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## Chaz Dean: The King of Co-Wash Set To Open East Coast Salon

by Victoria Thomas

Chaz Dean, founder of mega-brand, Wen, is a soft-spoken dog-lover who transfixes you with his crystalline-blue, long-lashed gaze as though, for just that moment, you and he are the only people in the galaxy. He listens to questions as though he's never heard them before (although you know he has), and pauses before giving thoughtful answers.

The first question: what about hair care brands which suggest alternating between conventional shampoo and the conditioning non-shampoo—the “co-wash” or shampoo-free conditioning cleanser concept he founded in 1993, with the launch of the Wen brand? Wen conditioning cleansers, created in several fragrances now including new Ginger Pumpkin, Apple Spice and Tuscan Pear, do not lather, bubble or foam up—even a little. Chaz's answer: it's just so wrong, which jives with his mantra, “Friends don't let friends use shampoo.”

Sitting in the lounge area of his discreet, ivy-covered, two-story salon, there's no signage visible from the street—you have to know the driveway. A leafy, sun-dappled path from the tiny parking lot leads to a refurbished “Day of the Locust”-era bungalow, each step guided by tranquil Buddhas and the serene splash of a Koi pond.

His timeless visage looms from new billboards around Hollywood, but the national scoop is that at last, Wen has expanded East: this fall he closed escrow on a four-story property in NYC's West Village, where he will open a retail space and blow-out bar. The structure, built in 1844,

was a former pet-store, and will require two years of renovation before his grand opening scheduled for 2017.

Since the introduction of Wen's original cleansing conditioner more than two decades ago, a multitude of mainstream brands have jumped on the co-wash bandwagon. Top brands include Pantene Cleansing Conditioner Color Preserve, Devacurl No-Poo, Ouidad Curl Co-Wash Low-Foam Cleansing Conditioner; Carol's Daughter Hair Milk Conditioning Co-Wash and Shea Moisture Coconut & Hibiscus Co-Wash.

But none of these players in the space take Chaz's all-or-nothing approach when it comes to breaking the lather-detergent habit cold turkey. For instance, Pantene's site states, "For a squeaky-clean feel, cleanse with regular shampoo and conditioner every other wash." When Chaz learns of this he shrugs sweetly. FYI: Wen rules the category with epic footing on QVC, as well as infomercial, web and Sephora sales.

A major point of departure between the Wen co-wash and others is that mainstream brands often position their conditioning cleanser as a time-saver, as a single product replacing the classic lather, followed by crème rinse. And, shampoo-conditioner combos marketed in this way have been around for a while, especially in travel sizes. This is not actually how to use Wen, Chaz explained. Maintaining moisturized, balanced hair requires several products, and several steps, especially when restoring elasticity and softness to dry, damaged hair— meaning the hair of virtually every woman old enough to buy a lipstick.

For best results, Wen cleansing conditioner is applied in the shower to sopping wet hair. It doesn't lather, of course, but two applications is still recommended—the length, condition and texture of the hair determine the number of pumps. A few extra pumps of cleansing conditioner then are applied to ends as a leave-in.

Consumers may initially be challenged by the regimen, he said. Typically, they don't apply enough product, don't apply the cleansing conditioner twice, or don't rinse thoroughly enough. Also key: apply conditioning cleanser to the ends nightly in the shower, to maintain the moisture-seal, even when skipping the full-head treatment.

While hair is still wet, Chaz recommends a few pumps of Styling Crème, even if you're the kind of gal who has sworn off heat tools. When hair is dehydrated, it will frizz if allowed to air-dry, so a few pumps of Styling Crème combines the benefits of polishing gloss, leave-in conditioner and gel. Obviously, if you're hooked on your daily blow-out and flat-iron, this deep humectant action becomes even more essential. Throughout the day, Chaz recommends re-moistening hair with Replenishing Treatment Mist, to keep softness locked into strands.

The Wen line includes mousses, oils, hydrating masks and finishing and styling balms for hair, which offers multiple layers of moisture reinforcement to cloak strands against the elements. The most nourishing of these is the Lemon, Rosemary and Vanilla Bean-scented 613 Collection for skin, as well as hair, created in memory of Chaz Dean's beloved mother. The line also includes

specialty products for kids, men and pets, as well as a small assortment for body care, and a candle collection.

For treatments, guests are led across polished hardwood floors, past sleek modern furnishings and a lavish snack table spread with carafes of mint-cucumber ice water, raw veggies, grapes, dips and mini-cupcakes. Based on the maestros' recommendations, a formula will be cocktailed to meet clients' needs. For thirsty strands, Bamboo Green Tea and Mandarin Italian Conditioning Cleanser are a likely selection, followed by Fall Ginger Pumpkin Conditioning Cleanser as a leave-in. The customized Re-Moist pack stays on for 30 minutes under a rotating halo heat lamp. A rinse and blow out commence, with a boar-bristle, wood-handle (no metal core, because it gets too hot) round brush and 613 Styling Crème and Mousse, Pomegranate Glossing Serum, Finishing Treatment Crème and Volumizing Treatment Spray. With all of this luxe, anything less than stellar results wouldn't be satisfactory, with some describing their manes as money-hair, in every sense of the word.

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