



PHOTO BY ALICE GAO

BOBBI BROWN

Beyond the Brand

BY VICTORIA KEENAN

Whether you consider yourself a makeup artist or not, chances are you've heard of Bobbi Brown. Known for being the creator of the 'no-makeup, makeup' look, Brown taught women that they are all beautiful, and makeup should be used to enhance their features, rather than cover them up. Aside from being a makeup guru, Brown is also an accomplished author, editor, podcast and radio host, and philanthropist. But after stepping down from her brand this past December, the Chicago-born, Jersey-bred makeup expert has moved forward with her career, starting new ventures including her ninth book, and designing her husband, Steven Plofker's, upcoming hotel in Montclair, NJ. We recently got a chance to sit down with Brown to talk about her latest achievements, and how she's always ready to start and learn something new.

After 25 years, you've stepped away from Bobbi Brown Cosmetics. What has the transition been like? How has it prepared you for what you're doing next?

It was not an overnight decision. It was awhile in coming, and so when it finally happened, it was first a big sense of relief because all of a sudden, the things you're always worried about just kind of go away. Then, there was the excitement of anything is possible, what's next? And then, you have to deal with everything from missing your team to a little bit of the sadness. But coming out the other end has been a really positive experience because there's so many interesting things on the horizon that I wouldn't have been able to get to if I had the day-to-day responsibilities of my brand.



PHOTO BY BEN RITTER

You are an entrepreneur in so many ways - being a makeup artist, editor, author, humanitarian, and now interior designer. What advice do you have for the younger generation who want to follow in your footsteps?

Things seem very simple to me, even when it's hard. But first of all, you have to realize that everything you do requires a lot of hard work. Nothing is easy. You also just have to do things, and don't worry about failure, because if something doesn't work, just do something else. That doesn't mean you've failed, that just means you've changed direction because something didn't work. My biggest advice to entrepreneurs is just do it, stop talking about what you're going to do—just do it.

“Beauty from the Inside Out: Makeup / Wellness / Confidence” is your first book out of the nine you've written that focuses on lifestyle and wellness. What made you want to write about something different this time? Why do you think it was so important to offer advice from other notable and powerful women?

Every single book that I've written, and every single article that I've ever talked about beauty in, has always been about how important it is to take care of yourself. Lifestyle is the key to what

