

Daily Breeze

SUNDAY

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TODAY

IDEAS & TRENDS

TIPS FROM MARTHA

Readers wonder about the proper way to peel squash, the difference between heavy cream and whipping cream, and how best to dry citrus fruit. Fortunately, Martha Stewart has suggestions.

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DESTINATIONS



Would you include the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, among the new seven wonders of the world? How about the Statue of Liberty or the Taj Mahal? Stonehenge or the Eiffel Tower? Now is your chance to give your 2 cents on which man-made structures should make the revised list.

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ON THE BOOKSHELF

NEW READ

Thomas Pynchon's latest novel, *Against the Day*, reads like something a fan of the author's work might have written. And that's not necessarily a good thing. The flimsy plot centers around an anarchist bomber who is killed by hit men and the efforts of his children to avoid or accept his death.

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What's coming up



clip & tell

Getting your hair done isn't so cut and dried as salon talk turns trusted stylists into 'hairapists'

By Cerise Valenzuela
DAILY BREEZE

Photo illustration
by Bruce Hazelton
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For stylists, a client's happiness is only inches away. Cut enough hair and see a transformation. Cut too much and get served with a lawsuit.

But all too often there's something else in the mix. That client, the one who wants to look like that celebrity in the magazine clipping, also wants free counseling because the world is crashing down around her. Oh, and she doesn't want to be judged.

It's not easy being a hairapist.

But it makes good fodder for books and reality TV. "Therapy, they not only want it, they demand it," said Yasmine Spain, a stylist at Melvin's Golden Touch in Inglewood.

Spain is featured in an episode of Style Network's unscripted series "Split Ends," which premiered Nov. 17 and now airs Saturdays at 6 p.m. Stylists on the show swap shops for a chance to work at someone

else's chair. Spain was sent to New York during fashion week, where she was the only stylist experienced in working with black women's hair, but unarmed with necessary tools.

"Clients want to talk to you, and even if it's about nothing," said Spain, a part-time actress. "I work in the ghetto; when women here are going through a divorce, the attorneys subpoena the stylists. Oh yeah, we know if she's steppin' out on him."

Spain said she's painfully blunt with clients and hasn't got much patience for the tender-hearted. She tells them when they "look a little thick" and when "they actin' funky." Spread your moodiness around her salon or get sensitive when she tells you to wake up because he's just not that into you, and she's not likely to style your hair again.

Hairdressers love to gossip and we do. But these people love to tell you everything. I don't care how

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HAIRAPIST

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embarrassing it is. And you have to step up and respond," she said.

"I'll tell them, 'Don't you come up in here and talk about that guy when you know you should just move on."

It's exhausting, Spain said. "You have to save the energy for your own problems too. Sometimes I tell them 'Come on in and

get your hair done, but I don't need all the extras today."

Salon talk bounces from travel to toddlers and from anniversaries to alimony. The same miracle worker who tames manes often must talk clients down from the virtual ledge.

Pity the celebrity stylists: Those who want to keep their A-list clients sit on some seriously salacious gossip.

There are a few boundaries, Spain said.

Never talk sex with anyone younger than 18 and don't talk politics or religion.

"They teach you that in school," she said. "The No. 1

rule is no religion and no politics. A lot of people's homes and marriages have been ruined because of religion.

"We play it safe and we gossip about somebody on TV. They give us plenty to talk about," she said.

Maybe it's the chair that makes a client — male or female — more vulnerable, said Giuseppe Franco, owner of a Beverly Hills salon of the same name and personal stylist to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Franco, who describes himself as an "old-school Italian Catholic," said he doesn't believe in "the D word" (divorce), but many customers have confessed affairs or spoiled marriages.

"If you have money you'd probably go to therapy, but I would pick the hairdresser," he said. "If you trust your hairdresser to see you with wet hair and no makeup, there's a deep feeling of trust there."

"They're doing the talking, but you've got to respond," he said. "If you're a stylist and you say nothing, you've got the personality of an ashtray and you're doomed. We're in the business of communication and pampering people."

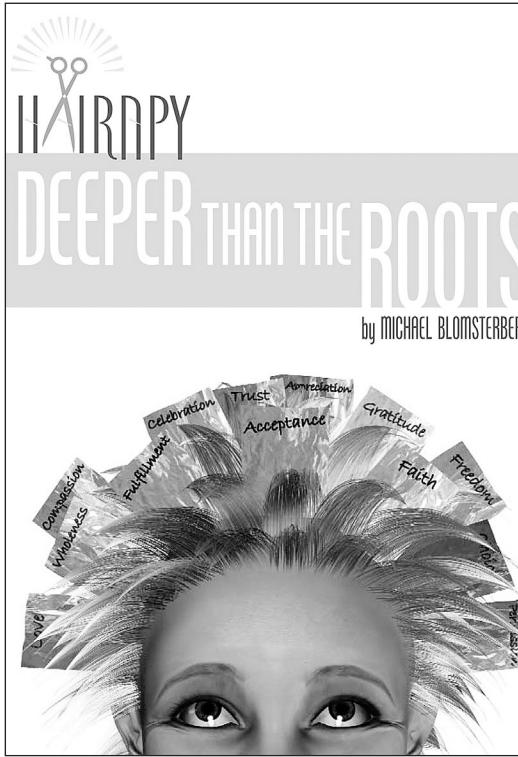
Busy stylists will have five to 10 clients a day, Franco said.

"Sure, you hope they're happy. But the truth is you're going to have seven that are miserable," he said.

"Should you give bad advice? No," he said.



Author Michael Blomsterberg has advice.



"Most self-help books say 'If you do A you'll get B.' What I'm genius at is guiding people to their own truth," said *Hairapy: Deeper Than the Roots* author Michael Blomsterberg. "I feel like I have a doctorate in listening."

the Roots (MLR Publishing). The book deals with death, holding out for "the one," holiday stress, and issues he dealt with in his own life — eating disorders, drug and alcohol addiction, and physical and psychological abuse. But it doesn't quite fit the self-help mold.

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"I feel like I have a doctorate in listening," he said.

As a hairdresser, Blomsterberg often supported a client by sharing when he'd known another client who had overcome the same issue. But he never discussed names.

Now he'll coach clients full time and teach them to accept themselves. People mostly concentrate on the elements in life that aren't working, but miss the majority of their successes, he said.

"I believe that we're all whole, perfect, and beautiful exactly as we are. I also believe that 98 percent of our lives is working and that 2 percent may need some adjustments."

The book's 39th and final chapter calls upon the reader to take charge and make "The contribution no one else can make."

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