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Alumni Profile

A tip of the hat

It's not just in your head. Since [Jennifer Ouellette](#)'s hair accessories began garnering attention everywhere from *Gossip Girl* to *Vogue* over the past few years, headbands have suddenly become the style de rigueur. Once reserved for the preschool set, women of all ages are clamoring to get their hands on hair bows, headbands and other tress-toppers.

Ouellette, BS HES '94, of New York has been creating hair accessories for more than 10 years and wearing them for twice as long. It was only after Blair

Waldorf, *Gossip Girl*'s queen bee teen,

began donning the accessories that they turned into a bona fide trend. Ouellette outfitted the most stylish students on television; as an undergrad, she created her very first hat — an oversized beret made of vintage velvet — and spent several years designing costumes for the University of Missouri's theater department.

Today, she counts actresses Reese Witherspoon and Julia Roberts as fans and considers Barney's New York her largest buyer. "We have happy customers all over the world — Japan and as far as Kuwait," Ouellette says.

Regardless of how widespread her influence has become, Ouellette remains her own best client. "I always have something in my hair or on my head. I use at least one of the following every day: hat, headband, hairpin, hair stick or pony. Sometimes I will wear a headband with a hat on top, tilted to the side."

Born in St. Louis, Ouellette is now based in the Big Apple, where she manages a staff of 15 employees. On the heels of her millinery success, the inspired designer would like to delve into shoes, jewelry and dresses in the near future. — *Casey Lewis*

Adobe Flash version 8, or higher, and Java Script are required to view the slide show for this feature story.

About the author: Lewis is a senior journalism major from Palmyra, Mo.

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