

The sense of anticipation started building weeks ago. Backstage in New York, Pat McGrath, the most prolific and prestigious make-up artist to work at the international collections, darted around the crowded rows of white tables, approving and correcting the work of her team, some 30 assistants. "I need more warmth in the complexions. Skin that's fresh!" When the gaggle of beauty journalists clustering around her was too big to ignore, she paused to describe the look of the show. There was only one question she ducked: "Pat, tell us about Gucci!" She laughed, and then her voice fell to a whisper: "Girls! All I can say is . . . you are gonna LOVE this!"

Frida Giannini's long-awaited cosmetics line, for which McGrath is cosmetics artistic director, has been four years in the making. And while the Gucci website has been taking pre-orders, the collection made its official debut at the Gucci show in Milan.

Made in partnership with Procter & Gamble (which is also behind the success of the fragrance Gucci Guilty,



1,500
the number of Rouge Dior lipsticks sold every day in the UK

and for which McGrath works as creative design director) each product comes in black and gold packaging, monogrammed with interlocking GGs. Inside, the Gucci factor is instantly recognisable in a palette of reds, bronzes, coppers and peacock-blues from past collections.

McGrath's brief was to modernise the most classic Gucci make-up looks and interpret them for modern Gucci women. "Some of the colours took up to 60 rounds of shading to get right," she says. "Frida wasn't simply looking for a cosmetic brand, she wanted something that professional make-up artists would want to use backstage." There are make-up brushes, nail colours and even a nod to skincare, while a campaign starring Charlotte Casiraghi, It girl and member of the Monaco royal family, puts Gucci on the map with other designer cosmetic brands, from Tom Ford to newcomers Marc Jacobs, Michael Kors, Burberry, Tory Burch and Christian Louboutin.

Carla Liumi, global vice-president of Gucci Beauty, calls the brand's first foray into cosmetics the "ultimate beauty accessory". And therein lies the key: Gucci's attempt to convince its customers that the Magnetic Color Shadow Quad in Aquamarine Dream (£48) is the perfect eyeshadow to complement the leather ruffle button-down sage-green shirt (£2,060) from its autumn/winter 2014 collection, is one of the reasons why the designer cosmetic range is this season's biggest beauty trend.

"Almost every key cosmetics brand today has some association with a designer," says John Demsey, group president of Estée Lauder, who was behind the launch of Tom Ford and oversees the cosmetic collections of Michael Kors and Tory Burch, as well as the designer collaborations of MAC. He attributes the popularity of designer cosmetics ranges in part to a waning celebrity-driven market.



The labels on everyone's lips

Beauty | From Gucci to Burberry, designer brands are moving into make-up.

But are lipsticks always lucrative? Kathleen Baird-Murray reports

2.02 million
the number of times Charlotte Tilbury's 'The Feline Flick' has been viewed on YouTube

"If you look at the general marketplace, the glut of megastar perfumes and megastar contracts behind traditional brands has meant that brands that are aspirational, authentic or have the most point of difference are now the ones with the edge. Designers now have big social profiles, their runway shows are devoured on all social media platforms, and in some ways, it's less about clothing and more about the total look."

Wider distribution points such as Sephora, Space NK and online retailers such as Net-A-Porter make it easier to reach international consumers - something that was less achievable in the 1980s and early 1990s, when designers Ralph Lauren, Diane von Furstenberg and Donna Karan launched ultimately short-lived cosmetics ranges.

"Partly it's driven by new markets like Brazil, Africa and Asia," says Demsey. "People look for brands that signify they've arrived. In an emerging market, it means a lot to have the lipstick, even if you can't get the handbag."

David Olsen, global vice-president at Net-A-Porter, has direct experience of the correlation between clothing sales and associated beauty sales. "Make-up artists are constantly collaborating with

designers on the look for a show, and that means designer brands have that edge on the beauty trends," he says.

