



# Au Naturel

August 2007

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## Salon Events

**Fri., August 10, 2007**

### Faux-tography Customer Appreciation and Art Show

will be held at *Schatzi's* from 7pm-9pm. Come for lots of food, fun and art appreciation. Dress is evening casual. There will also be a raffle of one original art piece on the night of the show. See you there!

**Sat., August 11, 2007**

### Teen Workshop: Natural Hair Care for Today and Forever

Targeting teens ages 15-18, this workshop is designed to give young ladies the basic knowledge in natural hair care that need to be independent, natural, confident sisters for today and forever. Please call Latisha at 844-1933 for more information.

## Happy Anniversary *Schatzi's*!!

It is with a joyful spirit of thanksgiving that I announce our first anniversary is a benchmark sought, attained, and soon to be history. We give thanks! It is with solidarity, peace and love that we congratulate all of our brothers and sisters communing in the first anniversary spirit at this time, whatever their field of endeavor. I wish you continued success, love and happiness!!

In anticipation of this, our first anniversary, I wanted this month's edition of *Au Naturel* to be spectacular and inspiring, full of joy, laughter and thanksgiving. But with IRS quarterly filings being due on July 31<sup>st</sup>, I must admit that I have fallen short of the mark perceived in my own mind. All the same, I think you will find this edition educational and hopefully engaging. So, enjoy.

This edition of *Au Naturel* is dedicated to those ladies who are transitioning to natural hair. My heart was moved to create this issue because I have spoken to so many ladies of late who appear to have unrealistic expectations about the transitioning process. Many are accustomed to grooming their hair on a daily basis. Yet, transitioning hair creates the anomaly of two antithetical hair textures co-existing on one hair shaft. This "multiple personality" hair should never be harassed (ie, combed) daily as it will cause breakage. The ladies I meet rightfully don't want breakage, but many don't want to cut off the permed hair and they don't want braids, unless maybe they're microbraids. Hmmm....

This scenario creates a quandary which is not easily resolved. I've pondered over this issue considerably and I believe in my heart and soul that what lies at the core of this predicament is an aversion to looking **too black**. Okay, I said it. Challenge me if you disagree. I want to be proven wrong. Until then, my core question is: Why do you want to be natural? To all of you transitioning ladies, I ask this question. Consider it carefully. Because your answer may determine whether natural hair is right for you.

The answer to this question is important because I have met many women singing the praises of natural hair who were permed again inside of two months. They want carefree hair, but they also want a quick fix. **Natural hair is neither carefree nor a quick fix.** In fact, relaxer systems were created BECAUSE our hair is neither of these things. The term "relax" is defined in Merriam Webster's online dictionary as follows:

- 1 : to make less tense or rigid
  - 2 : to make less severe or stringent
  - 3 : **to deprive of energy, zeal, or strength of purpose**
  - 4 : to relieve from nervous tension
  - 5 : to treat (hair) chemically in order to relax curls
- intransitive verb*
- 1 : **to become lax, weak, or loose**
  - 2 : **to become less intense or severe**
  - 3 *of a muscle or muscle fiber* : **to become inactive and lengthen**
  - 4 : **to cast off social restraint, nervous tension, or anxiety**
  - 5 : to seek rest or recreation

## Community Events

Jamaica Paradise Café will host a Domino Tournament and (Jamaica) Independence Day celebration on Sat., August 4, 2007 from 10pm – until. They are located at 1030 North Rogers Lane, Raleigh, NC 27610. Please phone: (919) 231-3505 for more information.

Taylor Sparks, author of "What's a Girl to do in a Big City if She Can't Dance" will be having a book-signing at the Borders Bookstore in Cary on August 25, 2007 from 1pm-3pm. Borders is located at 1751 Walnut Street, Cary, NC 27511. Please call (919) 285-9364 for more information.

## Contact Us

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**6** : to relieve constipation

**7** : to attain equilibrium following the abrupt removal of some influence

In other words, **to relax** our hair is to be more socially acceptable in the eyes of our former slave masters; to make them less nervous. To these ladies, I say this: We are no longer bound by the shackles of slavery. If you believe that you need to be more "relaxed" for others to accept you, I say you need to first accept yourself. When you're comfortable with who you are, others are comfortable around you. So my transitioning sisters, know what you're doing and why, then you can attack the issue of how. Natural hair is professional hair. We can show you **how** to achieve that. But, only if you're ready for hair that is: full of strength of purpose and energy; intense; active; tight; strong; prone to cause angst and nervous tension in the weak-minded and insecure of our society;...and the beat goes on.....

Embrace the Beauty of You.

