

The Big Brush -OFF

Any craftsman will attest that high-quality, purposeful tools are paramount to their work. An artist could hardly present a masterpiece without superior paint brushes. Hairdressers offer the perfect salon finish utilizing proper knowledge and use of appropriate hairbrushes and appliances. Makeup artists as well are faithful followers of a brush stroke of genius. Now, thanks to makeup guru Christi Harris, the same goes for the rest of us as we face-off with the big brush-off! With a little direction and a few key brushes, we too can present a masterpiece of our very own right from our (Southern) vanities.

by Donana Galloway

The Basics

There are a few fundamental makeup brushes that no respectable vanity should be without.



Powder

Look for a full, soft pony *chiseled powder* brush. Loading the tip of the brush, flip it upside down and tap the loose powder into the brush. Fluff the brush downward lightly on the face and allow the powder to set the foundation. Overloading the brush or using too firm a hand can make powder look cakey, ruining a perfectly applied foundation.

Blusher

The right blush brush makes this typically tricky application foolproof and flawless! The most common mistake here is to use a large, round brush which



simply serves to slather blusher all over the mid-face. Not pretty. Choose a *defining contour blush* brush. The proper angle and bevel are critical in controlling the perfect amount and placement of color.

Brow Groomer

Everybody has one. Few use it to its maximum potential. A good *brow groomer* will be dual-sided with both brush and comb applications. Contrary to popular belief, both sides are used for brows. The comb side makes a terrific groomer for denser brows—great for men!



Eye Shadow Applicators

It's difficult to define a "basic" eye shadow brush because it's nearly impossible to get the perfect shadow application with only one brush. Think of it ... all over, lid, crease and liner colors—impossible with only one brush. Here's what you need to make your peepers pop!



Use a *chiseled shadow blender* for all over color and blending. It must be firm and dense in order to put down just the right amount of color.

Achieve the perfectly measured shadow contour—the classic upside-down "7"—with a precisely proportioned *angled shadow shaper*. If a brush is too small, it makes tough work of the task. If it is too large, it will deposit too much color over too wide an area. It's all about proportion with this brush.



Pure genius is an *angled eyeliner* brush! The bend in the brush allows even the most unsteady of hands to apply cake liner like a pro. It gives access over the tops of lashes and deposits the finest line of color right down to the very base of the lash for a perfect payoff every time. If you can use a pencil, you can use this brush like a pro.



A *beveled shadow blender* does exactly what its name implies—blending shadows seamlessly and beautifully.



Duo Brow

A must for brow babes from novices to brow snobs, a good *duo brow* brush is the bomb! Look for a dense, firm tip on one end to apply brow color in a stippled, natural finish, and a smooth, slim tip on the other end for the perfect "tail." We've found none better than the new design from Christi Harris.



Eye Shadow Definer

An *eye shadow definer* brush is a must for achieving the ever-popular smokey eye. Its small, firm shape makes it impossible to get a poor result. Used for smudging darker shadows along the lash line as well as adding dramatic corner detail.



Lip Definer

Not all lip brushes are created equally! An inexpensive, retractable brush is fine for your purse, but be sure your vanity area is armed with a flawlessly designed *lip definer* for the first and most important lipstick application of the day. It will pay in spades!



Finisher/Blender

Like nothing we've ever seen or used, this swank little *finisher/blender* is fun to look at and even more fun to use! The longer, finer bristles make bronzer disasters a thing of the past. The shorter, denser bristles used with greater pressure blend finishing powders flawlessly. It's also terrific for applying shimmers and highlighting powders for face and décolleté.



Sponge Tip Blender

A *sponge-tip blender* is essential for building color for a heavy payoff and burnishing metallic shadow shades. Look for a quality sponge with changeable heads.



Contour/Highlighter

With fine sable bristles, a high-quality *contour/highlighter* brush will give a finer, more seamless payoff from contour creams, highlighters, concealers and shadow primers. This brush will blend well from side-to-side and cut in to tight areas beautifully.



Egg-shaped Sponge

An *egg-shaped sponge* is used to blend foundation and other enhancers ... not apply them! If you are using a sponge to apply your foundation, you're wasting product and introducing nasty germs and microbes to your face every day. Eek! Use it to blend at the neck and hairlines.



Brush Tips ...

- All brushes shed. A high-quality brush should stop shedding after its first or second washing. A poor-quality brush will continue to shed throughout its short, pathetic life.
- Use an exfoliating hair shampoo to cleanse makeup brushes. Add a few drops of shampoo to a sink of cool water and swish the brushes until they are clean. Rinse thoroughly, reshape if necessary and lay on its side to dry. Do not use a hair dryer to dry brushes. Using conditioner is not necessary.
- Do not use alcohol-based brush cleaners for your personal brush collection.
- Use the right brush for the right product.
- Invest wisely. Expect to pay between \$20 and \$50 per brush. Many manufacturers offer discounts if brushes are purchased in "sets." Quality brushes aren't cheap, but they can last for many years if properly cared for. Cheap brushes will save you neither time nor money in the long run.
- Travel with makeup brushes rolled in a protective leather case.
- Love your brushes and your brushes will love you back!

Now that we have the basics mastered, let's have some fun!

