



A TRADITIONAL BEAUTY

THINK THREADING IS FOR THE AUNTIES? THINK AGAIN. SHOBHA TUMMALA BRINGS THIS ANCIENT ART UPTOWN.

Threading may have been the third world's beauty tool of choice, but not anymore. Shobha Tummala has taken the ancient beauty secret from underground to uptown. The Michigan native and current New York resident was a longtime advocate of traditional Indian beauty practices, having been exposed to them during annual trips to India as a young girl. Unfortunately, she couldn't find a salon back in the States that combined the ancient arts with modern customer service. "I always wanted something like this for myself, sugaring [and] threading but in a clean environment, with quality control. I thought someone should take this to the next level, and I was always waiting for it myself. And then I thought, you know what, I'm going to do it."

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After successfully introducing many of her non-desi friends to threading, a quick and relatively painless method of hair removal using (what else?) thread, Tummala realized there was a potential market for her services. "I took a lot of my own friends to [predominantly South Asian neighborhoods] Jackson Heights or Devon, and they loved the threading, but they said that they wouldn't come back on their own." Tummala relied on her engineering degree as well as her Harvard-trained business acumen to establish a small-scale threading operation in a local salon. She hoped to bring ancient beauty practices out of the auntie's kitchen and into a salon setting, where non-desis would feel less intimidated. Aided by a timely mention in Vogue magazine, Tummala's concept took off, and she eventually expanded into two full-service salons in New York City.