A full-page photograph of singer Lola Ponce performing on stage. She is wearing a long, shimmering gold dress and holding a microphone. The background is a stage with a grid of lights.

Singer Lola Ponce's wavy tresses are a mane event at the 58th San Remo Music Festival.

In the Mix

Twirling textures are coiling their way into the hearts—and services—of stylists.

By Jeryl E. Spear and Alyson Osterman

What lies beneath those pretty manes is anyone's guess these days, as America's melting pot continues to serve up an ever-growing blend of multicultural diversity. To keep pace with the spiraling array of textures, ambitious stylists are doing more than just honing their chemical skills; they're becoming purveyors of products that can make even a fierce 'fro do their silky bidding.

Fortunately for beauty pros working in the "mix," haircare manufacturers have come a long way since the days when a crevasse divided "black" and "white" hair. Today, with skin colors ranging from milky white to ebony and every luscious shade in between, forward-thinking stylists are addressing the needs of multicultural hair through its texture, and not the client's ethnicity. And like today's state-of-the-art skincare products that can make the complexion look and behave beautifully, multicultural haircare products are also leveraging the latest high-tech and naturally derived ingredients to reform even the most energetic curls into smoother, calmer shapes.

Curlicious **DevaCurl Set It Free** locks in moisture and plumps up strands, thanks to chamomile and balm mint extracts, as well as soybean lipids.

Extracts of chamomile, hops and hydrolyzed wheat protein in **DevaCurl B'Leave-In** help calm the scalp while delivering moisture and vitality to harried hair.

Mizani Scalp Tonic utilizes purifying rosemary leaf extract, antibacterial tea tree leaf oil and dandruff-combating nettle to whip scalps into tip-top shape.



Philip Pelusi DiVerCity shampoo leverages the steely powers of hydrolyzed wheat protein, licorice extract and biotin to promote healthy hair and growth.



Tracy Ellis Ross' healthy, shiny locks are a smooth sensation at the 39th Annual NAACP Awards thanks to rich conditioners, skillful finger styling and the strategic use of a professional ceramic iron.

Packed with **HydraSilk Complex**, **CHI Nourish Intense** silk hair masque for coarse hair delivers intense nourishment.



Hair Hydra-archy

Bathe her hair in beauty-giving moisture.

To flaunt her ethnic beauty, a mane-conscious *mix-tress* must make her hair—no matter what length or shape—a priority. But in order to ensure that her curls loop in luscious patterns while at the same time sending her frizz-prone texture packing, her strands need moisture—and plenty of it. Unlike her sebum-producing Caucasian counterparts, nearly all beautyphiles with twisty strands have moisture on a par with the Sahara Desert. "There's no doubt about it," agrees Titi Branch, owner of Miss Jessie's salon and hair products in Brooklyn, New York. "Dryness is the No. 1 problem and the No. 1 complaint among multicultural and ethnic clients."



"Ross' signature 'natural' style is one of the most requested looks by ethnic clients," says Martha Watts, owner of Martha's Multicultural SalonSpa in Milwaukee.

When treating über-curly tresses, Branch suggests giving them a long, tall drink of water by drenching them with moisture-laden products containing such nourishing ingredients as castor, avocado, sweet almond jojoba and olive oils, and creamy shea butter. In cases where hair is parched to the nth degree, says Branch, "even emollients containing some mineral oil are needed to form a light occlusive barrier to help slow moisture loss, and create a protective 'slip' on the strands to make them smoother and less prone to damage."

Invigorating **Avlon KeraCare Intensive Restorative Masque** contains fruit extracts to help repair damaged hair.



Graham Webb Velvet Soft Advanced Softening Treatment is pumped with patented **Thermacore Complex**, which turns heat from styling tools into a beneficial conditioning treatment.



Latina-friendly **Redken Real Control Conditioner** is packed with shea butter to moisturize and help repair stressed strands.

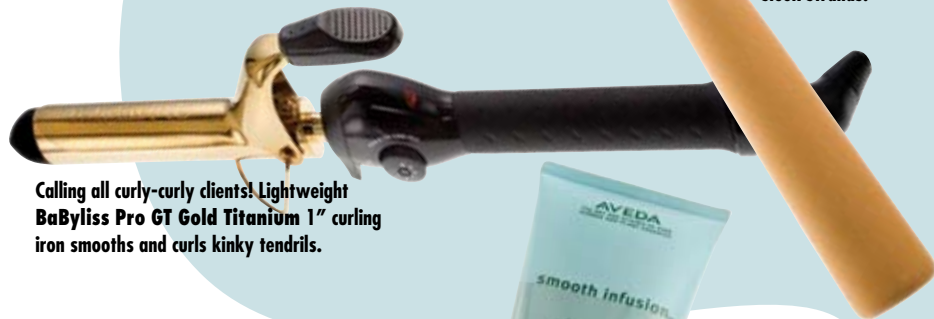


Slather on **Miss Jessie's Rapid Recovery Treatment** to enrich depleted tresses with shea butter, hydrolyzed wheat protein and vegetable oil.



