

# THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE

with love from Naja x



**NAJA RICKETTE** reflects on her career thus far when photos from a commission three years ago become available to her - the timeless nails she crafted for Madonna's *Vogue* performance

**T**his month I thought we should all get dolled up in leather and lace, strike a pose and reflect. Reflect on where we've been, how we got there, who helped us along the way and who hurt us along the way, to see just how far we've come.

No matter whether you be a seasoned veteran nail artist, an industry leader, a new salon owner or student just getting into the nail game, we all have our accomplishments to celebrate. I hear from various arenas all too often how much more there is to do - and this I believe is good news. This will never change! When finally we get done what we set our heart on, we find out fairly instantly that there's another challenge to face on our list of career goals. So, settle down and take a few moments to really reflect on your successes and overall journey so far.

I find as consummate nail professionals we become almost obsessed with what needs to be done, what must be fixed, how sales can improve, how to expand, what the competition is doing etc - now, these things are integral to running and operating any business, but I'd like to add a little reflection into the recipe to give a new perspective.

These stunning images you see are the result of a job I worked on about three years ago. It was my very first session job. I was excited and nervous, because it was also my first photo shoot.

It turned out it wasn't small fry either, as the client was Madonna and the shoot was for her 2008 *Sticky & Sweet* world tour. WOW! That day we shot video and still images all designed for use on the giant video screens behind Madonna while she performed her infamous song *Vogue* on stage during the tour.

I must confess I'd completely forgotten about these photos because they took so long to get hold of for legal reasons. In the photographer's contract, these photos couldn't be released until after her tour. Well Madonna is in such great shape and seemed to tour for years, so the photos remained under lock and key until recently. They emerged in a surprise moment for me a few months ago when I worked with the same photographer on the backdrop video screens for Rhianna and Britney Spears' upcoming tours. It was that day I found out that the *Vogue* photos were finally ready for my viewing.

Viewing the images naturally brought my mind into reflection. Since the day I was commissioned three years ago for this project, my career has totally evolved, changed and expanded beyond recognition. Sitting back and reflecting on the nail skills portrayed in these photos I realised just how much I've improved over the years. I noticed imperfections in my polish, in the shaping of some of the nails and other flaws in my work. What I enjoyed most however, as I dissected my work, was reflecting on just how much I've learned about the business of nails over the years. The technical

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aspects that create the foundation necessary to build on skill, the education I've immersed myself in and the practice, practice, practice I've indulged in to better my work.

My business journey has been paved in mistakes, meetings, meals, money and motivation. During these past three years of owning a salon, doing session work, grooming celebrity clients such as Lady Gaga, Katy Perry and Fergie as well as working on music videos, quotes in *American Vogue*, becoming a Minx Maestro leading to me training thousands of Minx manicurists, alongside presenting business classes and now working closely with Athena Elliott as her co-host/owner of Nail Talk Radio and with my own Minx designs about to be released - I can't help but to urge both you and me to reflect on what we've accomplished.

I forget all the time and fall into the, "I'm not doing enough," mind trap. It doesn't matter how much or how little you think you've done - the point is, you are here today! Take some time out this month to reflect back and celebrate how you got where you are today with true introspection and gratitude and you will soar into your next nail adventure.

A good tip that I've learned along the way is that even 'something I may view as a failed project still gets filed in the 'S' cabinet under success' because those are some of the most important learning experiences we have. Learning what not to do, is just as valuable as finding out what to do.

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