



ELLE BEAUTY MAKEOVER



PREP SCHOOL

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PARTY PERFECTION IS REQUIRED BUT IT'S 12 HOURS TILL SHOWTIME? JESSICA COEN TAKES A CRASH COURSE IN BEAUTY TIME MANAGEMENT

I find myself in this situation far more often than I care to admit: It's one day before a big night out and I am aesthetically unprepared. Tomorrow evening I've got a birthday celebration for a certain handsome, precocious young novelist. Every media insider (and professional party photographer) will be crammed into one room, which means I'll need to work the crowd for both business and pleasure. I have to believe that somewhere beneath this disheveled exterior (picture the red wine- and coffee-abused smile, long-neglected roots, and general ineptitude at makeup application that scream *freelance writer*) lurks my inner dream girl in all her smoothly coiffed, smoky-eyed, poreless-skinned glory. But with only 12 hours to achieve maximum hotness, it's going to take several expert excavators to locate her and polish her up.

In a panic, I call *New York Post* Page Six reporter Paula Froelich. Getting beautiful in no time flat is almost a job requirement for Froelich, who literally wrote the book—*It! 9 Secrets of the Rich and Famous That Will Take You to the Top* (Miramax Books)—on how to be a head turner. “If you look hot at these things, you get better stories and dates,” says Froelich, who stocks her desk drawers with last-minute pick-me-ups such as Christian Louboutin stilettos and the unapologetically heavy-duty M.A.C Studio Fix foundation. But she can't take sole credit for her perfection: For key events, her very own “hair guy,” Miguel Lopez (the owner of the eponymous New York City salon), makes an early-morning house call. Froelich is smart to place a blow-out at the top of her party checklist—according to a Yale University study, hair is the first thing

people notice when someone walks into a room.

Salon-styled hair might be nonnegotiable, but color touch-ups don't require a professional. Hair and makeup artist Romy Parscale, who often has a mere 15 minutes to prep VH1 commentators for on-camera appearances, reaches for mascara to hide grays. “Wipe down the wand before you back-comb it through your roots,” Parscale says. “Plus, the tiny bristles do a great job at teasing your hair.”

To brighten dull highlights, Los Angeles fashion stylist Brooke Dulien (who moonlights as the designer behind White Trash Charms jewelry) tells clients to douse their hair with Kérastase Oléo-Relax mask, snap on a shower cap, and cover it all with a beret. “Sweep your bangs to the side,” Dulien says. “No one will know you're treating your hair while doing errands.”

But what about getting a red carpet-ready complexion? Facialist Christine Chin in New York City will turn clients away if they don't allow the proper recovery time (at least one week) before a major photo op. Parscale agrees: “I don't recommend last-minute facials or eyebrow waxing. If it goes wrong, you're screwed.”

All of my advisers suggest one product that, like the aforementioned beret, I don't own: a pore-masking primer. L.A. fashion stylist Ilaria Urbinati, the woman responsible for some of Paris Hilton's better moments, swears by the Adjust shade of Smashbox Photo Finish Color Correcting Foundation Primer. “It's green, kind of scary-looking, but it goes on sheer, taking any red out of skin,” Urbinati says. “Sometimes it's all you'll need.”

Self-tanner, another flaw eraser, makes most experts' shortcut

short list, but I'm told to proceed with caution. “Just look at Kim Cattrall at the Golden Globes in 2001,” Froelich says. “She fake-and-baked and showed up looking bright orange.”

I fall asleep thinking of Urbinati's final guideline: When in doubt, stick with what—or whom—you know. One certain voluptuous young starlet Urbinati dresses tried out a new hairstylist for a gala. “She was going for Rita Hayworth, but it looked more like Miss America,” Urbinati says. “It was a shame because her dress was perfection.” This is one rule I'll have to break—I don't have health insurance, let alone a regular beauty dream team. Until morning, I have nightmares about pageant hair.

7:45 A.M.: BLEACH PATROL

I'm headed uptown to the office of dentist Debra Glassman, who keeps weekend hours for VIP clients such as Halle Berry and Diane Sawyer. By the time I get a cab on this rainy New York City Saturday, I'm soaked from the knees down. But I arrive right on time, and Glassman starts my Zoom2 whitening treatment by brushing a protective blocking cream on my gums, then paints hydrogen peroxide bleaching gel over my enamel. After 60 minutes in front of a special low-heat lamp and a DVD of *Bridget Jones's Diary*, my teeth are demonstrably brighter, especially the bottom row. I return downtown, 15 minutes ahead of schedule.

