

TEST DRIVE

High roller

One mother-to-be rediscovers her sex appeal with the help of the new bouffant

BY JULIA SEIDL

A few weekends ago, I fell under Brigitte Bardot's spell. The original blond bombshell took over my usually low-key look for one glamorous evening, and I have to admit I liked it.

At eight and a half months pregnant, *sexy* is barely in my vocabulary, and *party* is equally scarce. But both words re-entered my life and social calendar recently as I prepped for one last soiree before my baby's arrival. If this was to be my swan song before diaper changing took over my Saturday nights, I wanted to go out on a high note. And what could be higher than the bouffant hairstyles that ruled the Fall 2015 runways? From the gravity-defying beehives at Badgley Mischka and Adam Selman to the more subtle raised crowns at Matthew Williamson and Erdem (not to mention the candy-coloured demi-hives at Maison Martin Margiela's Spring 2016 show), traces of the sultry French screen queen's heightened mane are everywhere.

With my continually expanding belly already pushing the limits of my maternity waistband, I wondered how much height I could handle up top before I looked like a misshapen camel. I turned to the pros. "Don't go Amy Winehouse with it," advised hair guru and Redken global creative director Guido Palau, who created the mussed lifts backstage at Tory Burch Spring 2016. "Just raising the crown a little bit gives a softness and a sexiness. It elongates your face beautifully."

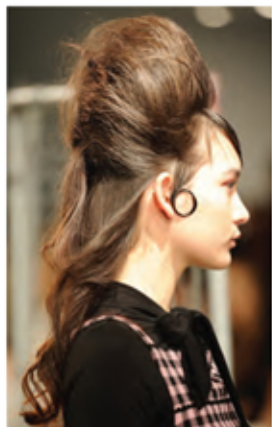
According to hairstylist Peter Gray, who was responsible for the "stride of pride" bouffants at Badgley Mischka, it's best to start with day-old hair. "It's my somewhat more egalitarian take on the 'walk of shame' or 'morning-after' texture," he explained. He suggested boosting roots with volumizing mousse or thickening spray; I also added a dose of dry shampoo.

Leaving out about two inches of hair from the front for a side sweep, I reached for a fine-tooth tail comb and a boar-bristle brush to begin the laborious process of backcombing my crown. To ensure even height, Gray suggests counting the number of brush strokes for each piece, gradually increasing them as you work from the front of the head toward the crown. After achieving an enormous bird's nest (which, when it came time to brush out my hair at the end of the evening, led to the loss of more than a few strands and a good 15 minutes of my life), I used my brush to delicately smooth the top layer back over it. I pulled back the sides into a half-up twist and secured that with a few criss-crossed bobby pins. Finally, I brushed the front section across my forehead and tucked it behind one ear, and lightly curled my loose ends.

Not to sound big-headed, but I was quite pleased with the results. The retro reference wasn't over the top; in fact, my hair made me crave even more of a 1960s look, which meant replacing my standard neutral shadow with a flirty Bardot-esque cat-eye. I also hold BB responsible for selecting the somewhat psychedelic striped dress at the very, very back of my closet. It was stretchy and sexy and certainly not something I had thought I would be wearing a mere three weeks before my due date. As I headed out of the bedroom, my husband was bug-eyed over my new look. He didn't go as far as whistling as I walked by, but he did wonder aloud where this side of me had been hiding. My friends were equally kind, especially the men. "Not every woman can pull off a look like that, but you can," said one with a wink. Given that prior to doubling up on my bump I'd felt more like a fat tabby than a sex kitten, this was music to my ears. Merci, Brigitte!



Top: Hair inspiration Brigitte Bardot (1964). Above: Writer Julia Seidl channels her inner bombshell. Left: Bouffants on the Fall 2015 runways (clockwise from top left) at Matthew Williamson, Badgley Mischka, Erdem, Tory Burch (Spring 2016), Adam Selman.



Bouffant tool kit



MOROCCANOIL BOAR BRISTLE TEASING BRUSH, \$40, MOROCCANOIL.COM. GARNIER FRUCTIS STYLE FULL & PLUSH BIG VOLUME SPRAY, \$6, DRUGSTORES. REDKEN GUTS 10 ROOT TARGETED VOLUME SPRAY FOAM, \$23, REDKEN.CA