

NAJA NAIL IT...

West Hollywood nail stylist **NAJA RICKETTE** talks of her recent Guinness World Record title

Who is Naja Rickette?

In the middle of LA with its slammed deadlines and crazy work schedules, nail guru Naja has long been established as a go-to nail professional with an A-list clientele including stars such as Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Fergie, Mariah Carey, Pink and Miranda Lambert. Currently a full-time session nail stylist and official member of the 'glam squad', Naja is represented by Celestine Agency, and her artistry and keen business sense have propelled her to become one of the top nail stylists in the world.

www.najanailguru.com

Congratulations to Naja Rickette, Hollywood nail stylist, reality star, and now the new Guinness World Records title-holder for polishing the most clients nails in an eight-hour period!

Naja's world record will be featured in this season of *LA Hair*, WE TV's reality show based in Los Angeles in which Naja is a key cast member. Naja reveals details of her accomplishment and her predictions for the hottest nail styles of the summer.

What exactly is the new Guinness World Records title that you now hold?

NAJA: I now own the title for the most nails filed and varnished by an individual in an 8-hour period. Essentially, the record stands for the most polish changes in eight hours. A standard polish change at a nail salon involves shaping the nails, removing any old polish and then polishing. I had to reach 50 people in order to set the record, which I achieved at the six-hour mark, so I continued on for another two hours to see how many more people I could do. I wanted to give it 110% and get to the highest number of people that I could.

Whose idea was it to attempt this record?

NAJA: It was my idea! *Nailpro* magazine put on a nails-only beauty show last year in Pasadena, California. *Nailpro* Competitions held a contest for the fastest full set of acrylic sculptured nails. I thought it was such a progressive thing for the nail industry, and that it would be really fun to try and set or break a record. I'm an achiever with a competitive spirit, so this is right up my alley.

What role did the Guinness World Records representatives have?

NAJA: Guinness World Records set all the parameters. There was a set of rules and

steps that needed to be completed on each client. If these steps were not performed, or if one step was missed, then that client would not count towards my final number and would be disqualified. Philip Robertson, the adjudicator, was there as the official counter of finished clients, to officiate the eight-hour time period, and to enforce that all pre-qualified steps were performed. As soon as the eight-hour clock began, it ran continuously. Bathroom, lunch and stretching breaks all factored into the time period.

For female participants, the steps I needed to complete were as follows:

1. Consult with participant, check for contra-indications
2. Sanitise hands
3. Assess hand and nail conditions
4. Remove nail varnish, if necessary
5. File nails
6. Apply base coat
7. Apply two coats of varnish
8. Apply top coat.

If I was working with a male participant, then I completed the same steps except I would buff the nails to a high shine rather than polishing. All the female participants needed to be polished. They could not get a buff shine.

The record measures how quickly you polished nails, but was there a quality standard?

NAJA: Yes. I couldn't just throw polish on and call it a day. In the rules it stated the finished nails needed to be 'salon standard quality'. Not only did I need to be extremely fast, but I also needed to do a great job. There needed to be a qualified manicurist present to check and approve each completed client before they were counted. If the polish or filing was not approved, then that client would be disqualified and not count towards my final number.

Before I received the rules, I'd planned on polishing the participants by going straight

to colour, omitting the base and top coat. When I work at fashion shows or for very time-sensitive set work, I often polish nails in this manner as the polish doesn't have to stay on for long. But, when I received the official rules, I saw I had to complete the participants using both base and top coats, and the nails had to be salon quality.

Was there a team present to assist you?

NAJA: I had my assistant to feed me, give me water and massage my neck and legs. I could not stop! My assistant also kept me on track with regard to how many people I'd completed. I had large groups of people scheduled to come in every two hours. While they were in the waiting area I had my assistant explain the rules to them and what was expected. Most important on my list was that the participants could not use their mobile phones while I was working on them, or even set the phone on the table. I didn't want to lose time by dealing with distractions or waiting for the participants to switch hands.

I called my good friend and mentor Kimmie Kyees to officiate that day and be the expert nail tech to approve my work. However, she had a last minute call to do Rihanna's nails so couldn't make it, and instead I asked Kandi Yamz, whom I'd recently met at a beauty show, to be an official.

Where did the event take place?

NAJA: We filmed the record setting event at the Kimble Hair Studio in West Hollywood, California. The studio is owned by my close friend, famed hair stylist Kim Kimble who's been Beyoncé's personal hair stylist for the last 17 years. It is also the set of *LA Hair*, the reality show on WE TV that I joined last year.

How did you prepare for the event?

NAJA: I made sure I had a good night's rest, I ate a big breakfast and I did some stretching beforehand as I knew I'd be sitting for eight hours straight.

What nail polishes did you choose for the event?

NAJA: My two favourite brands to polish with are Deborah Lippmann and essie polishes. Right out of beauty school I started using essie, as I find it very user-friendly. The bottle easily fits in my hand and I like the width and length of the brush. It's my go-to polish on set when I am not normally polishing with a table and chair, but am kneeling in between a hair and make-up person while the client is waving her hands, eating lunch and talking on the phone as I'm trying to polish her nails. That can be very challenging, so I'm very serious when I select the brush with which I'm going to polish my clients!



Naja with Kim Kimble

TRENDS FOR SUMMER 2014

As a nail stylist to the stars, you are always at the forefront of new nail trends. Name your favourite trends right now?

NAJA: I'm a fan of the whole negative space craze. It offers so many creative ideas and really makes the colours that I use 'pop' up against the blank space. I, personally, am going through a black and white phase. For the past few months I've been wearing only black and white designs on my nails. I'm also loving the 3D full nail shield pieces I'm seeing all over LA.

What nail shapes and trends will emerge for summer 2014?

NAJA: The shapes will be more subtle and classic than in past years when the long, exaggerated pointed talons were popular. Length can still be there but with a shorter, more oval shape. Short, natural nails with bold colours will be a summer signature. Think primary colours (like Lego) in rich hues of yellow, blue or green. Nail art is here to stay and this summer the accent nail is out! Think more two-tonal nail art; choosing two to three colours with lines, shape, colour blocking or fades all the same style on each finger. I'm a fan of white nails; try essie's Blanc. If you've never tried white on the entire nail, you might be skeptical at first, but once you give it a shot you will be hooked!



See Naja on WE TV's LA HAIR

For the second season in a row, Naja is a feature cast member of WE TV's hit reality show, *LA HAIR*, where every day is a Hollywood holiday. The third season of *LA HAIR* will premiere on Thursday 22 May 2014 on WE TV. Naja's world record is currently scheduled to be featured on the programme on Thursday 17 July.



Naja with Philip Robertson for Guinness Book of Records