

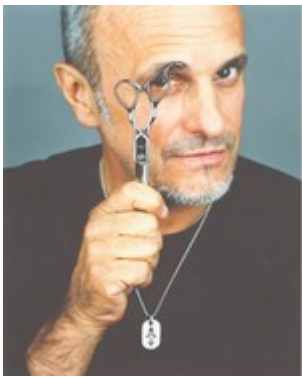


A FRENCH PERSPECTIVE IN NEW YORK

Join me as I search New York City for all things that remind me of Paris!

March 24, 2007

[Yves Durif : "A Haircut is a great medium to express yourself and certainly a better accessory than a Hermes Bag !"](#)

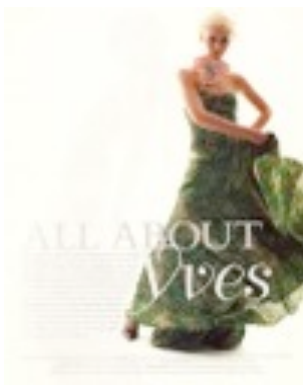


Almost ten years ago, Yves Durif opened the doors to his salon, which is nestled in a landmark brownstone in the Upper East Side. A master with scissors, Yves uses French cutting techniques to achieve a distinctive style for each client. It is no wonder then, that he has garnered the trust and loyalty of a discerning, sophisticated clientele ranging from downtown to uptown style-setters, CEOs, celebrities, artists and media. And the list of supporters continues to grow with such socialite fans as Nina Griscom, Nancy Friday, Nancy Novograd, Erica Jong and Amy Fine Collins. Praised for his styling expertise and respect for the individual, Durif and his staff, provide a high degree personal attention for each client.



Yves, How did you end up in New York City?

I began my career very young in **Jacques Dessange**'s first franchised salon in Grenoble. Very quickly, I moved to Montreal to open a new salon. And few years later, I met **Bruno Pittini**, who had just opened the first Dessange in New York City. Very quickly, he offered me a job. Bruno Pittini, the artistic director of Dessange, was famous for bringing the **French cutting techniques** to the US. He was more like an artist than a stylist and when I came to visit him in NY I was taken by the queue in the stairs of clients waiting to be cut by him. I saw **Raquel Welsh** and **Andy Warhol**, and thought, if this is the Hair business then I want to move to NY and join Bruno's team. It was incredible: a real beehive of creativity. Every hair stylists who worked there at that time became famous: **Frederic Fekkai** (www.fredericfekkai.com), **Alain Pinon** (www.salonaks.com) and so many others...



What's the difference between the French technique and the English technique?

Well...the two are very different. The English technique is like an artist who paints very close to his canvas with lots of tiny details and sharpness. The hair stylist starts cutting hair by hair, section by section. The angles are hard and edged. This, in my opinion, severely limits the fit of the haircut to the person. In the **French techniques**, it is the opposite, we like to step backward, and look at the background first. Bruno used to say, "**You have to draw the haircut in your head.**" We look at the whole profile of the person, search for the harmonious combination between the hair and the shape of the head. For me, at the end, I want harmonious shapes that remind me of an oval.



How do you adapt this oval shape to the shape of the head itself ?

If you have a "pear" head (pointed on the top but large on the bottom), then I will add more volume on the top part and then get narrow at the bottom. If you have a square face, I will increase the volume a bit on the side and on the top. For a rectangular face, the volume will be added on the sides. Pretty logical...

You like to say that you adopt more a holistic approach to your clients. What do you mean?

*I believe it is fundamental to step back from your work. I like to ask a client to stand up first. I look at her body, the way she talks and I try to apprehend her personality. I always start with the sides (many hairdressers will start by pointing a person's head down, leaving the client wondering what it is happening in the back of her head). By contrast, the sides actually give you a better guide for cutting the back. I start with a classic shape and then I may compose something more angular, with more shape and perhaps more funky. **In my view, clients come to get a style not just a cut!***



What's your favorite style for a woman?

*I often refer to French movies and Italian movies. I like the mix of the two styles. I like **Juliette Binoche's** style or **Audrey Tatou's** in *Amelie*, with a short fringe on the front. Fringe puts the emphasis on your cheekbones and directs the focus to your eyes. Very sassy !*

***A haircut is a great medium to express yourself and done correctly certainly better than a Hermes bag!** Think about it, this is the place on your body where you can let go because hair grows back. Our techniques is designed to create points of interest in the face, so the haircut becomes a real accessory of beauty for a woman.*

After living here for so long, do you still feel French?

Yes, because everyone reminds me of it with my accent! New York is a city where you can keep your own identity. You stay who you are. So yes, I am French, I am a New Yorker, but not yet an American.



What are your favorite French places in NY ?

I like to go to the **Alliance Française** to see French movies (www.fiaf.org), but I definitely would recommend **360**, a very good bistro in Red Hook (360 Van Brunt St., Brooklyn, NY 11231, nr. Sullivan St. 718-246-0360).



Haircuts start at \$100 and up for staff and \$200 with Yves. Coloring cost goes from \$95 to \$200.

Hush...Yves Durif will open very soon a new concept of salon! Another story to be continued...

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