

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

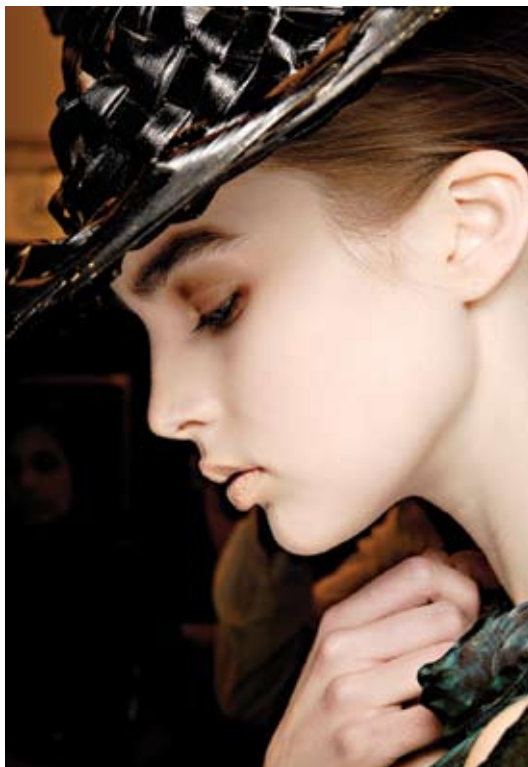
Made to Order

What if you could give each client exactly the shade of foundation or lipstick she wanted? Custom blending lets you do just that.

In the beauty industry, individuality is the mantra of the moment, and an ever-growing number of salon and spa owners are offering their clients products and services that specifically target their different needs. When it comes to cosmetics, custom blending is enabling makeup artists and retailers to ensure their clients get personalized treatment, too. Obsessive Compulsive Cosmetics (OCC), for example, recently introduced five water-based airbrush foundation pigments that makeup artists can blend to match any skin tone.

"With these primaries, makeup artists literally have all the same advantages that a cosmetic chemist has," says David Klasfeld, OCC's CEO and creative director, who teaches workshops on custom blending at the new Rouge Makeup Studio in Manhattan. "With a little instruction, any artist can create the right skin tone on the spot." In the salon environment, as well as on set, the ability to blend custom foundation colors is crucial, Klasfeld stresses, so that makeup artists will never be without the right skin tone for a client.

Custom blending has also made a splash at the retail counter. Ready-to-use products like Three Custom Color Specialists' Special Effects Lip Palette, for example, allow consumers to do their own custom blending. The palette, which can be used to alter the shade of any lipstick or lip gloss, contains white and black for lightening or darkening, three cool shimmers, three warm shimmers, a sheer gloss, a lip brush and a space for blending with the accompanying spatula. The company also offers a service that retailers can use to create any



color of lipstick, lip gloss, eye shadow, concealer, face or shimmer powder, or brow gel or powder. The company can even recreate shades from discontinued products. "We have documented more than 8,000 shades dating back to the 1930s," says Three Custom Color co-founder Chad Hayduk. "We're a great resource, whether it's for a makeup artist working on a period piece or a customer looking for the lipstick color her grandma wore in the '70s."

Colorlab Custom Cosmetics took custom blending to a new level in 1996, when founder and President Mary Swaab developed a system that enables retailers to produce any shade and texture of lipstick a customer desires right at the makeup counter in a matter of minutes. The system consists of a selection of texture bases, 21 pigments and additions such as SPF and moisturizers that are blended together and formed into a lipstick mold. "When the lipstick comes out of the mold,

everybody's mouth just drops," Swaab says. "They think it's incredible that you have created that particular product right before their eyes."

Since then, Colorlab has expanded, offering systems for retailers to generate their own shades of liquid mineral foundation and mineral powder, including eye shadow, blush and bronzer. The products can be further customized with one of the company's active complexes that control oil, firm skin or add moisture, for example. "Everything in the industry is moving toward personalization and customization," says Swabb. "We provide a way to give customers exactly what they want." —LOTUS ABRAMS



Three Custom Color's Special Effects Lip Palette can be used to alter any shade of lipstick.

Colorlab Custom Cosmetics' pigments can be blended for customers right at the counter into any color and texture of lipstick.



Airbrush makeup artists can create foundation to match any skin tone with Obsessive Compulsive Cosmetics' water-based pigments.