## Natural Hair Transition

Excerpts from an article of the same title posted on [treasuredlocks.com](http://treasuredlocks.com)



Photo from ourhair.net

Transitioning from permed or relaxed hair to natural hair should be an exciting time for you. It should not be a time of intimidation or of a feeling of loss. Many women face objections from boyfriends, husbands, family and even in the workplace. While we can't help you with those social and political pressures, we can give you some tips on what to expect and how to make the transition as easy as possible.

### What to Expect When Transitioning to Natural Hair

People often ask us how they can make their relaxed hair "revert" back to natural hair. The true answer is you cannot. Nothing will make hair that has been chemically relaxed go back to its natural state. You have two choices, you can live with the permed hair at the end of the natural hair that is coming in or you can cut the permed hair off. Should you decide you just can't let go of that length, be prepared for some breakage. The place where the natural hair joins the permed hair is a weak point. Many people experience a lot of breakage when growing out a perm. By treating the hair gently and minimizing combing during the transitioning stage, you can minimize the breakage. How much breakage you get is dependent on your hair type and how you treat your hair during the process.

### How to Make the Transition to Natural Hair

There are a few basic ways to make the transition to natural hair. The simplest is to just cut off the permed hair and live with a short hair style for several months. This is the boldest way. But, takes the least amount of work and there's no worry about breakage.

- **Cut off the relaxed hair**- depending on how much new growth and your preferences you have a few styling options. You can wear a TWA (tweeny weeny afro) or twists (two strand or comb twists) pretty easily with almost any length hair. For other styling ideas, see <http://www.ourhair.net> or <http://www.hairweb.com>
- **Braids and/or extensions**- you can have your hair braided until it grows to a length where you feel comfortable cutting off the new growth and going with other styling

options

- **Other Transition Styles**- see below for more ideas of styles to wear while making the transition from relaxed to natural hair.

If you are going to try to maintain your length while transitioning, keep these things in mind. Your hair is very fragile during this time. Handle it as little as possible and make sure you keep it well moisturized. Sleep with a silk cap or scarf at night to prevent friction on your pillow and to maintain moisture in your hair.

## How Not to Make the Transition to Natural Hair

Transitioning to natural hair in other ways, like pressing the natural hair as it grows in underneath the relaxed hair, are going to make your hair prone to breakage and can damage the natural hair you're trying to grow in. Products that claim to revert permed hair might make it frizzy, but are not going to really make it natural. You do not want to put chemicals on top of chemicals in your hair. You will only end up damaging the hair and get even more breakage than you would experience otherwise. While transitioning, try to find a style that will accommodate the new growth coming in like twists or braids.

## Finding a Natural Hair Transition Style

This may be the biggest challenge of all about going natural (besides the comments from your friend and co-workers). How do you style your hair when it's very short or when some of it is nappy and the rest is straight. There are several options.

- **TWA**- do the Big Chop and just wear a Tweeny Weeny Afro
- **Braids or SisterLocks**- SisterLocks can be started with as little as 1-1/2" of new growth at the scalp.
- **Two Strand or Comb Twists**- simple yet effective. If you decide to cut your hair, you can just use some styling gel (like Black Earth's Lock It Up Gel) and part your hair into sections. Either twist on a comb or take two strands and twist them around each other. Your hair can be worn like this for several days before having to re-style. CAUTION: Hair that is left twisted for too long can begin to lock. So, unless you want locks, take it down every once in a while.
- **Straw Set**- this is a great style if you want to keep your permed hair. The tight curls make the different textures (your roots and ends) less noticeable.
- **Crinkle Set or Twist Out**- by braiding or twisting your hair using a setting gel, you can create a wavy/crinkly look that minimizes the different textures of your hair. You can wear your hair in twists or braids for a while, then remove them to wear the "twist out."
- **Flat Twists**- basically the same as cornrows. The difference is you use two strands of hair instead of three.

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## To Revert or Not to Revert...That is the Question

By Schatzi H. McCarthy ( Photo from Khamitkinks.com)



On Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> after a long day and feeling in need of *relaxation* (touché), I crashed in front of the tube. I rarely watch TV, but I was waiting for my show "So You Think You Can Dance?" If that ain't the show, I don't have time for it. Really. Anyway in anticipation of the show, I was just reclining into the sofa. It was heavenly. The droning sound of the TV was

almost comforting. Then, the phone rang.

It reminded me of the time when our family lived in Jamaica. Our first four years there were without a telephone because there were not enough phone lines in the area to accommodate our request for one. I recall the first time we were relaxing at home and the phone rang. Lloyd and I both jumped sky high! It was alarming and disconcerting! I hated it. I thought, 'why would ANYONE want **and** pay for such a thing!' We regretfully got accustomed to the abuse very quickly. On June 13<sup>th</sup>, I was wishing for simpler days.

