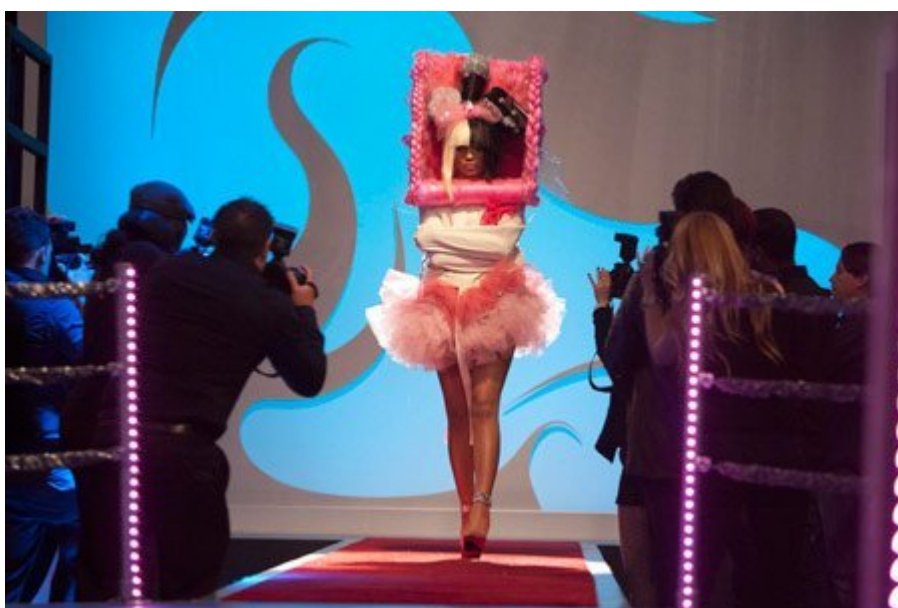


Hair Battle Spectacular's Blondie Talks Hair Tips for Dating



By Melissa Tierney

Picture yourself getting ready for that big first date. You've picked a cute outfit, shoes and bag to match. You searched high and low for that great bracelet to go with it. You're finally getting ready to do your hair and make up when crisis strikes. Hair catastrophes are unique for everyone, which makes Oxygen's Hair Battle Spectacular such a compelling show.

Hair Battle Spectacular, hosted by Eva Marcille, pits up-and-coming fantasy hair stylists against each other for the top \$100,000 prize.

Ashley Stone, better known as **Blondie**, left an indelible mark on audiences, judges, and fellow contestants alike. Not only did she win the big challenge of the first episode with her

Nicki Minaj-inspired hairpiece, but she also made it to the final four. Despite running her own salon and business for the better part of a decade, Blondie was new to avant-garde and fantasy looks. However, she hit the ground running and has catapulted herself to the forefront of the competition.

Blondie recently talked to us about her experience on the show, giving us some behind-the-scenes insight. She also shared a bit of hairstyle advice when it comes to date night or a break-up as well as what hair trends to expect this fall.

What influenced you to leave your salon to compete on the show?

The girls I worked with. They are all younger than me and kept pushing me to do it. They thought it would be a great experience, which it was. As a business owner, you must be able to take risks and know when to take them, and I felt this was the right time.

Was the show what you expected it would be?

I didn't know what to expect before I went on. It taped in six weeks, and I was only allowed to make one phone call home per week for just five minutes, so that was hard since I was away from my husband and son.

Why did you decide to do "show" hair when so many stylists shy away from doing up-dos, let alone extravagant hairdos like you do on the show?

I never really decided to do "fantasy" hair. I'm a colorist now, but I started my business by doing bridal parties and going on-site for big events. I love up-dos, but I never had experience with fantasy hair, so it was completely new to me. Other contestants knew how to use materials and techniques that I didn't, but I learned things along the way and got the hang of it.

How did it feel being in the final four?

I had mixed emotions. At that point, I was very homesick. If I

had to go home, I wouldn't have minded, and I would have been happy knowing I tried my best. But I wasn't surprised I made it (not to sound over-confident). I just feel that I'm a great hairdresser, and I was confident in my abilities even though I didn't have as much experience as the other contestants.

Do you have any regrets about doing the show or anything that may have happened on or off the screen?

No, I don't. I didn't like a few people on the show, but I also ended up making some friends from the show, so it went both ways. I don't like the drama, and certain contestants were all about that. A few of them liked to play mind games, and I'm so not about getting into people's heads.

Since we are a love and relationship advice site, what tips would you give the single ladies out there for a perfect first date hairdo?

It's very simple. If you're going from work to a date, just leave your hair straight during the day, and when you get home, curl some pieces of your hair with a curling iron and pin them back into a little up-do. It's the perfect date look and only takes ten minutes to do.

Any advice for women who just ended a relationship? Should they do a completely drastic change – color, cut, etc.?

I would say a change is definitely in order but I wouldn't recommend something too drastic. If there's something women should change when they are going through different stages in life, it would be their hair color. Color can always be fixed, while a cut cannot. If you chop it all off, it will cost a pretty penny to get extensions to try and mend the situation.

A different color will give you that instant boost after a break-up. You can change the base color, do a glaze or add some highlights, and it's a great pick-me-up.

Are there any tricks of the trade you can share with us to help women out there look fabulous even if they can't hit the

salon as often as they wish?

I'd suggest women allow their hair to air dry the night before and then go over it with a round brush and blow dryer in the morning. It will be easier to blow out and isn't as bad as when your hair is soaking wet.

What major trends are you seeing this fall?

I'm seeing a lot of women dye their hair red – either a copper red, a violet red or a bright red, anything on that spectrum. When it comes to how women are wearing their hair, it's either beach waves or silky smooth and straight thanks to Keratin treatments.

And finally, how would you describe your own hairstyle? How did you get your nickname "Blondie"?

I've always been a blonde, and I've tried every shade of blonde out there. I typically keep my hair straight, but occasionally, I curl it.

I got my nickname from my sister-in-law; she always calls me "Blondie." Also, I feel I've always been a blonde in a sea of brunettes.

For more information, visit Blondie's personal twitter @TeamBlondie and her Salon's twitter @SalonAlexander. For information on her services, visit SalonAlexander.com.