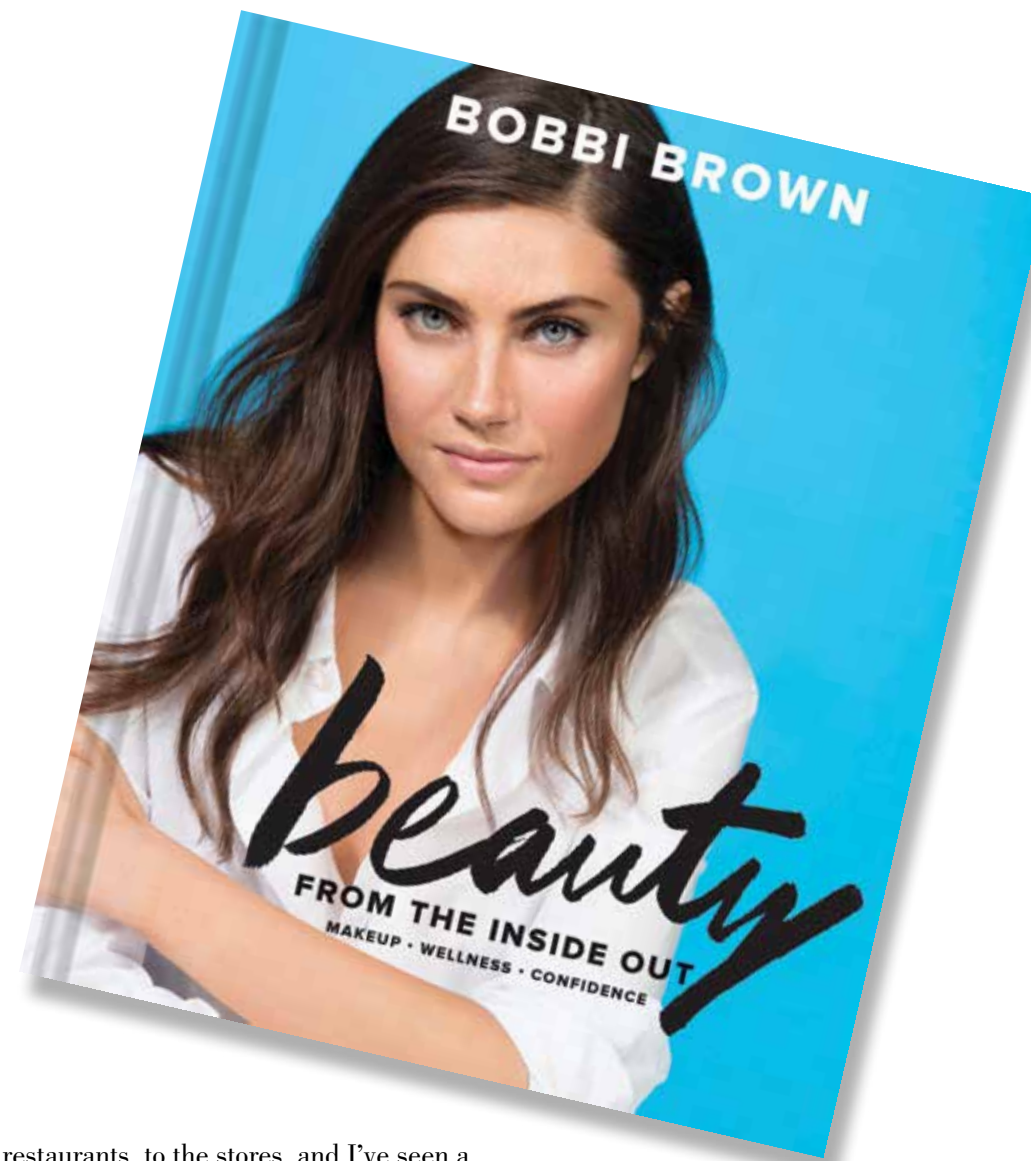
makes you look good, and most of the time when someone looks in the mirror and they don't look good, I guarantee they don't feel good. So you have to go back and adjust and see what you're doing. This book is really exciting for me because it's a way to really talk about what I do personally, but I'm not the expert in the book. Even though I share what works for me at the moment, I'm constantly changing things because things change. But I have so many experts in the book because people bring so many different things to the table, and I love to hear what they do. You always see pictures of these cool, successful women and think they have it all together, but guess what, they're just normal, we're all humans.

The new book is focused on laying a foundation for beauty from within, including the best foods to put in your body, yoga, and essential skincare routines. Do all of these tips and tricks come from your own philosophies?

Well, I'm very curious. I read a lot, I search the internet a lot, and I work with a lot of really awesome doctors, and healers, and all sorts of people. So I'm lucky in that way that I get to do different things, and different things work. But I'm a searcher, I'll continue to look for new things.

You've lived and raised your sons in Montclair and are now designing The George Inn, your husband's hotel, there. What do you love most about living in Montclair? Do you think staying in New Jersey has kept you grounded?

I'm originally from the suburbs of Chicago, so I am not a city girl. My husband and I do have an apartment in New York City, it's a pied-à-terre and it's nice to have, but I don't feel that it's home. Montclair is my home; I love that my kids went to public school, I'm a huge public school advocate, and I love the diversity of the town, I love everything from the eclecticism of the



restaurants, to the stores, and I've seen a really big change in the town since I've lived here. I moved here the day I got back from my honeymoon, 29 years ago. The food is good, and what I love most are all the really great parks and being outside. A lot of interesting people live there now.

What are you trying to create for the hotel? What is your biggest challenge designing the space there?

My husband and I both love to travel and we stay in some interesting hotels. We are not fancy people, we don't like fancy hotels, we like comfort and we like a good aesthetic. Working with the hotel is really interesting because it's going to be everything from picking or designing the sheets to how easy or hard it is to get a cup of tea or coffee in the morning. I

want to make whoever stays there feel that it's as good as being at home, or probably even a little bit better. So style without having too much furniture in a room, or looking too bare. It's a work in progress, but it's been really fun.

With so many new and exciting projects, what do you enjoy doing most when you have a spare moment to sit down and just relax?

I actually like exercising, it's what I like to do and the more I do it, the better I feel. I go to this amazing facility in Little Falls, right behind Montclair State, called Parabolic. It's a strength and conditioning place. I go three times a week, and then the other days, I'm basically outside with a girlfriend, walking a lot—it's my social life.