

by **BETTY GOODWIN**
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Besides rich and thin, there is hardly anything more revered in this town besides fingernails — long, hard, enamel coated nails.

Maybe it's a sign of money. Who else can wield Fu Manchu fingernails except those who have maids to wash the dishes, chauffeurs to drive the cars, and secretaries to sign the checks, or maybe it's just an extension of our California body fetish.

At any rate, California is first on the map for this fashion phenomenon. New Yorkers, as a rule, due to the cold, brittle weather, can't grow their nails as long as we can, at least, according to the nail specialists.

Whatever the reason, beautiful nails are high status for Southerlanders.

Women of all ages take their fingernails seriously — from glamor queens, to housewives, to socialites, and to receptionists — so seriously that incidents like these are not out of the ordinary:

When Cher broke a fingernail a few years ago while filming *Chastity* in Scottsdale, Ariz., she flew her manicurist-and-confidant in from Los Angeles to mend it.

Beverly Hills manicurist Nena Rico, who specializes in nail wrapping and human nail "transplants," likes to tell the story of her client, Goldie Hawn, who once went to a party, broke a nail, and wouldn't let anyone leave the premises until the disconnected fragment was retrieved — so Nena could transplant it the next day.

Nail care is fast becoming big business in Los Angeles. Is it any wonder "Nail Dens," "Nail Clinics," "Nail Lounges," and even "Nail Doctors" are showing up on our streets with hand clapping regularity.

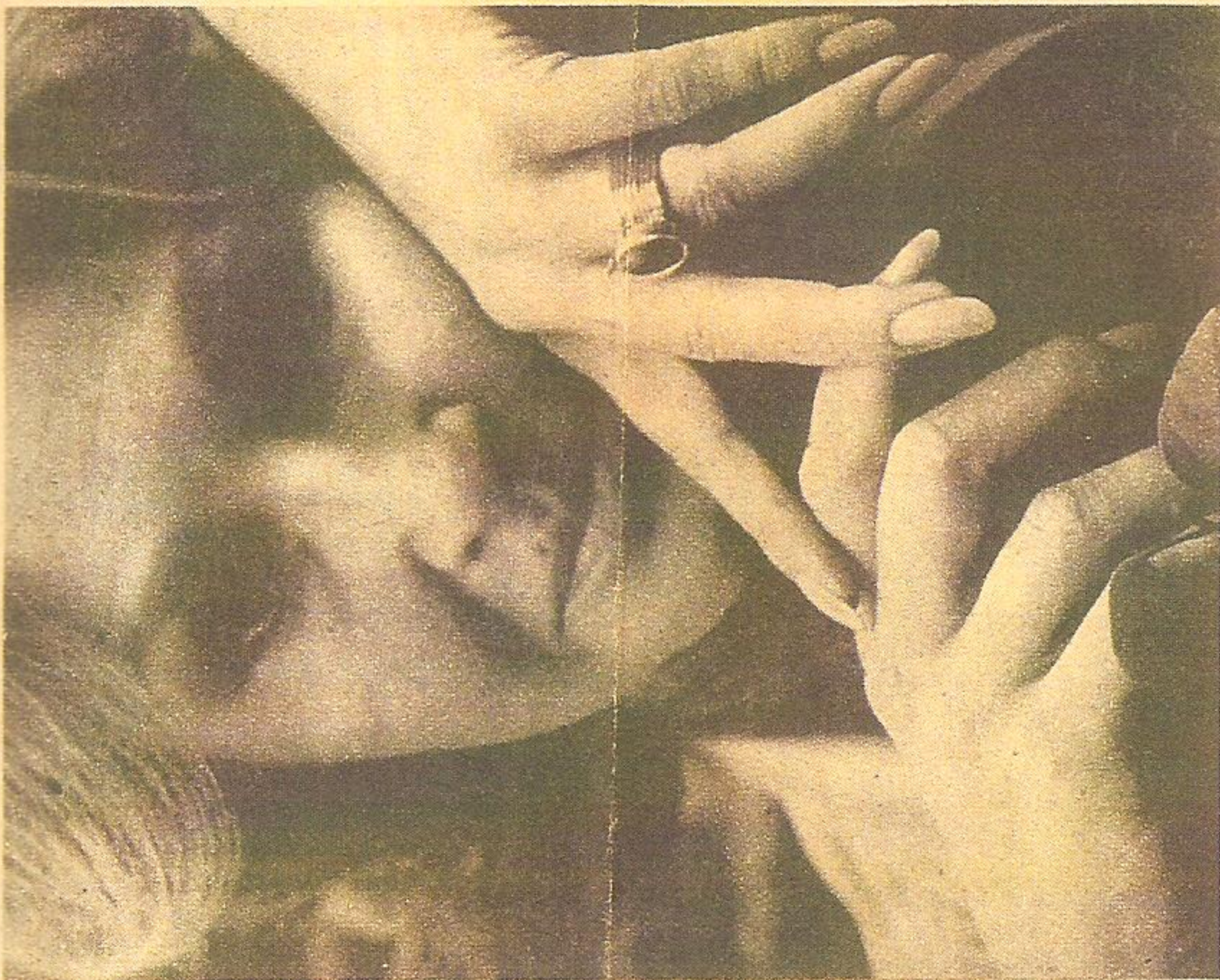
Top notch manicurists command fees upwards of \$75 for special treatments (not including tips).

And where the nail-tenders were once relegated to dark corners of hair salons — to give the hairdressers, the true "artists" — elbow room, now they oversee their own operations, on streets in Beverly Hills, no less.

The manicurists are the stars now. They are the ones asked for by name.

"I select my own customers," said one. "I do not do anyone I do not like. That's how much of a following I have."

Margo Horwitt, another manicurist, who works at the Beverly Hills Hotel Beauty Salon, is in such demand that she is rarely able to squeeze in a hotel guest.



Michele Slate, Hand Model

"I have to maintain my hands and nails for what I do for a living, but I also believe hands are one of the prettiest parts of a woman."

"Oh, last week I did a German baroness," says Margo, but that was an exception.

"Manicures used to be a give-away, a nothing. Only a star or a model cared. But today things are different," adds Margo. "Women know that even if they have ugly, short, stubby hands, with long nails, those hands will appear slender and young."

Because hands are on everyone's minds these days, we decided to consult with the experts and compile a list of the best kept hands in Los Angeles, knowing we are barely scratching the surface in this category.

Manicurists include Minnie Smith of Minnie Smith's Nail Salon; Nena Rico of Nails by Nena; Ada Adelson, owner of Ada's Nail Den; Margo Horwitt who works at the John La Joie Hair Salon at the Beverly Hills Hotel, and Georgia Giardini of Gene Mitchell CMHS Men's Hair Design.



Richard Simmons, Businessman
"Fellini treated me to my first manicure."



Ron Sheppard, Advertising Executive
"I have to be pleased with myself before I can embark upon my daily road through life."