

TrendSpotter

[THE LOOK]

Suzanne D'Amato

A LOOK AT 3 MAKEOVER BOOKS



1 Is there a fashion or beauty topic you'd like to see explored in Trend Spotter? E-mail Suzanne D'Amato at trendspotter@washpost.com.

With their cadres of beauty gurus and wardrobe winnowers, celebrities make the business of style seem simple. But most of us, sadly, lack a crew of hangers-on to tweeze our brows and schlep our Spanx. That's where makeover advice books come in. Lose a scarf, add some blush and presto chango! Any plain Jane can look a little like Halle Berry. At least, that's the kind of transformation that these releases suggest is possible:

"30 Days to Diva Style!" trumpets the cover of **"Brenda Kinsel's Fashion Makeover"** (Chronicle Books, \$22.95). Diva style, in this case, doesn't mean Diana Ross so much as clothes that showcase your assets and let your personality shine. Yes, that's roughly the same idea as every other makeover book on the market, but Kinsel's friendly, genuinely helpful voice elevates her read above the rest.

This illustration-packed book isn't for everyone, though: It caters to older women who need confidence as much as new clothes. Kinsel's peppy prose is riddled with yes-you-can aphorisms, some of which could appeal only to timorous hausfraus who live in "Super Bowl '86!" T-shirts. For them, this step-by-step guide to building a wardrobe could be a godsend. But women with more style are likely to find Kinsel's diva a little dowdy.

If you believe that "aging sucks" and inexpensive jeans make some women "look like hell," you'll find a soul mate in Charla Krupp, veteran beauty editor and author of **"How Not to Look Old"** (Springboard Press, \$25.99). Krupp maintains that her no-nonsense book is about "looking young without looking ridiculous" — a statement that seems slightly less credible once she fesses up to having had an eyelift, laser treatments and Botox injections. In a word: ouch.

Still, if you can get past the talk of fillers, plumpers and other iffy-sounding injectables, Krupp offers smart fashion and beauty tips that are suitable for women of all ages. Whether she's riffing on gloomy mascara or singing the praises of control-top pantyhose, Krupp manages to sound both down-to-earth and well-informed: Throughout, you'll find specific product recommendations and where-to-buy info.



BY JULIA EWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST

Going under the needle may not be for you, but the bulk of Krupp's matter-of-fact advice doesn't hurt one bit.

Most people shop for clothes when they need them. Sounds logical, yes, but too often it means that you end up buying a \$200 cocktail dress when you meant to spend half that (but it was the day before the party!). Or maybe you snap up the last Miraclesuit in the store, even though it's one size too big (but you're leaving for the beach tomorrow!). If this sounds familiar, Susan Redstone's **"Just Try It On!"** (Citadel, \$15.95) could be your salvation. This truly novel guide to shopping smarter relies on a simple concept: Clothes arrive in stores on a set schedule every month. By shopping as new merchandise becomes available, rather than waiting until you desperately need a specific item, you'll choose from the broadest array of

options. Once beach day arrives, you'll already have that perfect suit (and coverup, and sandals) in hand. Bye-bye, impulse shopping.

For women who don't want to plot out every purchase on an Excel spreadsheet, Redstone's ultra-organized approach could prove maddening. For the many people who shop at end-of-season sales because they, er, need to, some of her pay-full-price suggestions could be a big budget buster. But if you're the type who scrambles from sale rack to designer boutique trying to fill in the gaps in your closet, only to end up with a heap of junk you never wear, this innovative read just might change your life. Or your wardrobe — which, if you're a true fashion junkie, is more or less the same thing.

[RE: SOURCE]

MAKEOVER FOLLOW-UP: WHAT DID THEY THINK?

