are my go-to extension style. Happy styling! 😊



Letting Go of Locks: Choosing the Right Balance for You

One trend that I have observed since the COVID “re-opening” is that people are letting go of their locks in droves!! It’s almost an epidemic of its own! Three of my regulars have taken the plunge within the past few months. My son whose locks I started 12 years ago is no exception. So with this new quest for liberation, I thought I’d share a few thoughts about when and how to make the decision. I’ll be using two case examples that hopefully will provide some context for the discussion. Case One is a dear soul that I have come to know and love over the years. I started her locks about 5-6 years ago. When she first came into the salon, she was wearing locks started at a braiding salon. It was time for her maintenance and she wanted to have her hair done by someone focused on hair care. I looked at her locks and promptly advised her that I should take them a loose and start fresh in about three months. The reasons were as follows:



- 1) The locks were started with black gel (a no-no) that is often used in braiding salon but which is NOT good for the hair. The gel is used to “lock” the hair so that the style when leaving the salon is very smooth and beautiful. The problem is that the gel is black and is EXTREMELY DIFFICULT to clean out of the locks. Years ago, I shampooed a male client’s hair about 7 times in an attempt to remove as much of the black gel as possible. It took that long for his hair to actually lather up—a sign that the residue has been removed. For Case One, it took about 4 shampoos with me actually taking the locks a loose.
- 2) The gel was used to bond her hair together because it was really still too short to start her locks. If gel is needed to keep the hair from coming a loose, the technique is either inappropriate to lock the hair OR it’s still too short to start locks—excluding free-form locks which can be started at any time. This client needed about another inch of hair growth for a comfortable initiation of the locking process. So, I advised her (after shampooing and combing through her now short afro) to return to the salon when she had about one more inch of new growth (estimated to be in three months’ time).



She returned as advised and the rest is history. I started her locks, and they were absolutely gorgeous! Well after some time of wearing locks, she became uncomfortable with the weight of the locks on her neck. She is a busy Mom with a busy life and felt the need to liberate herself from the weight of hair. Her hair has hung down the length of her back even when it was not locked so she is comfortable with drastic change. She likes the look of short hair and knows from experience: It will grow back! The photos to the left (printed with permission) are before and after shots that were taken by her longtime barber who took pictures to document that people actually do ‘cut off beautiful hair that others pay good money for.’



In this case, the client was quite confident in her decision. She loves the look and freedom of short hair. She also has a lifestyle that needed less emphasis on hair. She told me that she considered cutting them off a few months before taking the decision because of their weight after shampooing. In March 2021, she finally took the plunge. I think she looks beautiful with and without locks so, I was happy with her decision.

Case Two is my eldest son. I started his locks around Thanksgiving of 2009. He was 17 years, had graduated from high school in June and calmly announced that he was not getting another haircut. He didn’t ask for permission and he didn’t discuss when or why he made the decision. He obviously had been considering the decision for a while so I respected his decision. I asked how he planned to wear it and he said “locks”. I had NO IDEA that he was interested in wearing locks. HE NEVER TALKED ABOUT IT! But as a natural salon owner, I was happy to assist him to DO IT RIGHT!

Well a few months ago, he announced that he was ready to cut his locks. I didn’t ask him why or when he took the decision, I only said, “How short and when?” He said he was



going to take some time to prepare himself so he would let me know. In July 2021, he walked into the salon and said "I'm ready!" Unlike Case One, he still wanted to wear locks but he wanted a lot less hair. I asked how much and he gestured "shoulder length". When he showed me what he wanted with his hands, I confess that I added about three inches to the length that he indicated. I kept seeing a blunt bob in my mind's eye much like the princes of Egypt. His hair was over three feet long!! I knew the weight and length was starting to become a burden. But, the beauty of locks is in their power, energy and flow. I felt intuitively that they needed a bit more length. (I think that's probably because I was thinking about the story of Samson and Delilah the whole time I was cutting. So, I was super-sensitive about being conservative. LOL!!) So, I told him what I was going to do and let him know that if he wants more cut off after a few days with the new length, he could come back. He agreed. Well, it worked beautifully, he was quite happy with the new length. The photos to the left are the before and after shots. I was amazed in the last photo about how lifeless the locks became after being liberated from his scalp. I thought the released locks would be MUCH MORE voluminous. But, they weren't. He maintains a beautiful health head of hair and is pleased with the results.

So if you are considering releasing your locks, consider the following:

- 1) Reflect on your thoughts and why you are considering the change. If you wake up one day and think you want to cut your locks, make sure that you don't cut them the same day. I have talked to people who made that type of decision and regretted it afterwards. Give yourself at least a month to reflect and weigh the full impact of the decision.
- 2) Consider your lifestyle and how your locks (long or short) may be impacting your personal peace, negatively and positively. I spoke with one client years ago who made the decision to cut about a foot of her locks off after catching her hair in a car door. When her neck was jerked from being unknowingly caught in the door, she needed NO OTHER incentive. She was certain and definitely ready for the decision. But, she likewise did not choose to cut all of her locks off—only the hair that was "getting in her way." Her lifestyle (i.e. health and safety) dictated a shorter look. Every consideration will not be as dramatic as this. Some people would never catch their hair in a door. So, do what's best for you.
- 3) Decide whether you are encumbered by locks themselves or the weight/length of the locks. Use this information to decide whether to cut your locks or to cut off your locks.
- 4) Reflect on the styles that you like to wear. If you like short, loose hairstyles and are eager for a big change, then you are likely ready for full liberation (after considering the other points raised of course). If you like lock styles that need a certain amount of length for the best result, then you may want a more conservative cut. If you like the look of short locks and are somewhat indifferent to styling, then you are a good candidate for a deeper cut.



Locks are a lifestyle. They define a look and speak volumes about the wearer just in the wearing. But then, all natural hairstyles speak about the self-awareness and confidence of the wearer. So when taking a decision to release locked hair, consider these thoughts for reflection to help you choose the balance that is right for you. Happy styling!