

SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL

Thanks to her new beauty collaboration with Estée Lauder, Victoria Beckham is on a quest to ensure every woman feels empowered



Twenty years ago, Victoria Beckham stood on the staircase of what is now London's St. Pancras Renaissance Hotel belting out the lyrics to the Spice Girls' chart-topping debut single *Wannabe*. Back then, few, least of all Beckham herself, could have imagined the trajectory her career would take, one which has seen her leave behind her Posh Spice moniker to become not only a credible and respected fashion designer, but an award-winning one, too. "I really enjoyed being in the music industry and I'm so respectful of my past and the girls," Beckham reveals. "But, if you'd asked people 10 years ago what they thought about me and how likely it would be that I would become successful in the fashion industry, they would have laughed. And that's OK, I was very aware of people's preconceptions."

Indeed, when Beckham announced the launch of her fashion label in 2008, reactions were mixed. Some loved the wearability and structure of her silhouettes, others branded them "unoriginal". Barely three years on, Beckham had the last laugh by winning the first of her two British Fashion Awards. Now, even the most diehard fashion critic acknowledges that she is a force to be reckoned with, a feat she is undoubtedly hoping to replicate in the world of beauty.

BECKHAM'S POINT OF VIEW

This September sees the unveiling of Beckham's collaboration with Estée Lauder – the launch of a capsule collection of make-up simply titled Victoria Beckham Estée Lauder. While most celebrities might have been happy to lend their name to a line and watch the money roll in, Beckham has worked closely with Sarah Creal, Estée Lauder's head of global partnership initiatives, to realise an ambition she has been harbouring for as long as she has been famous. "I've been working with the best make-up artists, stylists and photographers since I was about 18 years old and I've learnt lots of tricks that I want to share with women all around the world," says Beckham. "I was very excited when Estée Lauder came to me – this has been a dream of mine for so many years."

WORDS: KATHRYN CONWAY. PORTRAIT OF VICTORIA BECKHAM © VICTORIA BECKHAM LIMITED





It might have only taken just over a year to develop, but the 15-strong line is a considered offering; it's Beckham's take on the key pieces that she believes are missing in a woman's make-up bag. "I truly believe that all of these pieces are items that you can't find out there, and they are things that I've been searching for," she says. "Whether it's the colour, texture, size of the pigment, the way it stays on, how it feels or how it smells, I definitely feel that there's a difference between this collection and anything else that's out there."

A case in point is Beckham's Brazilian Nude lipstick. Beauty crusaders will be pleased to hear that, thanks to Beckham's creation, the hunt for the perfect nude can finally end. Interestingly, and perhaps somewhat unsurprising given her own make-up style, Beckham has chosen this subtle hue as the basis of her London look. Created from products in the collection, the look comprises a polished nude lip paired with an intense sooty eye. "I love London, I'm from London and I'd say that this look – the black, sparkly, smudgy, slightly sweaty-looking eye and the nude lip – is one that I personally wear myself a lot; it's something that people really associate with me. It just feels very British, it's quite cool and I think this look says 'London' all over it," she reveals.

WAYS TO WEAR COLOUR

Creating looks based around her favourite cities is a clever move that allows women to easily engage with the line; there's no fuss and that's because Beckham's aesthetic isn't that way inclined. "She has a strong point of view," acknowledges Creal, "so everything is very considered, very streamlined, very simple. Each look is created from a maximum of four or five products – this is not a 30-product situation." For the other three looks – Paris, New York and LA – Beckham took inspiration from her real-world experience.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: PRODUCTS FORMING THE PARIS CITY LOOK; EYE INK IN BLACK MYRRH; MORNING AURA; PRODUCTS FORMING THE LONDON CITY LOOK. ALL OTHER IMAGES © VICTORIA BECKHAM LIMITED

So the Paris look is drawn from a cover shoot with photographers Inez & Vinoodh for *Vogue* Paris where Beckham wore a matt sunset orange lip and a metallic green eye; the modern, fast pace of the Big Apple helped define an editorial style for the New York look; while the LA look draws on her sense of "feeling sunkissed, fresh and relaxed" when at home there.

Other noteworthy products in the collection include the clever double-ended Eye Kajal, which is as soft as butter to apply and features a pinky, creamy end to help open up the eye. "Adding a pale colour to the inside of the eye is a subtle way of achieving a fresh, youthful look," explains Beckham. Then there's the Eye Foils, which deliver a liquid-metal effect and dry to a cool vinyl-like shine. Perhaps most exciting of all is a stylish make-up case with a removable, battery-operated mirror that provides perfect make-up lighting. "I travel so much and I spend a lot of time in hotels and the lighting is pretty terrible," says Beckham. "So often I'll do my make-up in a hotel room, then leave and I'm almost embarrassed to look at people. I'm like, 'Oh my God, is it OK? Is it too heavy? Is it not enough?' I'm sure we've all had those moments. So I wanted to create something that looked beautiful in the bathroom but that had a mirror with proper make-up lighting that you could just chuck in your suitcase."

For Beckham, however, this make-up line isn't just about creating things that she desires, it's about much more. "I'm a girl's girl; I like to support women and I have no time for women who don't feel like that," she explains. "This is about empowering women and making them feel good about themselves, whether that's through fashion or make-up. If I can help a woman feel beautiful then that's great." Beckham calls the collection "the ultimate luxury", a fact you can judge for yourself when it launches in her Dover Street boutique and in Selfridges on September 13. The collection will also be available in all major airports from September 26.