So, following the 1990s trend for make-up artist-led brands such as Laura Mercier, Bobbi Brown and Nars, is the make-up expert imprimatur now essential for a brand's success? Collaborations with leading make-up artists such as McGrath, who also launched lines for Giorgio Armani in 2000 and Dolce & Gabbana in 2009, or Charlotte Tilbury, who, as well as having her own successful line works closely with Tom Ford, give an authoritative edge to a brand. In a generation informed by YouTube tutorials, being authoritative is key.

Is designer make-up really the gift that keeps on giving? The beauty business is worth around \$90bn globally, with prestige cosmetics alone making up around 20 per cent of that figure. At the time of Tory Burch's beauty launch in January, industry bible WWD estimated her sales could hit \$50m in the first year, putting her well on the way to the kind of success that Tom Ford is achieving now.

But for every Tom Ford ("phenomenally successful, number one in half the stores all over the world, and in less than 10 years - unheard of in this business," says Demsey), there's a Stella McCartney skincare (2007-11), a Versace make-up (1998-2009) or a Prada beauty line (2000-07) collecting dust in a forgotten warehouse. "Cosmetics is a natural extension for a designer," says Demsey, "but it's no slam dunk. While fragrance can take off, a beauty line has to be supported properly. People forget that it has the same rules that apply to the fashion business. Prada's skincare was beautiful, but they only knew the shoe business."

30 seconds
how often YSL sells a Touche Éclat concealer



1921
the year Chanel No 5 was created, and the first time a fashion house developed a perfume



Christian Louboutin seems to have calculated his venture into beauty: a new range of nail lacquers launched last month worldwide. With 22 years' experience as a shoe designer, the move into high-quality lacquer with a unique elongated lid (based on a 2007 collaboration between Louboutin and film director David Lynch) is pitched as an objet d'art, and will be available wherever Louboutin's red-soled shoes are sold. The marketing materials make much of the fact that the original red of the Louboutin sole was inspired by his assistant painting her nails a vivid red as Louboutin agonised over the design of his first shoe.

Having the right partner is also key. It's common practice for a designer to license out the manufac-

8 inches
the height of the cap on the Rouge Louboutin nail polish



ture of their fragrance and cosmetics to a beauty operator such as Procter & Gamble, L'Oréal or Estée Lauder, taking advantage of their industry knowledge as well as their laboratories, creative teams, warehousing and economies of scale, but it can be a risky business. Calvin Klein is now in its third partnership, this time with Coty.

The beauty companies partnering with designer brands are no pushovers. One leading global make-up artist recently told me of the years he had spent working with a designer on the launch of a new cosmetics brand in conjunction with a beauty giant. Just as it was ready to go, the designer changed his mind about the lid of a lipstick, and the launch was delayed by another three months, during which time 9/11 happened, world recession hit, and the prospective line was immediately axed by the licensee.

There are other advantages to going solo. When Burberry brought its perfume business back in-house, it was able to launch its beauty range exactly the way Christopher Bailey envisaged it. Earlier this month, the house launched My Burberry with its in-house perfumer Francis Kurkdjian and a campaign with Cara Delevingne and Kate Moss.

That proximity between designer and brand is crucial. Demsey cites Tom Ford as an example. "I've been in this industry for over 30 years and I've never met anyone more beauty-savvy and involved in his line than him. He plays the role of designer and make-up king combined. There aren't many who can do that."

So what next, post-Gucci? The announcement during fashion week of Christopher Kane's collaboration with Nars (which in the past has associated more with photographers and artists such as Guy Bourdin and Andy Warhol) set Instagram abuzz. Then there are MAC's designer collaborations - are they in fact thinly disguised testing ground for a fully-fledged designer and Estée Lauder cosmetics range in the near future?

"We do a better job of incubating ideas because we've worked with the designers," says Demsey. "But sometimes, let's just say it's easier to go on a date than straightaway commit to a long-term relationship."



INTRODUCING
TIFFANY T

TIFFANY & Co.
NEW YORK SINCE 1837

SQUARE BRACELETS, £4,075
0800 160 1837 | TIFFANY.CO