

BEAUTY JUNKIES

Bloggers who natter on about themselves can be a snore. But when this elite group of beauty mavens obsesses about the latest lipstick or eye cream online, thousands of shoppers sit up and take notice. By Margaret Lee

Everyone's got a blog these days—celebrities, politicians, your little sister. Even little Maddox Jolie-Pitt. Fortunately, beyond the glut of soliloquies on boring jobs and distant boyfriends, there's actually some information worth reading. A growing number of women—

some actual experts, some self-proclaimed—aim to spread their encyclopedic beauty knowledge. These devoted product hounds, obsessive samplers, and creative testers own more lip glosses than an entire sorority and chart the details of their experience in candid, sometimes ruthless reviews. We asked them to share their all-time favorites.

BLOGDORF GOODMAN

NAME: Ann Gugliotti, 35

URL: blogdorfgoodman.blogspot.com

POSTING FROM: Youngstown, Ohio, where she's a court deputy clerk

HER STORY: "Fragrance is my great love. Sampling different scents is actually a lot like wine tasting, in the way you try to decipher their notes." In fact, several times a year, she and a fellow scent hound travel to New York City for perfume-buying binges. And she's in no mood to settle down. "I don't really want to find the one perfect product out there," she says. "I like experimenting and being able to choose from a bunch of great options."

FAVORITE PRODUCTS

1 Bond No. 9 Chinatown "It's an incredible blend of peach blossom, peony, and gardenia that I wear to work, to go out, everywhere. The scent kind of travels right behind you, but it's nothing overpowering. I first smelled it with a group of friends, and we all agreed it was full-bottle worthy—the free sample size just wasn't enough. We haven't agreed on a scent since."

2 Lancôme Mille & Une Roses "This is a reissue of an old Lancôme fragrance, 2001 Roses. It has rose and amber, but also something I've never

been able to figure out—maybe some musk and a little bit of pepper. And the scent lasts forever. You put it on and you can still smell it the next day."

3 Shu Uemura Pressed Eye Shadow in ME Gold 370 "When you own over 500 beauty products like I do, it's impossible to use them all—much less use one up. But I've hit the bottom of the pan on this one several times. It's a goldish bronze, really shimmery, and it has a little pearl mixed in to make it more multidimensional. It's richer than most other shadows, and I find it stays on your lids longer."

4 Smashbox Photo Finish Foundation Primer "In extensive primer tests I did on the blog, this was the universal favorite. The clear, slippery fluid gives a smooth canvas for makeup, helps it last longer, and keeps color true. It also contains silicone, so it feels light yet velvety. But unlike others, it's not heavy or clogging at all."

5 Tocca Body Cream in Stella "This rich lotion has the best citrus scent I've ever smelled. There are rumors the company is going to come out with a perfume version—I've been waiting for years. I'm picky about citrus—some are too watery or smell like Pledge, but this cream is a more sophisticated, juicy blood orange."

eBEAUTYDAILY

NAME: Christina Jones, 37

URL: ebeautydaily.com

POSTING FROM: College Station, Texas, where she's a web editor

HER STORY: Jones graduated from beauty school in 1987, worked as an aesthetician, and owned a nail salon.

FAVORITE PRODUCTS

1 Seche Vite Top Coat "This is the toughest topcoat around. Some use it as a basecoat—but I disagree. Your color will come off in sheets."

2 Queen Helene Mint Julep Masque "For pore cleansing, this thick, green paste is the greatest. And a giant tub only costs about six bucks."

3 Bare Escentuals Minerals Foundation SPF 15 "Recently, I got stuck outside from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. wearing this powder, instead of my usual SPF 30. My arms were cooked that day, but my face was fine."

4 Panasonic Misting Pore Cleanser "I used to get regular facials, but now I don't have to."

5 Alcone Fast Lash "The white fibers look like lint, but don't be put off. After a coat of mascara, lightly touch the brush to wet lashes; then apply another coat of mascara. Your lashes will look ridiculously long."

SHAKE YOUR BEAUTY

NAME: Tia Williams, 30

URL: tiawilliams.net/blog

POSTING FROM: Brooklyn, where she is a novelist and radio host

HER STORY: "I have a compulsive need to try everything out there, so I end up with a zillion subtly different versions of my favorites," Williams says. "That may look like clutter to some, but not me." Her former job as a beauty editor encouraged such excess and experimentation. Williams began her blog after she left her magazine job to write *The Color of Beauty* with Iman. "As one of the few black beauty editors in mainstream magazines, I gave a voice to women who had traditionally been ignored in the beauty world, and I wasn't ready to give that up."

