

Dream Weaver

Sheila Stotts is the go-to girl in Hollywood for A-list actresses who want natural-looking hair extensions.

An Army brat who spent her childhood in Memphis, TN, met Elvis Presley when she was five and talked rocker Ted Nugent into a makeover right before he went on stage, Sheila Stotts was born to make beauty history. "We lived in Atwater Village, just south of Glendale in Los Angeles, when I was in high school," says Stotts. John Paul Deloria, now president and CEO of Paul Mitchell, lived in the same neighborhood. "I used to trick-or-treat at his mother's house, but he and I never put two-and-two together until we had a conversation about it five years ago."

Stotts, who was adopted by her parents while they were stationed in Germany, became a U.S. citizen around the time that John F. Kennedy was shot in Dallas. She lived in Texas then. It was earlier, while living in Memphis, that Stotts, on a dare,

climbed over the fence at Graceland. She was being escorted off the property by a security guard when Elvis, wearing a blue bathrobe, came to her rescue. "He invited me in," she says. "We had Chips Ahoy cookies and milk in his kitchen."

It was in Memphis where Stotts made friends with the black girls in her class and had an *aha!* moment. "They were adding raffia and yarn to their hair," she says. "That's when I realized that you could do things to make your hair appear longer than it was."

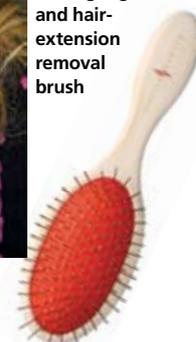
It was also while in Memphis that Stotts met Ted Nugent. "I'd gone to visit my cousins, who were groupies," she says. "One of them was dating a member of Savoy Brown. They were opening for Ted Nugent so she got me backstage. I had just graduated from beauty school and didn't even know if I'd passed the state boards, but I already thought of myself as a hairdresser, and I had my shears with me. At first I thought Ted was a roadie. I told him that I could give him a really great cut and break up his curl. When he went on stage, he pulled me on with him. That's when I realized who he was. He asked the audience what they thought of his new haircut. It was phenomenal."

After Stotts returned to Los Angeles, she got into a car accident. Nugent sent flowers to the hospital. "My cosmetologist's license came the day after the accident, but I couldn't work because I'd dislocated my shoulder," she says. Russ Parks, who owned the first unisex salon in Glendale—this was the 1970s—had offered her a job before her accident, but by the time she could work he had filled the position. "So I got a job at the Scissor Shack in Sherman Oaks," says Stotts, who met The Knack of *My Sharona* fame there. "They were my first celebrity clients."

Later on she worked for Dusty Fleming in Beverly Hills. Gene Shacove—Warren Beatty based



A Sheila Stotts detangling and hair-extension removal brush



his character in *Shampoo* on him—worked there. So did Harold Lapin, one of the Lapin brothers, who'd invented lift-and-deposit color. "I learned so much about color from him," she says. When she got tired of the Beverly Hills scene, she moved back to the Valley and opened the Sheila Stotts Salon in Studio City. "I was an Aveda professional then," she says. She was also doing hair extensions. It was in the Valley that she met her husband, Galileo Stotts. When they married, they tattooed each other's names on their ring fingers. Sadly, he died in 2001. "Five weeks after we found our dream house, he was diagnosed with cancer," she says. They have a son, Cole, who's 12.

Today Stotts sees a roster of celebrity clients, including Celine Dion and Mandy Moore, at her studio in Woodland Hills. "I met Celine through Peter Savick, an editorial stylist who's very flamboyant," Stotts says. "He looks like a gypsy—20 earrings, pants tied with a scarf. He called me from the Beverly Hills Hotel where he was doing Celine's hair. He kept whispering 'nightmare' into the phone, so I packed up my entire kit and drove right over with 300 ounces of hair in different lengths, textures and colors. I stayed up all night doing color correction and adding extensions. She started touring wearing her long hair, which I think is as much a part of her persona as her voice."

Barbara Lorenz, a set hairdresser for 35 years, sought Stotts out when filming began for Oprah Winfrey's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. "Halle Berry had about an inch and a half of hair," Stotts says. "Barbara wanted her to wear a wig, but Oprah insisted that she needed extensions. Barbara didn't think it could be done, but I did a full head using 12- and 32-inch wefts in different colors and textures. I think I put in more than 1,400 bonds."

Stotts has done about 130 movies and more than 50 TV shows. Recently she launched her own line of products, including shampoo, blow-dryers, flat irons and brushes that won't damage extensions. Visit her Web site, sheilastotts.com, to find out more. —MARIANNE DOUGHERTY



HALLE BERRY

ABOVE: Halle Berry loved the extensions Stotts gave her for *Their Eyes Were Watching God* so much that she kept them. RIGHT: Mandy Moore sees Stotts for extensions and her own stylist for color.



MANDY MOORE

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