

STAR MAKER

HAIR LEGEND ORIBE ON TRANSFORMING WOMEN INTO SUPERSTARS

Jennifer Lopez. Jessica Biel. Penelope Cruz. When Hollywood's most beautiful women need their hair styled, the man they turn to is Oribe Canales. Born in Cuba and raised in Charlotte, NC, the man known simply as Oribe is a hair-styling legend in the rarefied realms of high fashion and red carpet events.

For more than 30 years, Oribe has worked with the most important names in fashion, from the world's greatest photographers — Steven Meisel, Irving Penn, Helmut Newton, Richard Avedon, Patrick Demarchelier, Annie Leibovitz, Mario Testino and Herb Ritts — to the industry's most famous faces — Beverly Johnson, Christy Turlington, Heidi Klum and Naomi Campbell, among others.

Along the way, he has crafted the look of Hollywood ingénues, operated successful salons, and created a signature product line that brings his famous touch into salons and homes across the country. On a recent stop at Birmingham, Mich., salon Luigi Bruni, Oribe sat down with 944 to talk about his career, his product line and what he loves about women.

944: How did you get your start as a hair stylist?

ORIBE CANALES: I went to New York to be an actor, but I didn't have the discipline. I worked in a hairdressing shop and thought it might be something I would be interested in, so I went to beauty school. It took me a very long time to get through it — I wasn't very good at first. But I worked on it, and it really worked out for me, because I love it and I'm passionate about it. I'm still very insecure like the first day I started, but I'm super-fortunate in the sense that I've been doing it 33 years now. I get to do a lot of great things.

944: It's amazing what you've accomplished in your career and who you've worked with. What do you think are the keys to your success?

OC: I think the key to any success is 50 percent talent, and I think the other 50 percent is personality. At the end of the day, it's all a job, and I don't care how talented you are, if you're a pain or whatever, people aren't going to book you again. Another part of

my success and [why] I've been able to have such a long career is due to the fact that I'm constantly learning. I don't feel like I know it all. I learn from everything. As I get older, I'm tuning in to more inspirations.

944: When you're working with a celebrity, do you approach it differently than when you're working with a model?

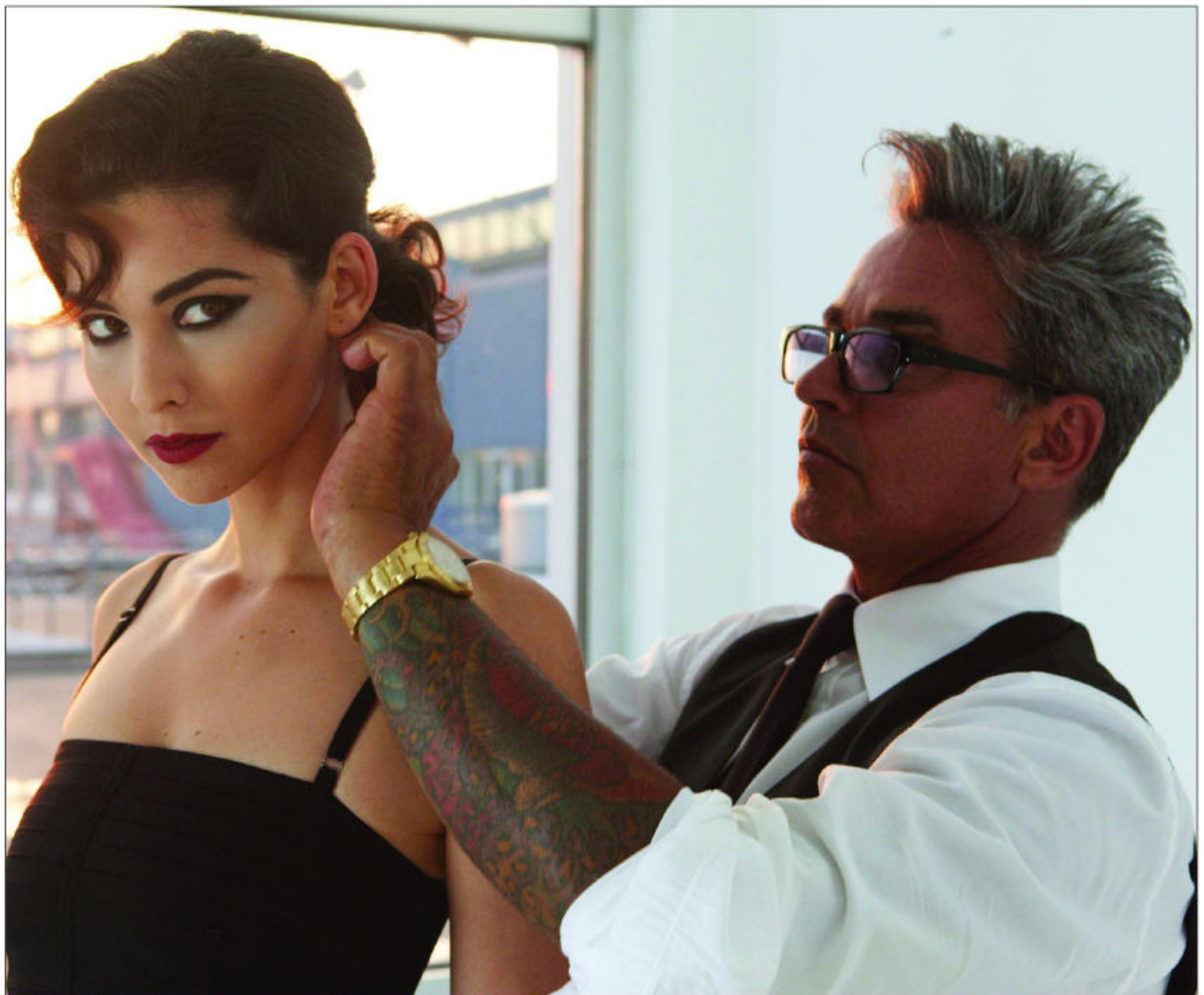
OC: Most celebrities — yes. There are some celebrities where I don't. [For example], my relationship with Jennifer Lopez is different than it is with Jessica Biel. I tell Jennifer the truth. She has a new video, and she's coming back, so I said, "You know what, Jennifer? It's a different character. This is what it has to be. I love you, I know you." When they trust you, it's an amazing process for me. I just go with my instincts. I recently did Lady Gaga. She's unbelievable. To do someone like Gaga was, like, "Oh my god!" She was so cool, so open — she was just amazing. I work with other celebrities, too. Kate Winslet's amazing, Sarah Jessica Parker is incredible, Jessica Alba. They're all different. You always add something to them because you do develop some sort of style after so many years. I like sexy. I like good texture. I love quality. I love beautiful.

