

BOB IT LIKE BECKHAM

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TAMPA - I'm sure many women consider Victoria Beckham, aka Posh Spice, an international fashion icon. But let's face it: The former Spice Girl has been responsible for her fair share of dodgy trends.

Sequin pants and stilettos, anyone? Clothes that reveal skin and bones and a tattoo that, at first glance, looks as if she has stitches down her spine? What about wearing a fuchsia bra with a backless animal print dress to the MTV Movie Awards?

Yes, the Posh one has been the source of some outlandish looks. But it looks as though Mrs. Beckham finally has latched onto something that women are eager to embrace (and, no, it's not her soccer-star hubby, David). It's the "Pob."

What's the Pob, you ask? Well, it's the bob reinvented. Beckham ditched the hair extensions last year for a sleek, graduated bob, angled to swing longer in the front. The look - and variations of it - is the mane attraction at Bay area salons.

The bob haircut has been popular since the 1920s. Over the years, it has been updated and worn in a variety of ways. But thanks to Beckham, it's hotter than ever.

"It's one of our most requested looks," says Michael Angelo Rizzi, owner of Michael Angelo Hair Studio in South Tampa. "She Beckham and her husband have always been trendsetters. The media reports their every move. When she does something to her hair, everyone notices."

One of the hair studio's customers sporting the look is 53-year old Janni Lifsey of Tampa.

"I absolutely love it," says Lifsey, 53, who chopped off her shoulder-length locks and went bobbing in July. "I've been stopped countless times by people asking me where I got my cut.

"I certainly never thought I would be walking around with something so popular."

The beauty of the bob this time around is that it can be customized to each individual, Rizzi says.

"It really depends on how trendy the person wants to be," he says. "You have to tailor the hairstyle to the person's personality. It would look funny if you put it on someone who doesn't dress the part."

The style also works on virtually any type of hair, regardless of a person's ethnic background.

"A lot of people think you have to have thick gorgeous hair, but you don't," Rizzi says. "The most important thing is the cut. Only 2 percent of people have perfect hair. The others have really good cuts."

Jacqui Rowley, manager of Studio 10 in South Tampa, says the bob's appeal is cross-generational.

"Anyone can pull it off," she says. "It sits at the chin, and it's ageless as well."

Rowley herself traded in her beyond-shoulder-length tresses and went bobbing in July.

"I cut it because I was trying to grow it out; but now I love it so much, I'm keeping it."

For those women who just can't part with their long locks, there's no need to worry.

"Classic long layers never go out of style," Rizzi says. "Classic haircuts don't go anywhere; they're just reinvented."

Rizzi says heavy bangs and '60s- and '70s-inspired cuts are popular right now as well. In terms of color, deep reds, rich mahogany and copper locks are the latest looks for fall.

But regardless of one's enthusiasm for of-the-minute trends, the best choice is to execute a style that makes a personal statement.

"Hair is your most important accessory; you wear it everyday," Rizzi says. "Unlike a dress and shoes that you can interchange daily, your hairstyle is something you wear everyday."