

Hair and beauty



Good hair days with Ella



Yes, they put this on my HAIR

Atelier

DERI ROBINS falls a little bit in love with this new salon on Clifton's Regent Street

Walking into Atelier's supremely groovy salon, I found myself praying that I'd emerge looking as sleek, pretty and sophisticated as the décor.

Bland salons are bad for the soul. You spend a lot of time gazing at the walls during the average treatment, and it's nice to have something interesting to look at; Atelier mixes bespoke 'distressed' wallpaper from Sweden with intriguing little upcycled industrial pieces, vast gilt mirrors and tactile cowhide cushions.

Colourist Henry raves about the light and space as we consider the colour of my hair; proprietor Ella is also on hand to advise. I'd love her California-girl blonde locks, but have to be realistic, so we settle on some subtle-but-can't-miss-them caramel highlights scattered through a chocolate fondant gloss – colours that sounded as edible as the products the team proposed to use.

Both Ella and Henry were converted to natural products during their stint at

an Aveda salon, but they've gone for an Italian range here: Milkshake smells as delicious as it sounds, and is pleasingly free of harsh ammonia.

Given that Clifton is hairdresser-central, I ask Henry: what sets Atelier apart? Like, in three words? "Creative. Passionate. Individual," he replies. I'd add 'luxurious and indulgent' into this heady mix – scalp and hand massages and vibrating chairs fill in the longueurs.

I'm a big fan of salons that offer something a little different, and I loved the theatricality of the Milkshake Cocktail Treatment applied by junior stylist Kat. Argan oil, colour, whipped mousse and active Milk Mask are stirred, not shaken, in a martini glass; applied as a conditioner, it drenches hair with moisture, and infuses milk proteins inside the cuticle.

I've waited patiently for my hair to grow to its current length, and was reluctant to lose it, so Ella cut in some blunt internal layers and an offset shattered fringe. I very much enjoyed the

final touch: a blowdry with Label M Sea Salt for a sexy, tousled finish.

You know you've had a really great haircut and treatment when you leave the salon and can *feel* your hair bouncing glossily like a model in a slow-motion TV ad. I monitored many a side glance as I walked back up Regent Street (and for once this wasn't because my skirt was caught up in the back; I checked).

Ella's currently planning to open a spa in September and will also be offering OPI gel manicures from July. I genuinely loved this salon, both for the experience and the end result. If *Clifton Life* had an official stamp of approval, it would be plastered all over those tasteful Scandi-chic-distressed walls. **CB**

Salon details

Cut and blowdry with Ella £52
Half-head highlights with Henry £80
Conditioner with Kat £15
• Atelier, 14 Regent Street, Clifton
0117 973 4142; atelierclifton.co.uk