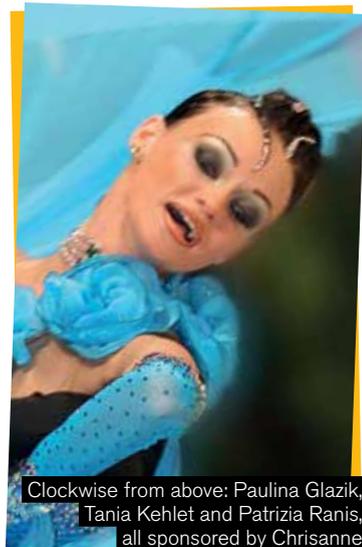


# A flair for hair

Marianka Swain seeks out the best products, plus top tips on styling, bedazzling and avoiding hair horror



Clockwise from above: Paulina Glazik, Tania Kehlet and Patrizia Ranis, all sponsored by Chrisanne

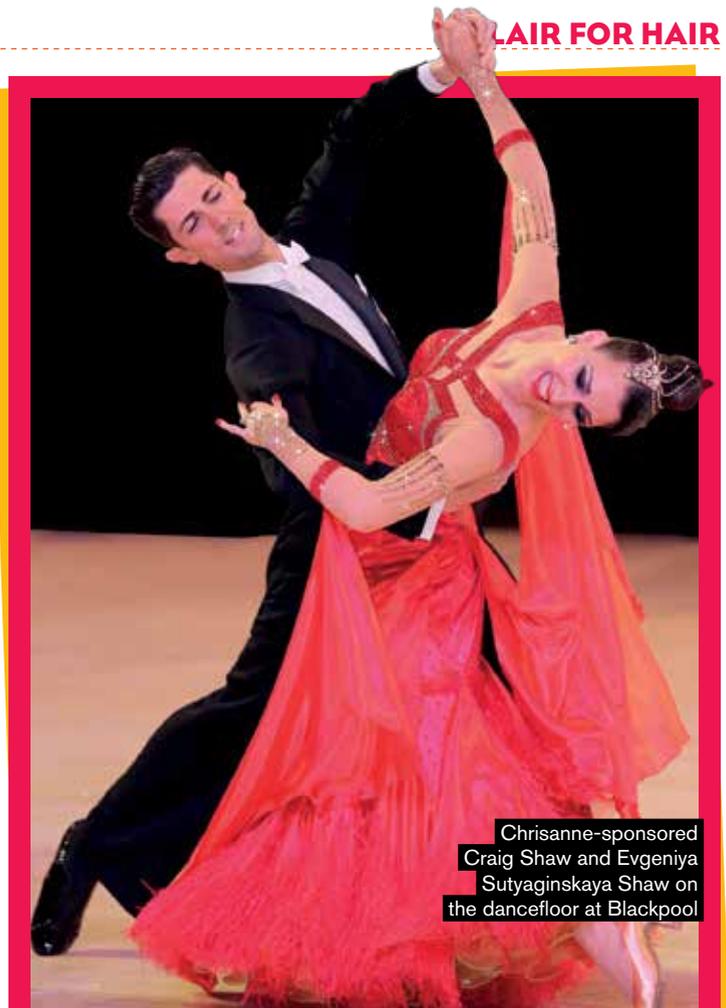


“When I started out, I looked at the experienced dancers and thought ‘How on earth do I achieve that?’” recalls top competitor Victoria Lawrence. “My teachers told me to keep hair off my face and neck, but other than that, I was left to my own devices. High street stylists are no good, as they don’t understand the rigours of ballroom – one tango and you’re shedding pins! – so it took a lot of trial and error to figure out what works.”

Given that styling is such a crucial aspect, affecting judges’ decisions, sponsor and media interest and contributing to how dancers feel about themselves when they step on to the floor, it’s strange that there isn’t more concrete advice available. The number of dancesport stylists is gradually rising, “but many charge a hell of a lot of money,” notes teacher and stylist Toni-Marie Foster.

Toni-Marie used to compete, so she knows the financial demands made on dancers, “and I keep it reasonable – usually about £20 for a full up-do. People bring in embellishments like crystals and fake curls, and I help them create an interesting – and secure! – look. It’s definitely something more dancers are thinking about; I’m booked solid during the Nationals in Blackpool.”

“Our job is to help you get noticed on the dancefloor, and hairstyling is a big part of that,” agrees Chrisanne designer Jamy Arafah. “Swarovski Elements stones are great for creating shapes in your hair that can be seen from a distance, and ➤



Chrisanne-sponsored Craig Shaw and Evgeniya Sutyaginskaya Shaw on the dancefloor at Blackpool

## Top five tips for beautiful hair

5. “Think big – small twists and curls disappear when you’re in the middle of the floor.” **Toni-Marie Foster**
4. “The audience isn’t just at ground level – make sure your hair looks great when seen from above.” **Victoria Lawrence**
3. “Reflect the design of your dress in your headpiece, and make sure it’s in proportion to your overall look.” **Jamy Arafah**
2. “Once your style’s in place, aim a hairdryer at it and hairspray generously in the heat wave – quick drying is key to it being super shiny.” **Toni-Marie**
1. “Always do the ‘hair shake test’ before you go out on the floor to make sure everything stays in place!” **Victoria**

trimmings like antenna strips, coque fringe and hackle or biot feathers give extra impact.

