

Runway Translation

A wizard of eye-popping, elaborate runway looks, Orlando Pita is not exactly holding sheep about whether his creations can be achieved at home. "I never think about that," he says. "If people could do this at home, I wouldn't have a job." But we asked very nicely, and he offered an interpretation of the loose-set Lauren Russell look that he created for the spring Christian Dior show: "Use a one-inch-barrel curling iron and start curling your hair under, all the way around the edge of your hairline. If you want an even more glamorous wave, go up one section higher and do two curls all the way around. This makes a deep side part and brash hair with a paddle brush—the wave pattern will emerge."

THE HEAD MASTER

Orlando Pita is the Frank Gehry of hair—always evolving, pushing the limits, and setting the standard for everyone who follows. He's done runway shows, magazine shoots, celebrity cuts, lecture ad campaigns. And the truly is something of an architect, capable of building a skyscraper where there once was a hole with the aid of hairpieces and hardware-store doodads.

In this frenzy of creativity, Pita is calm, patient—almost ethereal. When he gave her black vinyl braids for the "Shunamite" video, Madonna told others, "Orlando is an angel sent down from heaven to do my hair. He's a breath of fresh air." Not that this focused grace came naturally. "It's come

thing I definitely had to work on," he says. "You can't be happy with hair. You learn to go section by section and do it properly."

Pita now applies that carefully honed philosophy to both Errol's *Shaw-Graves* and to the line of hair-care products he has developed with T3. As a mentor and advisor to the young stylists on the show, his calm presence has added professionalism and lifted the quality of the competition. In creating the line of products, Pita's also taking the time to get it right. "I haven't developed products before," he says. "I'm always creating two or three products in my hands to come up with the right formula for whatever lifestyle I'm doing."

Orlando Pita (center) at Michel Le Bihan's in Pita with assistants Tonia Ishii, Brian Buenaventura, and Christian Miller