Anyway, Jela-ni says, "Mommy, phone. It's \_\_\_\_\_." Too tired to get up and not ashamed enough to do what I always told myself I wouldn't do when growing up, I said, "Please run and bring me the cordless. Thank you." Jela-ni darts off and returns rather quickly. "Thanks. Hello. Hey, how are you doing?" Yes, I have a minute. Come on over." My girlfriend then comes from her house to mine and makes a bee-line to the side of the sofa where I'm reclined. "LOOK AT MY HAIR!!" she says while removing a small straw hat pulled over a plastic conditioning cap. I looked and looked. I was in a bit of a fog from the day's activity, so I was noticeably delayed in "catching on." Then she says again, "Look at my hair!! I don't know what to do!" Then, I realized the predicament. I was a bit stunned but said nothing right away. She was showing me her "oh-so-natural" locks that were suddenly "not-so-natural." In fact, the hair on the left side of her head was bone straight...WET!!! I looked again to be sure I was looking at what I was looking at. "Your hair is wet and it looks like this?!", I said. "YES!!!" I then proceed to the logical next question, "What happened?" "I flat ironed it with a ceramic flat iron," she jettisons. Again, I was dumbstruck. I touched the hair to be sure. It was indeed wet and STRAIGHT!! I had always heard of hair pressing causing damage and breakage due to excessive heat but I had never heard of instant relaxed hair, care of the ceramic wand. I was shocked and saddened. Her natural locks were FABULOUS!! And gone.

I then reflected on another client who came into the salon for a style a few months back. She indicated that she would likely return in a few months to get a trim. In her words, "I know my hair is uneven and needs a trim. I took the scissors to it a little while back out of frustration." "Why," I asked. She responded, "I got it flat ironed for my wedding and it wouldn't revert when I washed it. I had no idea that would happen. I didn't know what to do so I just cut it off." I listened and empathized with the horror that she must have felt. However, TO SEE IT WITH MY OWN EYES was truly a surprise!! My girlfriend would have NEVER put a relaxer in her hair. It was indeed a shock.

Some will think, if a woman flat irons her hair, why should she care if it stays straight. Well, the reality is that most women who flat iron rather than relax their hair do so to maintain the health, vitality and *naturality* of their hair. If they wanted it permanently straight, they'd get the perm. It is a shock to have your natural hair fail to revert after applying water, when you KNOW you didn't have a chemical treatment added to your hair. In an attempt to research the issue, I Googled "flat iron hair won't revert." I found an interesting discussion on the "curly journal" for NaturallyCurly.com. There were quite a few sisters lamenting the perils of hair pressing with the ceramic flat iron. Incidentally, this "chattalk" was under the heading "Don't Press."

More intrigued than ever, I began to think logically about how this could possibly occur. From my own hair research over the years, I know that hair straightening is possible due to the rearrangement of broken hydrogen bonds in the hair's cortex. When we wet, heat or even pull our hair, we place pressure on these very fragile hydrogen bonds. They break very easily.

When the hair dries (or reaches room temperature), it takes on the shape that it last held before drying. So, if we wet our natural hair, it stretches and when it dries, it regains normalcy. When we pull our hair and allow it to dry while maintaining the pull, it will be straighter than before the pull. If we roller set wet hair and sit under a dryer, the hair takes on the shape of the roller. Fairly easily understood. So, when we flat iron, we are applying two of the processes referenced above, pulling and heating the hair simultaneously. This is consistent with most straightening procedures. Yet, there is something unique about the ceramic flat iron that is different from the flat comb. When we hot comb our hair, the hair reverts back when wet. Period. It does. So what is it about the high heat of the ceramic iron that prevents reversion? I mean, let's face it. A pressing comb can only get so hot before it will scorch your hair straight off of your head. If you've ever experienced this scorching, it will quickly turn you against straightening. Maybe that's why I have no desire to do so. Yet, there must be something about the ability of the hair to get so hot WITHOUT burning (due to its ceramic enclosure) that in effect recodes and thus permanently straightens the hair. Fascinating!! I suddenly became very interested in the Japanese Thermal Restructuring process, known to be as much as \$1000 at some beauty salons. What I learned is this process runs hot irons over the hair twice AND applies a chemical straightener before the process is complete. The result is bone straight hair that will not kink, coil, curl or bend when water is applied. This hair has been effectively reprogrammed. The roots however are another story because: That which God has coded, let NO MAN reprogram! Can I get a "Amen."

