

Long and luscious

Extensions take eyelashes to new lengths

by Morgan Kent

Eye-enhancing and long-lasting single-strand eyelash extensions have made their way to Des Moines, and they're not going anywhere – as long as they get touched up every few weeks.

Co-owner Dawn Frye says Alba Salon in Urbandale is the only business in Iowa to offer Hollywood's favorite instant-glamour trend: Xtreme Lashes. Frye and stylist Amy Louck are

both certified in the process of extending eyelashes to new lengths – and providing new lash colors and new dimensions.

"We begin with a thorough consultation based on eye shape and color and the customer's desired results," Frye says. "The colors chosen are never just funky or trendy. The colored lashes are integrated to accentuate eye color, skin tone and hair color. Swarovski crystals can be added in the corners of lashes for special occasions – weddings or holiday events – to 'wink' when you blink."

Color choices include black, dark brown, green, auburn, purple and

blue. But most of Alba's customers wear natural-colored lashes and come in every few weeks for touch-ups to keep the lashes from getting ragged, Frye says.

"They're totally a luxury item," says Heather Johnson of Des Moines, who has her eyelashes extended regularly. "But they make your eyes stand out more, and it's fun. If you have the money, it's fun to spend it this way."

The process is a bit lengthy, but Frye says the time is a small sacrifice to assure the hygiene and safety procedures they follow. Customers are made quite comfortable throughout the process: They lie on a massage bed with a heated neck pillow and enjoy XM satellite radio with headphones. Johnson says it's like going in for a relaxing nap.

Once the process begins, skin-safe eyebrow tape lifts the eyelid just enough to allow individual lash application. Lash extensions are applied only to the top lashes and are adhered by a micro-bond adhesive – the same used on sutureless wounds in surgery rooms; even though the bond never touches the skin, it is skin-safe.

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Photos: Xtreme Lashes

Louck or Frye then applies one extension to an individual natural lash, ultimately using between 50 and 75 per eye to create the desired look. Most clients simply want longer, fuller, darker lashes that are natural-looking, they say.

"I really like them because you don't necessarily have to wear mascara," Johnson says. "Even when I don't have makeup on, I look like I do."

Women with newly endowed Xtreme Lashes are told they can resume normal activities after waiting 24 hours to shower or wash the eyes and 48 hours to swim or spa.

"We have many clients who continually get the lashes done," Frye says. "They love the way it makes them feel to wake up in-

stantly bright-eyed and all made up. One client's friend even commented that she thought our client had gotten an eyebrow lift until our client told her about her new lashes. It even raises your confidence because you feel like you look great – and you do!" ✦

'Ex' treme Lashes

Alba Salon

- **Price:** \$225; includes three complimentary touchups
- **Application time:** Up to three hours
- **Set lasts:** Eight to nine weeks with regular touch-ups