FAVORITE PRODUCTS

1 Philosophy The Naturals Air-brush Color-Correctors in Dark "My skin is cappuccino brown with yellow undertones, and I've never been able to find a concealer that makes the earth move for me. This one's genius because it comes with three shades I mix together for the perfect color. I blend it on my undereye circles and the delightful new breakout on my chin."

2 Tarte Cheek Stain in Sunkissed "You just dab the stick on the apples of your cheeks and blend it with your fingers. It gives a natural bronze flush, and it's sheer enough for all skin tones. The paler you are, the less you need. I also love the beachy, coconut scent."

3 Hard Candy Eyeshadow Quartet in Old Skool "Every brown girl I know loves this compact. It has an ivory

shade for the brow bone; a rich, golden copper if you're feeling saucy; a matte taupe if you're feeling corporate; and a deep coffee brown that's amazing blended into the crease."

4 Bioré Pore Perfect Daily Deep Cleansing Cloths "I don't wash my face—for the stupidest reason. I get a blowout every week, so I try not to splash water on my roots. You don't even need to use makeup remover first. Just one swipe, and all your makeup's gone. But they can be drying, so I follow up with an oil-free moisturizer."

5 Clinique Dramatically Different Moisturizing Gel "My mom used the original yellow moisturizer when I was a little girl, so this is a sentimental treat—but different. It's a new gel version for oilier skin types like mine. I dot it on dry areas for a dewy finish."

"Of every product, this is the one most frequently stolen by my friends."

BEAUTY ADDICT

NAME: Kristen Kelly, 25

URL: beautyaddict.blogspot.com

POSTING FROM: Brooklyn, where she works as a marketing and business-development consultant

HER STORY: Kelly is what some marketers might call an early adopter. "When I was in first grade, I went to Catholic school, and I had a lipstick that I would hide in my uniform pocket," she says. "It ended up in the laundry—hot pink everywhere." Years later a friend encouraged her to share her encyclopedic makeup knowledge, although it took some coaxing to get her online. "I thought blogs were for depressed teenagers."

FAVORITE PRODUCTS

1 Nars Eye Liner Pencil in Bamako "It seems like a color that would make you look as if you'd been punched. But traced on your lash line, the dark eggplant enhances blue and brown eyes."

2 Laura Mercier Secret Brightener "For those mornings when you haven't slept enough, it's foolproof. The click-pen applicator is also spill-proof, and it's sheer, so you can brush it wherever you want to highlight."

3 Becca Compact Concealer "Each compact includes the same shade in two different consistencies—one that's heavier to dab on blemishes and a lighter one for discolorations or under the eyes. It comes in 34 shades, so you will find one that matches your skin."

4 Benefit Dallas "It's a combination blush and bronzer that doesn't have a lot of shimmer or too much dirty brown, so you don't look as if you've been bronzed like a baby shoe."

5 Ziaja Aretinol Q Hand & Nail Cream "This is the least greasy hand cream ever. It seals in moisture, but you can turn doorknobs right after using it. Out of every product I tote around with me, this is the one most frequently stolen by my friends."

Trade Secrets

Like computer-file sharing, makeup swapping can leave you infected. On websites such as makeupalley.com, users review products, share beauty tips, and even trade used makeup.

But before you dig into a stranger's half-full tub of wrinkle cream, think carefully, says Bradford Katchen, a New York City dermatologist. We're not talking about a potential Typhoid Maybelline epidemic, but "there's an inherent risk that you could catch a bacterial infection, especially staph or herpes, from the previous user." Remember these guidelines to safeguard your health: **AVOID ANYTHING YOU PUT NEAR YOUR EYES and on your mouth.** Both are virtual E-Z Pass lanes for infection.

KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF. "Anything you don't have to double-dip into is the safest," Katchen says. Potential petri dishes: cream blush, lip gloss, and face cream. OK to share: "Sprays, tubes, and airtight pumps, which lessen the chance of bacteria transferring to you." Even so, "wipe off the pump, nozzle, or any orifice of a bottle" or scrape off the top layer of powder or lipstick and sharpen all pencils.

REPLACE BRUSHES, PUFFS, OR WANDS. "They can transmit infection because they go from one body to another," Katchen says. The more moist a product or damp an applicator, the greater the chances bacteria has survived.

“For those mornings when you haven’t slept enough, it’s foolproof.”

JACK & HILL

NAME: Jackie Danicki, 28, and Hillary Johnson, 42

URL: jackandhill.typepad.com

POSTING FROM: Danicki is a blogging consultant in London, and Johnson is an intellectual property consultant in Los Angeles.