10:30 A.M.: BUFF AND POLISH

To prep for my spray-tan appointment at 1 P.M. (I'm prepared to risk a faux pas for a faux glow), I've booked a moisturizing scrub at the superserene Silk Day Spa. On the way there, my teeth start to feel sensitive, and I'm aching for a coffee. Per Glassman's orders, though, I'm on clear, nonstaining beverages for 48 hours. Instead of Starbucks, I settle for a Silk milk bath. As a therapist vigorously attacks my dermis with sandpaperlike mittens, I watch dead skin literally fall off my arms. I'm given a top coat of body lotion, then it's mani-pedi time. The foot fixing is so thorough, however, that at 12:50 my toes are just being painted a rich burgundy. I skip fingernail polish, rush my feet under the dryers, and bolt five blocks to my next stop—30 minutes late.

1:30 P.M.: BRONZE AMBITION

No one really wants to be “the tan one” at a party, so I've requested Completely Bare's lightest, most natural shade for my spray-on Sculpted Tan; five minutes later, my body has achieved a fairly believable bronze. The technician even adds some realistic shading to my stomach (*look—abs!*), lower back, collarbone, and thighs, so within 15 minutes it appears that I've been wintering on a Caribbean estate with a personal trainer. My skin reeking of that

unmistakable sour milk and plastic self-tanner smell, I'm ordered to stay dry for 12 hours—somewhat problematic in a flash flood. When I pull on my (still soggy) jeans, I notice that I've smudged my toenail polish. No open-toe heels for me tonight.

2:40 P.M.: ION-WARD BOUND

I typically neglect my hair to such a point that a friend recently inquired whether my inch-long roots were an attempt to channel Sarah Jessica Parker's *Sex in the City* look (circa season three). But I arrive at the John Frieda Salon (60 blocks back uptown) 40 minutes late, so there's no time for color correction. Instead, they wash and dry my hair, then coat it with ISH Ionic Rescue cream, which contains tiny conditioning crystals. A flatiron opens the cuticle and melts the crystals into my hair, leaving it so perfectly straight and blindingly shiny that no one will notice my roots.

5 P.M.: SLIM FAST

Some women swear by a stomach-flattening colonic, but I've signed up for a more soothing solution: a bloat-reducing manual lymphatic drainage massage at Chelsea's Sea Change New York holistic spa. The rubdown targets the lymph areas—under the chin, in the armpits—so my tan should remain intact. Despite the therapist's warning that I may end up spending the rest of the day “clearing my system” (a hotness killer if ever there was one), I fall asleep from the slow rhythm of the treatment.

6:30 P.M.: LASHING OUT

Last stop: Shu Uemura's SoHo headquarters, where makeup artist Mark Edio applies my idea of subtle sexpot perfection—smoky bronze bedroom eyes and neutral lips—then outfits my face with an unexpected touch: fluffy, light-as-air special-order mink eyelashes (the same ones Madonna used on tour).

Back at home, I throw on a waist-cinching blouse, big hoop earrings, and the bank-breaking “hot jeans” I save for such affairs. The lymphatic session hasn't had an effect, and my nails are a mess—I should have skipped the former and gone with the latter. Although my beachy glow bears telltale rainy-day streaks, my skin is pure velvet, and the makeup hits exactly the right dream girl—not showgirl—note. At the party, the compliments roll in before I order my first (white tooth-friendly) gin and tonic. I force people to touch my soft arms (all agree that they're buttery), and everyone admires my hair. But once the high of victory begins to wear off, something even more powerful sets in: exhaustion. After a day of backbreaking beautification, I can hardly keep my mink-lashed eyes open. Next time, I'll pick my treatment battles and focus more on beauty sleep. □

HOME IMPROVEMENT WHAT TO DO WHEN THERE'S NO TIME TO LEAVE THE HOUSE

“Avoid salty foods during the day; they cause bloating. I also like to take a soak bath. I'll pour a small bottle or two into the tub. It warms my body, boosts my circulation, and makes my skin soft.”

—Romy Parscale, makeup artist and hairstylist

“Benefit Bathina Body So Fine highlighter has me looking two pounds lighter. I use it on my collarbone, décolletage, and along my spine to take attention away from any trouble zones.”

—Brooke Dulien, designer, White Trash Charms jewelry

“Moisten some Q-tips with eyedrops. Put them in the freezer for about half an hour, then press one to a zit to bring down the swelling. Afterward, spritz skin with Jurlique Aromamist to remove any puffiness.”

—Ilaria Urbinati, fashion stylist

“If you can't schedule a trip to the dentist, Crest Whitestrips are great for last-minute touch-ups. Mystic Tan self-tanner and a berry shade of lipstick will also make teeth look brighter.”

—Debra Glassman, dentist