

LIFESTYLE

A point to extra cover

Balding Kiwi men are taking their cue from cricket star Martin Crowe.

by Rosaleen Macbrayne

Balding New Zealand men are no longer shying away from cosmetic cures.

Since former cricket great Martin Crowe went into bat for Advanced Hair Studio, the company says consultations and inquiries for hair replacement have been on the rise.

"We have certainly had a few guys ring up and say, 'I want hair like Martin Crowe's,'" a spokeswoman said. Most of the inquiries were from men in their 40s.

Crowe is delighted with his new head of hair and has joined other cricketing stars, including former England captain Grahame Gooch and Australian all-rounder Greg Matthews, in promoting the international company's technique.

"It has taken 10 years off me," Crowe says of his extra cover.

The man who could counter any bowling side in the world now calmly fields any questions thrown at him about his crowning glory.

Unlike former All Black Graham Thorne's infamous perm, Crowe has not had a lot of stick from other blokes or seen "any direct negativity at all". Even if he had, he wouldn't give a toss.

As for whether the new thatch bowls maidens over, Crowe says the only reaction that matters is his own.

"As I have found, if it looks natural on you, people are going to be absolutely fine about it.



REPLANTED: Martin Crowe before and after.

"It isn't like the transplants or the toupee-wig things that I have seen. I would never go down that route. It just doesn't look right."

The 38-year-old took action a year ago to deal with male pattern baldness.

"I had been building up to it for a couple of years. If I didn't try, I would always wonder what might have been."

He took the favoured option for both men and women aged 35-plus — "strand by strand" hair replacement.

Human hair from Europe is woven into a weblike membrane and fitted firmly, "like a second scalp", to blend with existing hair. Rather than having his hair replaced gradually, Crowe underwent just one session of the procedure.

It achieved what he wanted without surgery, pain or scarring and has had little impact on his lifestyle.

"You can swim, run, go to the gym, play sport."

The cost? Between \$4000 and \$6000.

"For long-term gain that is pretty reasonable. It's a good investment."

Every five or six weeks Crowe goes for a maintenance "refusion".

The membrane hair is trimmed and treated by the studio — which has outlets in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch — at a cost of \$40 to \$50.

Because it is not an artificial fibre, it can be washed, cut, styled, coloured or permed.

So what happens when your own hair starts greying, as he admits his is beginning to do?

"They will make sure your hair replacement also ages with honour."

The top of the range Russian variety, he says, is known as virgin hair because it has not been subjected to lots of shampoo products or treatments.

Why bother? It makes him feel good and he also wants to look his best on-screen in his job for Sky Television.

"It is for my own personal satisfaction."

Raising awareness among other men with receding hairlines and thinning crowns is a bonus.

Is brother Jeff — another former New Zealand captain — likely to follow suit?

It seems the older Crowe may have left his run too late. He has had the balding look for longer and it kind of suits him.

Says Martin Crowe: "I have got a big head, and it doesn't look good when it's shaved."