

MIRABELLA

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BLONDE AMBITIONS

Lacey Johnson // Beauty Editor

Jean Harlow is said to have been Hollywood's original blonde icon. Thus, she paved a trail - one which continues to stretch on far into the future - for countless others to follow. I'm not sure why such a fascination with blonde still thrives in our culture, but I know it has deep roots in it. I confess to having zero immunity to such a thrilling epidemic.

Hair color has long been one of my most treasured creative outlets. For me, my motivations have never solely been about the simple altering of its appearance, but more about it contributing to an overall artistic endeavor. I have long considered a change in hair color to be a method for allowing me to more fully step into whichever character I have created in my mind.

I was platinum blonde throughout my latter teens and early 20's. Most days I was attempting to channel Marilyn Monroe's timeless blend of innocence and glamour. Being the extremist I am, however, I one day abandoned blonde altogether, diving head-first into the dark side's great unknown.

Although I have long been captivated by the allure and mystery of dark hair, my blonde aspirations never departed from me. They were always present - like a phantom looming above my raven-dyed head, whispering, "Whenever you're ready, girl, we are waiting for you patiently."

I'm sure you, as most people do, have the practice of visualizing yourself engaging in certain acts (practicing for that upcoming awkward conversation, rehearsing for that important speech, reliving that pivotal moment, fantasizing that you are Beyoncé, etc.); and, when doing so, are able to somewhat "see" your own image in your mind's eye. Well, when I have engaged in such visualizations, I have never been able to imagine anything other than a blonde version of myself. My mind has emphatically resisted my brunette existence to a stubborn degree.

So, here I am.

the dream

I decided that my re-entrance into the realm of blonde would involve no ordinary version of it. The vision I held in my mind is like a lovely caramelized strawberry blonde with a swirl of cream and a sprinkle or two of sugar; like a gingerbread cookie laced with vanilla. I wanted to be Lucille Ball after a sun-drenched Caribbean vacation, or perhaps a California beach bunny with a splash of attitude. I wanted to blend the lines of ethereal and daring - like Cinderella with a punch of feist. So, indeed, I did not desire an ordinary blonde result.

My plan involved a blend of exhilaration and anxiety, however, for my worst fear was that the necessary layers of bleach would grant me a ginger blonde pixie. I consider my hair to be my crowning glory, as many women do, therefore I wanted it to remain as long, flowing and lustrous as possible.

I found comfort, however, in knowing how well Olaplex carried me through a rather frightening forest of a hair venture a year prior. My stylist's reminder of their bond-perfecting magic assured me I was in the safest of hands. If we happened to hit a wall or experience a fender-bender during our trip, I'd at least be buckled up securely.

the plan

In regard to any hair color endeavor, I've learned it is absolutely essential to not only determine the most flattering shade options for one's skin tone, but also where the placement of light and depth most flatters one's features. The selection of blonde tones, as well as their placement, should be on the opposite end of the spectrum from a one-size-fits-all approach.

Remember: Just because a particular placement of tones is drool-worthy on one's best friend or most admired celebrity, does not mean it will be at all flattering on them. In fact, it may have the opposite effect.

With a crystal vision in place, I scheduled a series of processes, involving Pravana's hair color de-oxidizer, the incorporation of Olaplex into every bleach mixture as well as Olaplex and conditioning treatments in between, to collectively carry me safely to my destination.



the process

Below is chronological account, documented in “real time,” of my journey toward achieving my ultimate blonde aspiration.

Process One

Today I completed my first step(s) in the process, which was to remove as much of the oxidized hair color from my strands as possible. Pravana’s Hair Color Extractor acted as my driver which, for the record, is quite the stinky little chauffeur. It’s magic, though. The smell is offensive, however it is worth suffering through the stench because, from both past and present experiences, I can attest that it is akin to being granted a 10-mile head start on a 30-mile race.

If one’s hair has been layered with oxidized color yet one desires to go lighter, a hair color de-oxidizer should be the first step in the process. It shrinks the hair color molecule, allowing it to be cleansed from the hair shaft. I’ve used it countless times through the years and know to never jump off of the ledge and into Blonde-dom without it.

My hair was dyed to a neutral level three - nearly black - this morning, however after three consecutive processes of the Pravana Hair Color Extractor, I stand before my mirror channeling my inner Ariel. The result is a vivid blend of coppery-red levels six and seven. I am a third of the way to my goal while having suffered zero damage.

Process Two

A few highlights were placed along my crown, and the rest of my hair was toned in order to balance the excessive amount of warmth. The result is a medium auburn brown with a subtle halo of sun-kissed highlights.

Process Three

A month after process two, and after weekly deep-conditioning treatments, it was time to continue my quest.

My crowning glory was so packed with foils today, I was picking up radio signals. The result is a lovely beachy “bronde.”

Stay tuned for Edition II: The Blonde Awakening in the next issue of Mirabella Magazine, which will discuss the final process, along with additional tips and insight into making one’s journey from dark to blonde as painless as possible.

Your blonde wish is your command!

I hope this article has convinced you to not surrender hope in even your most far-fetched blonde ambitions. Below are six key points to consider if you are planning to embark on a blonde endeavor of your own.

1. Thou Shalt De-oxidize. If your hair has been layered with oxidative dye, your first step should be to extract as much of it as possible. I performed a total of three processes to remove the layers of dark pigment from my strands. Make sure you are working with a stylist who is knowledgeable with this process, for there are tedious steps to it in order to achieve the optimal result. For example, shampooing repeatedly and rinsing thoroughly is a key component to maximizing results and avoiding the possibility of the color reverting.

2. Thou Shalt Olaplex. Do not attempt to enter the alluring gates of Blonde-dom without its bond-perfecting magic. It isn’t a fairy dust nor is it a miracle, but more like a valuable insurance policy.

3. Thou Shalt Treat Your Hair Like a Butterfly Wing. This is not the time to be excessive with heat styling, or to beat your hair to the brink of death with a teasing comb.

4. Thou Shalt Communicate. Know what your desired result is, communicate it with your stylist, and make sure the two of you are moving in the direction of the same destination. A mere request for “caramel” or “honey” may cause the stylist to transport you to Venice while you were anticipating an arrival in Rome. Do not be vague with your descriptions, have pictures to share and develop a realistic and mutually agreed upon plan.

5. Thou Shalt Be Wise With Your Choice of Stylist. Your choice of stylist can mean the difference between a sloppy, broken mess and a magazine-worthy mane. Make sure you employ the services of someone who is fully on board with your vision, who is excited about the goal you have in mind and who is experienced with such level of in-depth processes.

6. Thou Shalt Have Patience. The refined architecture of Rome was not built in a day. It wasn’t built in a week, either. Slow, cautious and steady is far less painful than hasty. The tortoise always wins the race. Make sure to follow Lacey’s other beauty-related endeavors and experiments at TheDailyDoll.com.