

# START YOUR ENGINES

You've seen it at all the big beauty shows. You've experienced the low hum of the equipment and you've heard the industry buzzing with interest. Still, you wonder, should I incorporate airbrush makeup into my salon?

Airbrushing, a process by which foundation or liquid color makeup is sprayed in a fine mist onto the face or body, has been used for years by film, television and special-effects makeup artists. It's also been used in the salon and spa industry for sunless tanning applications and by manicurists doing detail-driven design work. Due to an increasing number of clients who are reading about the technique and asking for it, however, the business is currently undergoing a major shift, says David Klasfeld, founder of Obsessive Compulsive Cosmetics. "Airbrushing is quickly becoming an essential part of the beauty business today," he says.

For years, airbrush companies have insisted that their products could be used for all the same applications as traditional makeup, but many makeup artists were hesitant to take the plunge. For one thing, the equipment seemed cumbersome and too heavy to tote around. "At first, I thought I could do the same thing with traditional makeup that I could with airbrushing," says Sheila McKenna, Founder of Kett Cosmetics, one of the industry's newest airbrush lines. "I was actually forced into trying it by my current business partner, and after about two weeks of daily use, I loved it so much that I vowed never to go back to traditional makeup."

According to McKenna, the payoff is a smoother, seamless and perfectly polished finish with less work—it only takes seconds to contour and highlight with an airbrush. Douglas Marvaldi of Marvaldi Makeup agrees. "Airbrushing provides you with great versatility as an artist," he says. "It can produce a lightweight finish or it can be built up for complete coverage; either way, you end up with a flawless finish. It's also great for working on sensitive skin, since you can apply foundation without touching the face."

Klasfeld, who presents workshops on airbrushing for The Powder Group in New York, says the secret to a perfect finish is in the application. "The product itself is very high in coverage," he says. "Only the airbrush can disperse the makeup as evenly and thinly as needed. The result is skin that looks extremely natural but flawless."

Because the application feels fresh and clean and has great longevity, bridal clients in particular are often willing to pay a premium for the work.



OCC's David Klasfeld applies an airbrush foundation.

For makeup artists working in photography, film and television, the crispness and natural effect airbrushing produces is hard to beat.

Although today's airbrush equipment is more user-friendly than it was in the past, perfecting your airbrushing skills and learning the proper technique does take time. Airbrushing may not be rocket science, but Klasfeld recommends investing in proper training as well as proper equipment. "Experimenting with the many different products available and understanding which you like best is as important as choosing a great eyeshadow or lipstick," he says. "Taking the time to better understand the techniques, tools and products is essential to success."

Rest assured, the buzz over airbrushing is only going to get louder, and as interest in the process continues to grow, your clients will become more curious about whether airbrushing is for them. Being able to show them that your business is on top of current beauty trends always helps create an atmosphere of expertise—and keeps your clients coming back for more.

—MICHAEL DeVELLIS

To meet the artists and brands behind the airbrush phenomenon, join the makeup artist community at The Makeup Show NYC, May 14 and 15 at the Metropolitan Pavilion in New York. [www.themakeupshow.com](http://www.themakeupshow.com) or 212-242-1213