

COME AS YOU ARE

Part *deux* of our *What I Love About Me* feature: break through the barriers of old ideals and celebrate your unique beauty **TEXT SHANTILA LEE**

If you were to create the 'ideal' Asian woman, what would she look like? She would be androgynously thin, no doubt (the idea of replacing *fat* with the more salubrious allusion of *curvy* never quite caught on this side of the continent), with stick straight hair, and skin pale, alabaster and unlined in its babyish softness (as attested by racks of whitening skincare stacked wall to wall, nary a tanning lotion in sight). Envision celebs up on the highest pedestal of ideal Asian beauty—Lucy Liu, Michelle Yeoh, Zhang Ziyi, Fan Bing Bing—and tick everything off that checklist. This unforgivingly narrow definition of Asian beauty has droves of women with sultry waves scurrying to the

salon to get their hair straightened, and ladies with lush chocolate complexions and knockout skin wearing foundation in ghastly shades way too light for their skin tone in an attempt to create the illusion of fairer skin. Earnest, yes, but especially for the latter, mad and a little misguided.

And here lies my pet peeve: **why hide behind the makeup?** Most Asian women are blessed with utterly gorgeous skin tinted an exotic hue, so by all means, *flaunt it*. Never mask your skin with a wrong, too-pale shade of foundation that leaves a sickly grey cast, because it's a dead giveaway for a lack of confidence and it *just doesn't work* (you ultimately end up looking like an extra from *The Living Dead* or give off the impression that you haven't got a clue how to wear makeup). How *passé*. The ruling principle is do what works best for *you*—if you crave brighter skin, invest in whitening skincare, or straighten your hair only if it works with your face, not because you aspire to look like Gong Li.

So here's an updated beauty mantra, to steer you off the beaten path (and into a sense of sensibility): **CELEBRATE** your God-given beauty, be it glamorous, dark skin or lustrous curls and shift your perspective to some of the most exquisite women in the world—think Beyoncé, Jennifer Lopez, Aishwarya Rai. Consider this your definitive how-to where we lay down the law—bring on the new rules and toss that ridiculous tube of wrong shade foundation into the bin, pronto.

BREAKING ALL THE RULES LET IT SHOW!

The purpose of wearing makeup is to enhance your skin, not to hide it. Invest in foundation with the right coverage (stick to sheers if you don't need any cover up) and a shade that blends seamlessly into your skin (check our foundation matching guide on the next page). Think smouldering, glowing skin flooded with light reflecting pigments. **Laura Mercier** Tinted Moisturiser; **Smashbox** Photo Finish Luminizing Primer

PLAY IT UP

Use makeup to maximise your natural features—master the art of making your eyes pop or peppering your lips to a fuller