"We recently produced a hair piece for Tania Kehlet which had Swarovski crystals in a shading technique, so the colours gradually deepened. It was a real statement piece that separated her from all the other competitors."

Creating the perfect style can be time-consuming – "some girls even sleep with their hair done if a competition is over several days, which is pretty uncomfortable," notes Victoria – so detachable hair pieces are a good solution. Rather than crafting a style from scratch, you can do a *Blue Peter* and wear one that was made earlier.

"I wasn't sure about pieces, but H for Hair sent me one to try and I was amazed: it matched perfectly, it was easy to pin in and it took 15 minutes rather than an hour and a half," reveals Victoria. "You can quickly switch between different styles – fantastic for ten-dance – and it's better for your hair in the long run."

H for Hair supplies pieces to dancers all over the world through their website, "and we'd love to form partnerships with competitions and dance shops in future," says Tanaka. They can colour-match hair when creating their made-to-order front pieces and chignons, and recommend ordering about a month before a big competition.

For a more bespoke approach, Heleen Borneman of Dance Hair Special, who danced at a high level before suffering an injury, works closely with dancers to develop a unique, tailored look. "I

## Top five tips to avoid hair horror



Not a hair out of place: Domen Krabez and Monica Nigro, sponsored by Chrisanne

5. "Never wash your hair just before a comp. Clean hair slips and is too fly-away to get a slick look." **Toni-Marie**

4. "Use silver glitter spray sparingly, as it can look grey from a distance." **Victoria**

3. "Don't hairspray rhinestones or they'll lose their shine. Eyelash glue secures them and can be melted off again with hot water." **Toni-Marie**

2. "Never tear or forcibly remove glued hairpieces – always use dissolver." **Tanaka**

1. "To get stubborn product out of your hair, add bicarbonate of soda to your shampoo." **Victoria**

take into account elements like whether you want to increase height or not – for example, closing the gap between partners – and what type of style best suits your physique, face shape, style and character," she explains.

"It's really important to me that I get to know my customer and create something that reflects

who they are on the inside, rather than just copying something they've seen elsewhere. For example, if you have a lot of embellishments on your dress, you might not need many in your hair as well, but it can really help dancers who are a bit shy in their performance."

Heleen has lots of customers who buy multiple pieces – "just like you want more than one pair of shoes, you want more than one hairstyle!" You also need to differentiate between Standard and Latin, adds Jamy: "Standard is more elegant, classic styles, with a variation of heights and shapes, while Latin is slick and shiny, buns, ponytails or braids, and accessorised to add drama and express individuality."

Above all, styles should be reliable, says Toni-Marie, who recommends Schwarzkopf Silhouette Super Hold Hairspray and Sebastian Professional Laminates Curling Gel for added security. Jamy agrees: "When you step on to the floor, you need confidence in your style so you're free to focus completely on your performance." ●

## Stockists

**Dance Hair Special**  
[www.dancehairspecial.com](http://www.dancehairspecial.com)

**H for Hair**  
[www.hforhair.jp](http://www.hforhair.jp)

**TMF Dance**  
[www.tmfdance.co.uk](http://www.tmfdance.co.uk)

**Glitzy Secrets**  
[www.glitzysecrets.com](http://www.glitzysecrets.com)

**Chrisanne**  
[www.chrisanne.com](http://www.chrisanne.com)

**DSI London**  
[www.dsi-london.com](http://www.dsi-london.com)

## Top five hair pieces



Dance Hair Special create bespoke pieces

5. **Ready NOW collection, H for Hair** One-off coiled and bedazzled pieces. From £38.

4. **Chignon round and French twist, Tamishyo** Smart buns with eye-catching loops. £109.

3. **Headpieces, Glitzy Secrets** Chic, romantic looks from the company that accessorises *Strictly Come Dancing*. From £30.

2. **Chignons and coils, H for Hair** Elegant pieces with interesting details. From £42.

1. **Bespoke pieces, Dance Hair Special** Design a unique, tailored look. From £115 for a simple piece, £150 for a complete back-to-front piece.

## Top five accessories



Tamishyo medium-sized ornament

5. **Hair ornaments, Tamishyo** Pretty jewelled pieces in various sizes, patterns and colours. From £39.

4. **Trimmings, Chrisanne and DSI** Embellish with feathers, fringe, beads and feelers. Prices vary.

3. **Side tiaras and pins, Glitzy Secrets** Pearl-studded vintage glamour. From £14.

2. **Crystal Series, H for Hair** Bling-tastic attachment coils and curls. From £38.

1. **Swarovski Elements, Chrisanne and DSI** Use Flat Back and Sew On crystals to create interesting patterns. Prices vary.

**Tamishyo**  
[www.dancesport.uk.com/hair](http://www.dancesport.uk.com/hair)

**H for Hair is offering a special ten per cent discount to Dance Today readers. Just quote "Dance Today" when you order any product from them.**