

ON THE CUFF

Ondine wears a handful of bracelets—all from her own jewelry line (lasirene designs.com).

HAIR BY LINH NGUYEN FOR SEE MANAGEMENT USING ORIBE; MAKEUP BY LINDSEY WILLIAMS FOR LOWE & CO. USING REAL HER MAKEUP; MANICURE BY RACHEL SHIM FOR ARTISTS AT WILHELMINA USING CHANEL LE VERNIS; STYLING BY JENNIFER SMITH FOR ELYSE CONNOLLY

Beauty at Any Age

It Grows on You

WITH YEARS COMES CONFIDENCE. FOR ONDINE, THAT MEANT FINALLY EMBRACING THE FEATURE SHE SPENT YEARS TRYING TO COVER UP—HER GRAY HAIR. HERE, THE STORY OF HOW SHE ACCEPTED HERSELF.

By Lisa DeSantis

“As you get older, you fully become who you are,” says Ondine, who encourages friends—and total strangers—to go gray too.

ONDINE’S HAIR started turning gray when she was just 15. “They call it ‘shock gray,’” Ondine, now 54, says—which is fitting, given that it happened when her adoptive father died. The grays came in “as a whole chunk,” she says. “I actually used mascara to cover it.” Around that time, she was scouted by a top modeling agency, and—in the interest of looking like the young woman she was—she began dyeing her hair.

But then, at age 20, she was diagnosed with lupus, and she underwent nearly three years of chemotherapy. When she was hairless, she experimented with various wigs, but when her hair grew back, she reverted to trying to “fit in” by dyeing it dark brown.

Then she got pregnant at 37, and her habits changed: After two decades of using treatments to manage her curls and cover her grays, she decided to avoid chemicals completely. “I thought, ‘Well, they’ll probably think I’m her grandmother,’” she says, laughing. (So far, no one has made that mistake.)

Her daughter, Ella, is now 16, and if family history is anything to go by, her brown hair will someday bear a telltale stripe. The day Ondine met her birth family, eight years ago, her aunt looked at her and said, “You’re definitely a Fitzgerald.” She understood what that meant when they showed her an old photo of another aunt with the same gray streak: “Finally, my hair made sense,” Ondine says. “It’s who I am.” Ella too—her own grays have started poking through.



ONDINE’S GO-TO PRODUCTS



BRASS BUSTER
Clairol Professional Shimmer Lights Shampoo

“I noticed the white of my hair going yellow, so someone turned me on to this purple shampoo. If I don’t use it, my hair starts to get brassy.” **TO BUY:** \$13.50 for 16 oz.; ultra.com.



FRIZZ FIGHTER
Ouidad Advanced Climate Control Collection

“This line has been tremendously successful for me. The Heat and Humidity Gel in particular really seals the curls in my hair.” **TO BUY:** From \$10; ouidad.com.



CURL ENHANCER
Redken Curvaceous Full Swirl Cream Serum

“I have dry hair, so I moisturize it a lot. This helps tame my curls. If I don’t put anything in my hair, it’s going to be Diana Ross on a bad day.” **TO BUY:** \$21; ultra.com.