A couple of weeks ago, we offered four readers some personalized fashion advice ("Style Rx," April 6). Of course, we were curious to find out what the story's subjects thought of our picks. Would the patent-leather heels we suggested send our comfy-sneakers lover running in the opposite direction? Let's find out:

Tirzah O'Beirne, the sweat-shirt-wearing 25-year-old who needed a sophisticated update, had nothing but love for us. So did her friends — and her mother, who told her she just *had* to give Kate Hudson's hair a try. (Thanks, Tirzah's mom!) Our vivid palette, including a scarlet trench and grass-green slingbacks, was also a hit. "Green is something I don't usually pick for a shoe, but I really liked it," O'Beirne says.

Stephanie Jordan, the theater major whose wardrobe



needed a youthful boost, felt the love, too. Her favorite item? The glittery slip-on sneakers from Target's Converse line, shown at right. "The next chance I get, I'm going to buy those shoes," she says. Though she adored the color and cut of the Alisha Levine colorblocked tank we suggested, \$208 was a no-go on her college student budget. "It's more than I would usually spend, but I could use it to look for something like that," she says.

Our fashionable promoter in search of a consistent style, Jill Melnicki, says the boho-glam look we suggested suits her well. "I have lots of those loose, flowy tops," she says. "I'm so comfortable and happy in that kind of stuff." The animal-print maxi dress, shown at far right, might be a stretch for some 32-year-old moms, but Melnicki says her summer wardrobe is filled with the style. As for those



metallic Giuseppe Zanotti gladiator sandals? "A bit much," she says. Oops.

Cornelia Tietke, the social worker whose sparse wardrobe stars three pairs of the same pants, was hoping for a more hands-on approach — like having someone shop with her and show her which pieces work for her body type. After reading our suggestions, Tietke tried on the Mint Jodi Arnold T-shirt dress and Anthropologie's orange linen tank, shown at left, but neither piece had the right fit. Still, the experience wasn't a total bust. "I am so happy to have gotten a push from you to go into Anthropologie, where I found a few more casual pieces to diversify my wardrobe," Tietke writes in an e-mail. "And guess what — I only bought one of each thing!"

Well, three out of four isn't bad. Next time, perfection!
— Michelle Thomas



ANTHROPOLOGIE; TARGET; BANANA REPUBLIC

[TEST DRIVE]



CIBU STICKY RICE POMADE

So apparently Christian Siriano, the Annapolis-raised winner of the past season's "Project Runway," really likes this stuff. Which I guess isn't saying much, considering his hair makes him look like a rooster that was sucked into a buzz saw. Regardless! If Cibu's pomade works on his dramatic pouf, then it should have no trouble wrangling my mane, which is about a month overdue for a cut and inching close to John Stamos circa 1988.

The pomade has good points right off the bat: It smells nice. It's just this side of not-too-greasy. It doesn't leave white smudges on my hair. The initial hold is natural. But that hold deteriorates over the workday, leading my hair to frizz and puff out and stray. Reapplications are necessary.

Eventually, I decide that Sticky Rice probably works much better with shorter hair. I just can't justify going to the bathroom three times a day to reorient my wild strands.

— Dan Zak

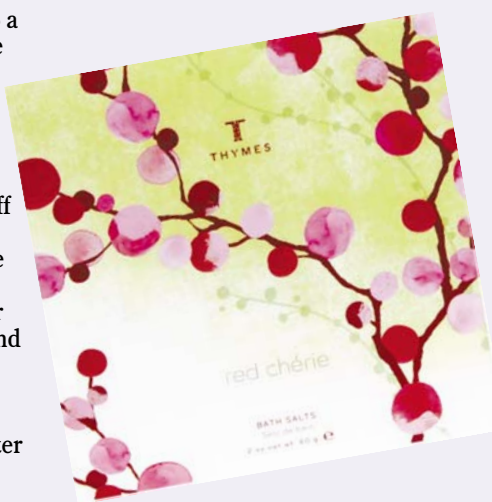
\$16.50 at Bubbles Salon locations and www.cibuinternational.com.