Catering to Latinas, **Paul Mitchell Super Skinny Relaxing Balm** boasts wheat and vegetable proteins to smooth and condition dry hair.





Calling all curly-curly clients! Lightweight BaByliss Pro GT Gold Titanium 1" curling iron smooths and curls kinky tendrils.

Latina Envy by Monroe features an hourglass-shaped barrel for even control of the roots, ensuring sleek strands.



Rachel True's two-strand twist, seen here in 2006 at the *Miami Vice* premiere, is still a frequently requested style among curly-curly clients who want to keep their natural coils front and center.

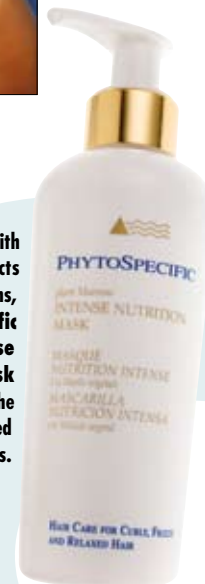
Aveda Smooth Infusion utilizes an exclusive blend of organic aloe, maize and guar bean to reduce frizz and create smooth styles.



ThermaFuse Straight smoothing balm boasts dimethicone to hydrate and gloss strands.



Pumped with plant extracts and proteins, Phytospecific Intense Nutrition Mask quenches the thirst of parched tendrils.



Just Calm Down!

The latest hairstyling products can turn even the most mischievous mane into a devilishly delicious 'do.

Many *multitextural* clients are bypassing chemical smoothing services in favor of freeing their coils—at least to a point. With the exception of super-delinquent tresses, this can be accomplished with hero products such as non-drying (low alcohol or alcohol-free) gels or mousses to temporarily relax zigzag and spiral-shaped curls by as much as 50%, leaving them animated yet manageable.

Good news! Hard and crispy styling products are so passé, announces Martha Watts, owner of Martha's Multicultural SalonSpa in Milwaukee. She adds, "Many of today's multicultural products provide soft, pliable control with added moisture benefits to keep hair in the proper shaped, while still maintaining a soft profile."

Watts also shares that finger styles—especially "twisties" (double twists)—on hair that has been coated with a nourishing styling agent can often do the trick to shape, smooth and even stretch super-curly hair that has a propensity for dramatically shrinking as it dries. (Get the scoop on how to do twisties on wikihow.com.)

DevaCare Arc AnGéll not only offers extra hold without stiffness or stickiness, but also dissolves instantly on wet strands.



A helping of Miss Jessie's Curly Pudding contains weighted aloe polymers to plump curls and shea butter to moisturize and protect the scalp and hair.



Designed with the ethnic gal in mind, Belson's Gold 'N Hot 1" flat iron smooths frizzy locks in short order.



Infused with beeswax, Paul Mitchell Elastic Shaping Paste provides bendable texture and versatile styling while visibly thickening hair.



Jennifer Hudson's locks are perfectly matched with the right products and dry cut.



Make hair flat-out fabulous with Profound Beauty 50 shampoo and 01 conditioner, which include cocoa butter and hydrolyzed wheat protein to thicken, strengthen and smooth strands.

Crossover Haircare

Mix-tresses are seeking diversity in products.

"I never use products that only target multicultural or ethnic hair types," declares Edris Nichols, owner of Edris Salon, located in the hip Meatpacking District of Manhattan, and long-time lead stylist for designer Tracy Reese at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in NYC. "Instead, I seek out brands that work with all hair textures. I look for moisturizing and conditioning products that are rich in emollients and produce added sheen. I choose products that are nourishing yet lightweight, have powerful humectants, and are never greasy." As for treatment services—something all multicultural clients need every time they visit the salon—Nichols says that she prefers using a hair steamer to gently process conditioners on all degrees of straight, wavy or kinky hair.



Why weight? Featherlight Aqage Straightening Ultragel invigorates and calms hair with nutrient-rich Algaeplex sea botanicals and silicones.



Matrix Biolage Intensive Strengthening Masque makes the crossover to all hair types with VitaForce technology that includes ceramides to reduce brittleness.



Achieve long-lasting definition with ghd Sculpting Wax Matte Finish, which also nourishes hair with a heaping of mineral-rich Dead Sea mud.



Fortifying Joico K-Pak Smoothing Balm is packed with concentrated levels of keratin proteins to help smooth weak, rough hair.



Smart Solutions Straight Conditioning Serum utilizes vitamin E and aloe vera to help reconstruct hair's strength and maintain health.