



Is There Such a Thing as a Perfect Haircut? Yves Durif Thinks So

by *Jessica Flint* May 17, 2010, 5:44 PM



New York City hairstylist **Yves Durif** might be one of Madison Avenue's marquee *coiffeurs*, but when I recently walked into his signature salon, which is nestled within the **Carlyle hotel's Sense, a Rosewood Spa**, I vowed not to let the Frenchman get near my chestnut-brown hair with his shears. *Oh non, non!* You see, Durif has built a cult clientele based on his Egg Theory: he believes that only one perfect shape exists—not the square or the circle, but the egg—and he adapts his cuts to any head shape so that the overall look resembles an oval archetype. In brief, he's famous for his short sculptural cuts. And I was not walking out of his salon with a bob. But there's a reason that everyone from style icon Daphne Guinness to business magnate Martha Stewart, to *Vanity Fair* fashion maven Amy Fine Collins considers Durif to be a snip-master, so, in the name of investigative journalism, I decided to let him tell me about his theory—I just wouldn't test it out.

Sitting at one of the two haircutting stations in his private room off his main salon, the gregarious Durif explained that the roots of his philosophy come from working with the late famed hairstylist Bruno Pittini. "You don't hear much about it, but every single French hairdresser in the city—Frédéric Fekkai, A.K.S., Serge Normandt, and Julien Farel, later on—all the big shots worked for Bruno," said Durif, his French accent punctuating his point. "In 1984, the salon was called Bruno Dessange. That was a branch of the main business, which was Jacques Dessange. Everyone comes from that. We were 11 stylists working in the same salon. The top guy, Bruno, had this amazing technique to cut hair. He could never put a name on it, although the result was always the same. When I say the same, I'm talking about volume. The volume was working. The result, in the end, is that everyone would always have an oval cut—*always*." "Let's say that someone has a very round face," Durif continues, grabbing dry-erase markers from a nearby countertop. He starts drawing shapes on one of the mirrors in front of a cutting station. "I know for sure that I'm going to need to add volume on top. Or you see people with those long, rectangular faces. They always ask for volume; the hairdresser listens and puts volume on top. I say to them, Look, if your face is more of a rectangle—longer than wider—if I put more on top of something, it's going to make it longer. So I say, You do need volume, you just don't know where. You need it *here*. Boom! Oval. You go on and on like that. Some people have triangular shape this way. You know that you need a little volume on top, and a little on the side. If you have an inverse triangle, then you need absolutely no volume on the side."

He says he wished he could illustrate his point by showing me how he would fix various celebrities' hair. So I let him have a go at it. Then he turned to me. "See, your haircut was oval," he said. "Now you are losing it. I see this." He puts his hands near my chin, indicating that he would chop off about six inches of my precious locks. "It would be very glamorous."

All of a sudden, something came over me, and I decided to let him go for it. He started snipping away. As our upbeat conversation turned from yoga to tapas bars, to Brooklyn, I watched as Durif liberated my look in a matter of minutes.

Oh la la! Glamorous indeed! In fact, a very scientific poll of my acquaintances indicates that it's perhaps the best cut I've ever gotten.

"It's the egg. It's a perfect, *perfect* shape," Durif says. "Now you are going to walk down the street and I say, 'I see square people!'" True. I do. And I'm certainly glad not to be one of them.