With that thought, I ended my search. I don't have all of the answers to the numerous questions that have been circulating in my head about "why" the ceramic flat iron reprograms the hair strands. All that I can surmise is that due to the high heat tolerance of ceramic, the net effect on the hair can be a **chemical** reaction that is catalyzed by the introduction of extreme heat rather than reacting chemical compounds (e.g. Relaxer products). Who knew? So, in the spirit of sharing, I issue a word of caution to the ladies:

1. Exercise extreme caution when using ceramic flat irons. If you must flat iron, use low heat settings only. You may even want to test the heat setting on a section of your hair in the back of your hair to test reversion tendency.
2. Never flat iron hair more than once between washing. It is important to allow your hair to revert and remember its name (so to speak) before telling it to sing another song again. I would recommend flat ironing only on occasion rather than regularly.
3. Flat iron your hair yourself or have someone do it who appreciates the naturality journey that you are on. Those who understand your walk will be more inclined to care for the strength and vitality of your hair long after the individual style is gone.
4. Be careful when purchasing ceramic flat irons. These products appear to be getting hotter and hotter. However, these products were largely designed for European hair. Europeans and Africans often straighten their hair for very different reasons. A sister who hates her wavy locks and always wanted straight hair down her back won't care that her red curls or now permanently auburn rods. However, the natural sister that wants natural locks and presses her hair for a job interview to take away the "x" factor in the interview won't be pleased to discover that her twist out `fro is now a wavy bob. The manufacturers of these products aren't telling the whole story.

And in the immortal words of Paul Harvey, "Now you know...the rest of the story."

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## Giving Thanks...EVERYDAY!!!

On this our first anniversary, I would be extremely remiss if I didn't give appreciation where it is due. So, please accompany me in giving thanks to those beautiful people who God has placed in my path. I am eternally grateful. Without their daily support, this first anniversary would be but a raisin in the sun.

Shaundrelle: You are an awesome spirit and the most inspiring stylist that I have EVER MET!!! The salon and our clients have been blessed by your presence and I will never stop giving thanks for you being willing to share your talents with us. YOU ROCK!!!! EVERYDAY!! You nourish my spirit with your positive energy, and I can only pray that I have been half of the source of inspiration that you have been to me. I pray that one day, you receive the compensation that you truly deserve!!

Latisha: You are Beauty personified. You are a cherished flower. What a wonderful presence you are. I am honored that you have graced our salon with your engaging personality. I can't imagine a person more appropriate to greet our clients upon entry into our spa experience. Your voice is beauty, you are beauty, our clients are assured. They love you!! All of them!! That's no easy task to achieve. You are a blessing. Thank you for sharing your time and your talent. Again, I can only imagine that I have fallen short of the mark as an employer, but I appreciate your willingness to tolerate my shortcomings and press on.

To you ladies, I am eternally grateful. I pray for God's bounty so that I may share it with you.

Chris, Bonita, Vanessa, Isha, Keely and Tamioka: Each of you has your respective talents and I thank you for sharing them in our salon. I pray that this next year will grant the opportunity for each of you to self-actualize in your own ways, through a medium that you love and enjoy. I pray that *Schatzi's* can facilitate that personal growth and development.

Lloyd, Jela-Ni and Jamar: My husband and my sons have been a constant source of inspiration to me over the past year. On days I felt down, Lloyd always rebounded with a positive vision of the future. His positivism and engaging laughter can be infectious at times. My sons likewise have been any mother's dream. They have done their homework, even when I wasn't there to check it. They came home from the streets when I told them to, even though I wasn't there to make sure they were home. In fact, they have become pretty good cooks over the past year. Two young ladies are going to be very delighted with these gentlemen when they learn of their culinary prowess, molded under the watchful eye of their father. As a Jamaican, I must admit that my cooking skills pale on the pallet in comparison to his own. Thank you gentlemen for being in my life and supporting me. We are indeed blessed.

Jasmine: My sister and my friend. Your artwork is a rare and wonderful gift to the salon. Thank you for sharing it with the world. I remember the years when I used to take care of you. Of late, it seems that you are taking care of me. I am blessed and honored that you are sharing my life with me as my one and only sister.

Yoneka: My girl. I've never really had girlfriends to whom I tell everything, or just about everything. Never!! I'm pretty private and always have been. But to you, I give thanks. You are the first and only female to whom I have entrusted my soul, and you have never let me down. It's really a shame that it took me seven years of friendship to realize how integral you are and have



been to my life. I'm glad you moved to the Raleigh area. It has made a qualitative difference in my life. Despite our nightly chats until after midnight and my ensuing tired eyes the next day, I wouldn't change a thing. Thank you.

Mom, Dad, Earl, Jason, Christine, Master Jo-Hun Seong et al: Thank you for inspiring me to believe in myself and know that I CAN. You are all beautiful jewels in my life and to each of you, I am eternally grateful for the unique impact that you have made on my life.