THYMES RED CHERIE BATH SALTS

Fun Dip. That's my nickname for Thymes's Red Cherie bath salts. The fine white granules look just like the powder candy — and they kind of smell like it, too (in a good way). More to the point, it's definitely fun to dip into a tub o' water infused with this cherry, pomegranate, passion flower and jasmine bouquet. After one 30-minute bath, for which I dumped in the whole packet of fine white salts, the fruity essence engulfed my studio apartment. I couldn't stop smelling my shoulder — I smelled *that* good. And even though the District's water is about as soft as a cracked concrete sidewalk, my skin felt supple and fresh, just like a cherry blossom bloom.

— Rachel Machacek

\$5.50-\$6 each at Abrielle (3301 New Mexico Ave. NW, 202-364-6118) and www.thymes.com.



ASTARA SPIRULINA AND SEA MINERAL SOAK

Astaro's bath soak is a departure from the pretty-smelling, foamy potions I usually employ during my lolls in the tub. It's a shocking green, for starters, and has a sour scent that's hard to place . . . sort of like the smell of algae that used to collect on the sides of the fish tank I had as a kid.

The company, cultishly famous for its face masks, promises big things: The soak is supposed to "eliminate harmful toxins," "improve the body's balance and the mind's focus" and, of course, leave one's skin silky smooth. Given that it costs \$34 a bottle — enough for only four uses, per the directions — I'm hoping it does windows, too.

The thin gel turns my tub water palest green, and, thankfully, the smell is all but undetectable. After a 20-minute soak, I feel plenty relaxed, but it's hard to chalk it up to the product instead of, say, the copy of US Weekly I was perusing or the glass of wine perched on the rim of the tub.

Softer skin? Well, maybe. But when it comes to bath soaks, there are plenty of other fish in the sea.

— Emily Heil

\$34 at www.astaraskincare.com.

CIBU; THYMES; ASTARA

[WHAT'S IN STORE]

Shop for a cause by purchasing a \$50 **Eat, Shop, Give** card to benefit Autism Speaks, which funds autism research. The card will get you 20 percent discounts at more than 100 shops, restaurants and salons in and around Montgomery County, including Vivi, Denim Bar and Emily Grace, plus a \$25 gift card for use at Ceviche's new wine bar. Monday through April 27. See www.eatshopgive.org for details or to buy a card. Cards are also available at some stores, including Ralph Lauren, Daisy Too and On Cloud 9. For information, call 301-651-0303.

Saks is hosting a trunk show of designer **Monique Lhuillier's** fall evening-wear collection, which features elegantly embellished cocktail dresses and dreamy, free-flowing gowns. Monday-Tuesday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saks Fifth Avenue, 555 Wisconsin Ave., Chevy Chase, 240-497-5292.

Celebrate Earth Day by bringing your empty **Kiehl's** bottles to any free-standing Kiehl's store. You'll receive a reusable canvas tote in exchange. Available for the first 50 participants Tuesday at the Georgetown location, 3110 M St. NW, 202-333-5101.

At this year's **Beauty Night Out**, you can indulge in mini-manicures and massages while getting the scoop on beauty trends. Wednesday, 5-10 p.m. Carnegie Library, 801 K St. NW. \$25 in advance, \$35 at the door. For more information and tickets, call 202-387-1845 or visit www.sinpr.com/BNO.

Meet designer **Shoshanna Gruss**, whose eponymous label is known for its girly, wearable clothes (see one sunny example at left). Lonstein Gruss will appear with author Melanie Charlton Fascitelli, who will be signing her new book, "Shop Your Closet." See pieces from the latest collection, snag a gift bag with any Shoshanna purchase and get 15 percent off storewide. Thursday, 3-8 p.m. Urban Chic, 1626 Wisconsin Ave. NW, 202-338-5398.

At the annual Book Hill **French Market** sidewalk sale, you can score discounts of up to 80 percent on wares from Sugar, Sassanova and Pink November, among other stores. Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Wisconsin Avenue NW between Reservoir Road and P Street. See www.georgetowndc.com for details.

— Michelle Thomas



SHOSHANNA