

# Class and flattery are always in fashion

**BEAUTY** The renowned stylist-to-the-stars' philosophy to allow hair to do "what comes naturally" is why Oscar Blandi endures, reports **Elyse Glickman**, who had her mane refreshed for fall at his flagship Manhattan salon

PHOTOGRAPHED BY  
**GUSTAVO SCATENA**/IMAGEM PAULISTA,  
**CHRISTINA M. HICKS**, AND **NICK BERARDI**



**I**N CONTRAST to the minimalist chic of many higher-end salons, Oscar Blandi's fabled space, discreetly occupying a floor inside a Madison Avenue mid-century office building, is a wonderful throwback to an earlier time where glamour reigned supreme over edge. Even with the most up-to-date salon technology within stylists' arms' reach,

the furniture is plush, the colour scheme is calming, and an enchanting boutique space greets clients. Large portraits of celeb clients like Kelly Ripa, Sofia Vergara and Faith Hill, who rely on subtle changes with timeless flair rather than extreme makeovers, grace the walls.

Even though the salon, with an expanse of 1,200 m<sup>2</sup>, is one of the largest

in the US, it feels intimate and cozy. On a Saturday, just before the weekend rush, you'll see high-profile career women (encouraged to turn off their perpetually buzzy cellphones after entering) and society ladies and their properly behaved daughters filing in. I am drawn to a jewellery case filled with hair ornaments when my stylist and the manager greet





me and squire me to a seat. The music is kept at a manageable level, so I can articulate my wants and needs in addressing my summer-ravaged hair.

The cut and style is classic—just slightly shorter in the back to allow movement in the front—and all signs of summertime damage has been removed. Afterwards, the manager introduces me to Blandi,

whom I realize is as much an anomaly in the beauty salon universe—in very positive ways. He expresses his passion for perfecting hair in a very quiet, thoughtful way without need for superlative adjectives or pretense, particularly appealing when one is in New York on a Saturday morning following a week of UN meetings.

As one may intuit, Blandi's colour and

cut outlook for the coming autumn and winter is straightforward, and adaptable to people of all ages, backgrounds and fashion preferences. 'While runways, magazines, and fashion ostensibly set the trends, the majority of women prefer the longer hair,' says Blandi, a native of Napoli, Italy. '[With our clientèle], graduated long bobs and bobs are what



# *Blandi expresses his passion for perfecting hair in a very quiet, thoughtful way*

would be considered edgy. That said, long layers will always be in as it works with a variety of textures?

Thinking ahead to next spring, Blandi predicts sleek hair will return in 2019 after several seasons of beachy waves and sunny streaks. He stresses the updated look will have movement and body that imparts shine and bounce, rather than have that old flat straight look. For some clients with natural waves and curls, he admits the 'sleek and sophisticated look' will take added effort. With the right products and guidance from a stylist, the sleekness can endure the vicissitudes of humidity and unpredictable weather.

'For tropical climates like Florida, a silicon base oil will help fight frizz and flyaways,' he says. 'We show our clients how to work with gel and oil, based on their hair type, to get the right balance of hold. However, with curly-haired clients, we want to show them how to attain flexibility and manageability of their hair. Rather than fight to straighten hair in humid conditions, we want to teach them the correct way to use the creams or silicon based oils to add smoothness with the hair's natural texture.'

Although keratin treatments have had their moment, he discourages women from 'killing the curl'. 'Work with your stylist to get a cut and products that work with the hair's natural texture to control frizz and flyaway,' he continues.

Blandi acknowledges that highlights and balayage will still be around, especially as they are commitments and customers are willing to use the right products to maintain that look longer. However, he points out out blonde and red hues will steer more subtle, warmer, and less likely to oxidize or become brassy. 'Stay true to skin colour and pay attention to your wardrobe,' he says. 'Multi-tonal colouring will be more blended and natural-looking but still have dimension so it will illuminate the face and make you look younger.'

Summing it up, Blandi is less about his personal celebrity status, and more about his appreciation for natural beauty and a "to thy own self be true" philosophy for cuts, colour, and care he passes on to clients. •



**Above:** Inside Oscar Blandi's Manhattan salon. **Right:** One of Blandi's styles in partnership with Wella Professionals.

Elyse Glickman is US west coast editor of *Lucire*.

SALON PHOTOS: CHRISTINA M. HICKS; NICK BERARDI