944: What are some of the most memorable moments from your career?

OC: I'm so fortunate — I've had so many. Let's see ... Going to Paris to shoot Sophia Loren at the Ritz and having her be such an amazing superstar. She's so open. She was so flirtatious. That's certainly a highlight. I'm a big '60s freak when it comes to Italian movie stars. Through the years, I've managed to do the people who I truly love, and it's always been very inspirational.

944: You mentioned the '60s — is there an era of hair design that particularly inspires you?

OC: The '60s were great. I love beautiful, glamorous women, no matter what. I love all the eras. Through the decades there's always been those kind of iconic women. Now something weird is happening to that. There's Hollywood, then there's reality — things have changed so much. The computer has changed a lot of



things. There's a few who truly inspire me. Penelope's one. She's incredible. Gaga blows me away — not necessarily her hair, it's what she does. She's shaken things up more than any designer in years. I'm disappointed sometimes when you go to do a young actress that doesn't get it. That was the great thing about Jennifer Lopez. She's fearless. She's a movie star, she's a popstar — she's "it." Whatever you did to her — sometimes it was ugly, sometimes it was outrageous, but always interesting. You have to keep it interesting for these celebrities or anybody. Even if you change the angle of the bang or something, it's nice to keep some sort of growth going.

944: Tell me a little bit about your product line. What sets it apart from other hair care lines that are out there?

OC: For 30 years I've been doing hair, and you become a chemist. What's different about my company is [that] there's a heart, a soul and a hairdresser behind it. It comes from the gut. There's soul there. All the products were designed for a purpose, for a reason. When we

started the line, there was no expense spared to the ingredients, to the packaging. It worked out because in bad times — in any times — quality is important. It's not luxury, but it's quality. Our products are paraben-free, which means you get much more for your dollar than something watered down. They're built for performance for both the hairdresser and consumers. The shampoos make your hair really silky, beautiful and shiny without making it greasy. Packaging — there's no other product like it. We're very competitive in our prices with other lines. Everything's so expensive anyway, so why not have something beautiful on your counter that works?

944: What's the most important thing for a woman to have in her hair care arsenal?

OC: The most important thing is that you feel confident. I don't care what the hair looks like. Be confident, be yourself. Especially now — everything goes.

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