“THE BEST THING IS TO LOOK NATURAL, BUT IT TAKES MAKEUP TO LOOK NATURAL.”—CALVIN KLEIN



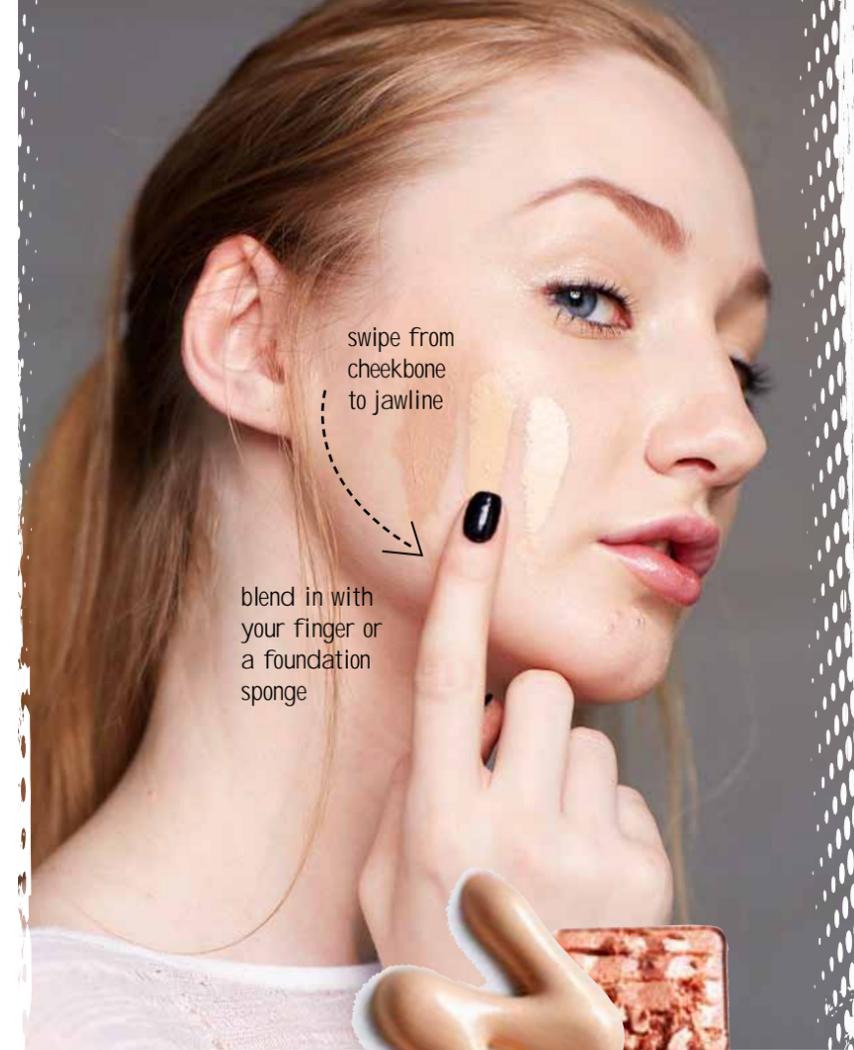
pout, a way better alternative to slicking on heavy, unnecessary makeup to mask what you may not have. **Chanel** Lèvres Scintillantes Glossimer in 287; **Esprique** Melty Fix Cheek in PK800

LESS IS MORE

When selecting makeup, always consider the coverage—if you don't have blemishes to cover up, opt for sheer formulas *sans* overly dense, viscous coverage. And even when you do have something that needs concealing, thick foundation is not always the answer: makeup with max coverage clogs pores, so try BB cream or a *touché éclat* pen. **Chanel** Perfection Lumière Long-Wear Flawless Fluid Makeup in 30 Beige; **Dior** Skinflash Radiance Booster Pen, RM133

MATCHY MATCHY

Stock up on indulgent, complementary shades for face, eyes and lips: brown eyes always look decadently rich in slate and navy, pink or plum-based blusher warms up olive skin and blue-based reds set off dark skin tones. Wearing makeup in an enhancing shade is a fail-proof way of looking primed and polished, minus the fuss. **Shiseido** Maquillage True Rouge; **Chanel** Illusion D'Ombre in Emerveillé



swipe from cheekbone to jawline

blend in with your finger or a foundation sponge

MATCHMAKER

Our most detailed how-to yet for matching foundation to your skin tone. Start by narrowing it down to the right formula: liquid, compact or powder in sheer, medium, or buildable coverage. Then choose the right shade that should disappear into your skin.

- 1 Always pick foundations that have a slight yellowish undertone which blend perfectly into the skin so you'll always look fresh-faced.
- 2 Swatch your skin from the cheek to the jawline with the closest shade along with a lighter and darker shade.
- 3 Blend gently into your skin and check it in natural light—the one that is imperceptible is the winner.
- 4 Don't be tempted to go for a lighter or darker shade in hopes of transforming your skin to something it isn't, and ignore anyone who tells you otherwise.
- 5 If the brand you're shopping at doesn't have anything in your shade and the sales rep tries to convince you to 'make do' with their darkest shade, which isn't very dark at all, take the next exit and find a brand that has shades tailored for darker skin tones.

Laura Mercier Tinted Moisturiser SPF20

Clarins Eye Quartet Mineral Palette in Nudes

Dior Diorskin Forever Compact in 020

Laura Mercier Fan Powder Brush

Shiseido Sheer Mattifying Compact in Natural Fair

Shiseido Maquillage Essence Rich White Liquid UV Foundation in OC10

