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Skin MAGICIANS

Behind the scenes of every skin-care ad, there's an expert who's fine-tuning the model's every pore. Here, the pros' best tricks. By Jessica Matlin

Three little words in the English language make skin-care advertisers weak in the knees: "natural," "fresh," and "clean." A model who radiates those qualities is worth her weight in soapsuds. That's why a team is hired to moisturize, buff, massage, and highlight her face to perfection before and during a shoot.

Unlike in other beauty-advertisement photographs, there's nowhere to hide in a skin-care ad—no elongated lashes, richly pigmented lipsticks, or cool, geometric haircuts. "Skin-care ads call for fresh, minimal makeup," says Collier Strong, a consulting makeup artist for L'Oréal Paris who has worked on skin-care shoots for their Advanced Revitalift products featuring Andie MacDowell and Age Perfect Pro-Calcium with Diane Keaton.

Skin-care shoots also present a number of unusual obstacles for makeup artists. Not only are the artists faced with the usual challenge of creating gorgeous makeup that won't melt under hot lights, they also have to ensure their work can withstand a good drenching. "To give the ads a spalike feeling, these shoots often involve a lot of splashing water and wet hair," says Kristofer Buckle, a makeup artist who has worked on ads for Dior Capture Totale, in which Sharon Stone is shot in extreme close-up. "Sometimes they even want dewdrops on the skin."

The makeup artists, dermatologists, and facialists who specialize in preparing models for these kinds of shoots have particular tricks up their sleeves for presenting the skin at its absolute best. And their biggest secret is that each is just as effective (and surprisingly easy) in real life.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY WAYNE MASER

a water-resistant glue," he says. "This combination of products is hard-core, but it achieves a perfect look."

Defuse a breakout. Even if a huge zit rears its head 24 hours before a shoot, a model doesn't have to panic. "A mild cortisone injection can bring down a blemish," says Fields, who refers to this steroid as "the magic bullet." If that's too drastic, or you can't get to a dermatologist, Heidi A. Waldorf, director of laser and cosmetic dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Manhattan, suggests applying a topical cream with 2 percent benzoyl peroxide.

ENHANCING THE SKIN

Wake up fast. Beauty shoots typically begin at the crack of dawn, when no woman is ready for her close-up. "Puffy, tired skin is the bane of my existence," says Strong. To combat that sleepy look, Strong soaks a washcloth in ice water, wrings it out, lays it on the model's skin for a few minutes, then repeats this process several times. "It instantly reduces puffiness," he says. Tammy Fender, an aesthetician in West Palm Beach, Florida, suggests her model clients soak cold compresses in her Roman Chamomile Tonic and leave them on the skin for 15 minutes. Not only does this take down puffiness, but it also gets rid of overall redness, she says.

Use eye drops. Since models often get red-eyed from squinting in the studios' bright lights, Buckle uses Naphcon-A Allergy Relief Eye Drops with antihistamines to make their eyes look fresh. Wendy W. Lee, assistant professor of ophthalmic plastic, orbital surgery and oncology at the Bascomb Palmer Eye Institute at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, says that this is safe for occasional use for red or itchy eyes, although everyone should read the package insert because there are some conditions, such as glaucoma, associated with a warning.

Don't spackle. "The model in a skin-care ad should look naturally luminous—not made-up," says makeup artist Tyrone Traylor, who has worked on ads for Garnier Nutritioniste and

Fructis. He creates a sheer base by dotting the center of the model's forehead with a single dab of foundation, then blends outward using a foundation brush. "The model gets more coverage where she needs it—in the T-zone and cheeks—and less where she doesn't," he says.

Go easy on the powder. "Young-looking skin has a nice sheen," says Buckle. To ensure Stone's skin looks dewy, Buckle refuses to pile on the face powder. "I use blotting papers or translucent powder to take down shine wherever there's too much reflection," he says.

PERFECTING THE BODY

Shed dry skin. Before a shoot, Miriam Azoulay, the makeup artist on Jergens Natural Glow ads, will ask the model to give herself a good scrubbing from the shoulders down in the shower. "Getting rid of dead skin with a fresh loofah—especially on the knees and elbows—helps even out the skin tone," she says. To "provide double the exfoliation," Azoulay tells her to squirt St. Ives Apricot Scrub on the loofah.

Moisturize, moisturize, moisturize. To make sure the model looks like a glowing vision of health from head to toe, makeup artist Polly Osmond, whose work has appeared in Olay ads, massages drugstore baby oil on the model's body. Since traditional baby oil can be too greasy in real life, Osmond suggests a less slippery alternative, such as baby-oil gel or Palmer's Cocoa Butter, for regular women.

Cover up. "Any part of the model's body that's exposed in the ad has to look perfect," says Strong, who uses foundation to camouflage spots and even out discoloration. "But putting products on the model's body becomes a nightmare for the art department, because it usually stains the white couch and the model's white clothes," he adds. (Those stains are typically retouched.) For that reason alone, Giordano loves M.A.C. Face and Body Foundation. "It doesn't rub off onto fabric," she says—convenient for those who aren't on photo shoots as well. ♦

Making It Up

Skin-care models have the luxury of professional lighting experts to make them look flawless, while the rest of us are left to our own devices. But a few key makeup shades and application techniques can work wonders. "On the set of skin-care ads, I try to enhance the model's natural features and stick with tones that already exist within her skin," says Buckle. "I'm not trying to reinvent her face."

LOOK SHARP "Inevitably, the beauty company will want an extreme close-up of the eye area—after you've been shooting for 13 hours straight," says Strong. He brushes a brownish-pink eye shadow in the crease and shimmering beige on the brow bone to make the model's eyes look especially fresh and clear.

GET BRIGHT-EYED Osmond finds that applying liner on the top lid looks too "makeup-y" for a skin-care ad, for which the goal is always fresh-faced and natural. "Occasionally, I'll put a little off-white liner on the lower inner rim to brighten up the whites of the eyes," she says. This trick makes even sleepy, jet-lagged complexions "look more alive."

FOCUS ON THE LASHES Makeup artists' unbreakable rule: "Always curl the lashes," says Giordano. "Skin-care ads are about looking youthful, and anything lifted is going to get that message across." After Osmond curls lashes, she creates a defined, wide-eyed look with mascara. L'Oréal Paris Double Extend Waterproof Lash Fortifier & Extender Mascara in Black can "withstand a lot of splashing if the ad calls for that, and it has the densest, most intense black shade." If the company wants a superbare look, Osmond switches to Chanel Inimitable Mascara in Brown.

GO FOR PINK CHEEKS A cream blush in a rose tone best simulates the natural look of a flush, says Buckle. To find a model's perfect shade, he has an unusual trick: "I look at the color inside her lips and pick a blush that matches it," he says. "Then I know that that color exists naturally within her skin."