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Generations



Leave the Smoky Eye to the Teenagers

By Peg DeMarco - Special to The News Herald

It may seem to many that getting ready for a formal event is as easy as baking an apple pie, which I have no idea how to do other than to call on Mrs. Smith and slip her frozen perfection into the oven.

But it took planning for this gal since other than two wedding gowns, the last formal I went to had to be the senior prom, some 60+ years ago, when I begged my then boyfriend, Tommy, to take me and ended up in a beautiful gown with white satin elbow gloves, extra heavy eyeliner, and a beehive hairdo thanks to Bridgette Bardot, the sexy pouted nymph of my generation whose gap in her two front teeth only added to her allure. Move over, Madonna – you weren't first.

It was easy in those days to get ready for a formal because fashion and makeup ruled a teenage girl's life, and I could put on eyeliner with the best of them. My eye shadow collection was a kaleidoscope of colors and my dozens of lipsticks ranged from Red Devil to Baby Pink Parfait.

So, recently, when I knew I had to “get formal,” I started planning way in advance because I was working from ground zero on this quest.

Since I work from home, my wardrobe consists of capris (which my generation called clam diggers), baggy shirts so I could go braless, floppy sandals, and no makeup other than mascara once in a while when the mood hit. The hair went grey a long time ago, and I carry around a picture of Jamie Lee Curtis so that wherever I get a haircut, the hairdresser knows that I'm serious when I say, “There's a good tip for you if you cut it this short.”

My 2017 formal dress was purchased somewhere on the Internet, long, black and velvet with patent leather, one-inch, heels to match. I almost weakened and included pantyhose in the mix, but, with one foot in and memories of a typical pantyhose struggle, I decided on knee highs. Spanx? No way for this gal.

It was time to think about makeup and, luckily, I had never thrown out a bottle of liquid makeup I purchased in Belk's a couple of years ago, when a gal offered me a makeover as I passed the perfume aisle.

I knew eye makeup had changed and women raved about something called the “Smoky Eye.” Apparently full, lush eyebrows were also in now, which probably made Brooke Shields happy and sent Garbo turning over again in her grave.

My brows had disappeared long ago when they turned grey, so I checked around on the Internet and purchased “Wunder Brow.” This gel-like product worked like a charm and in about ten minutes, I had brows again. I hadn’t seen them in years and made my husband look up from CNN just to see them, too.

“Yeah, Peg, I see them,” he said in between squints, before flipping the remote to “Meet the Press.”

Next came the “Smoky Eye,” which Maybelline and Cover Girl helped me purchase the intricate tools I needed to a tune of \$30+.

I struggled with the eyeliner for about 30 minutes because my hand wasn’t as steady as it had been as a teenage expert, and the dark shadow around each eyeball took time and precision to get it even on both eyes.

Whew! Sweat was forming on my upper lip as I finally stared at my reflection in the mirror. Something just wasn’t right.

And that’s when I burst out laughing, not a chuckle, but a full-blown, hysterical, hoot of a laugh that sent my husband running into the bathroom to see if something was wrong.

I shooed him out and promptly deposited all the beauty products where they belonged - in the trashcan. I did, however, keep the Wunder Brow for special occasions.

Huffington Post said it best on its website in describing the ins and outs of the popular smoky eye: “In the world of makeup, there are few things more challenging than creating a soft and sultry smoky eye. Too overzealous and you can end up looking like a deranged raccoon; too timid and you might look like you’re sporting a bruised eye.”

My smoky eyes were a cross between the two.

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