THEIR STORY: After meeting in Los Angeles, Danicki and Johnson began their shared blog, jump-started by a bad case of jet lag. “Jackie flew back home to London and couldn’t sleep. So she stayed up all night creating the first version of Jack & Hill,” Johnson says. “I woke up the next morning and found our new blog.” Johnson also relishes the theatrical edge of beauty. “It’s like reinventing yourself and a way of telling a story—like make-believe.”

FAVORITE PRODUCTS

1 Tarte 24.7 Lip Sheer Johnson: “It’s ChapStick with pigment—like lipstick but easier. Each shade is casual and goes with everything. You can wear it out to dinner, but it also won’t look bad at the gym. You won’t look like one of those women who would wear high heels on a Stairmaster.”

2 Stila Brow Set in Fair Johnson: “This powder formula is great because it doesn’t leave hard lines the way a pencil can. Most brow products are too dark for me, but this stands up to sunlight on my light blonde brows without giving an orange cast.”

3 Christian Lacroix fragrance by Christian Lacroix Johnson: “I like eccentric scents. Every time I wear this, people comment on how different it is. It’s got some interesting herbal notes like tarragon, which makes it a Van-Gogh-mad-in-Provence herbal rather than a healthy, outdoorsy-girl herbal. These are herbs you might hallucinate on, not the kind that make you virtuous and athletic.”

4 Lancôme Définicils High Definition Mascara Danicki: “Don’t we all want a mascara that separates, lengthens, and volumizes? This does it all, and won’t rub off. I hate mascara that makes your lashes stick together, but I don’t have that problem with this.”

5 Laura Mercier Secret Camouflage Danicki: “Some concealers are too liquidy or dry and chalky; this is the perfect medium texture for around my nose, under my eyes, on blemishes, above my eyebrows. I use it daily.”

6 Actifirm Peel and Firm Regimen Johnson: “These products come in a cartoonishly sinister set of gigantic syringes. Once I ignored the absurd, almost veterinary packaging, I was pleasantly surprised by how much smoother my skin felt.”

7 Pout Flush Blush in Flushed Pink Johnson: “At first I thought this pink was too bright to look natural. I was rubbing the stick directly on my skin, and it was a bit too much. Now I just put some on my finger and work it on my cheeks, and it’s fantastic. It looks really good on lips as well.”

8 Avene Extremely Gentle Cleanser Danicki: “A few months ago, my skin was getting weird breakouts and dry spots. It was awful. This is a very basic cleanser with thermal water that’s made my skin so much better.”

9 Eve Lom Moisturizer + SPF 15 Danicki: “I’ve found that some moisturizers do funny things to your makeup, sometimes balling up like dried Elmer’s Glue when you apply foundation on top of them. This just seeps into your skin, and you’re ready to smooth on foundation right away.”

10 Space NK Soulful Eau de Toilette Danicki: “It’s a complex scent with cedar and sandalwood for just a hint of the masculine. If it’s feminine with just a whiff of man, I want to wear it and smell it all the time.”

LIPSTICK IS MY CRACK

NAME: Kerry Daniels*, 39

URL: lipstickismy-crack.blogspot.com

POSTING FROM: Austin, where she is a freelance writer.

HER STORY: Daniels can’t remember a time when she wasn’t interested in beauty. “I think it had something to do with watching my mom,” she says. “Makeup transformed her, not just physically, but in her whole attitude and self-confidence.” Posting her opinions on the Web was irresistible. “When I’m excited about something, I want to talk about it.”

FAVORITE PRODUCTS

1 Boscia Amino-AG Enlivening Eye Treatment “My upper lids are starting to get droopy, and I have some dark circles. This cream firmed up the corners of my eyes a bit and faded my circles and fine lines. I had a trial-size sample and ordered a full-size tube before it was empty.”

2 Kusco Murphy Bedroom Hair “I’ve heard people say this smells exactly like a brothel. I certainly wouldn’t know for sure. It’s a gel with a strong hold but dries soft and flexible and washes out more easily than most waxes or pomades.”

3 Dove Energy Glow Daily Moisturizer with Subtle Self-Tanners “I love this whole category of products because they’re so idiotproof. Dove’s is the least obnoxious self-tanner smell-wise—and I think I’ve tried every one out there. It doesn’t develop that reek after a few hours the way others do.”

4 Clinique Water Therapy Foot Smoothing Cream “It’s the best damn foot cream in the entire world. Most make you feel like you’re going to slide right out of your shoes, but this sinks in well. Plus, it costs exactly what you need to get a free gift with purchase.”

5 Mr. Clean Magic Eraser “I’ve found that you can use this white house-cleaning sponge to remove self-tanner mistakes. Still, you can overdo it, so first dampen your skin and rub really lightly. I’m also secretly convinced that it would make a great body exfoliator.”

*Not her real name