

No day at the beach

MAY 10, 2004 | 12:00AM PT

Going for the gold yields orange results

Diane Garrett (<http://variety.com/author/diane-garrett/>)

Maybe you can't be too rich or too thin, but you can certainly be too orange.

The dangers of self-tanning were never more evident than at this year's Academy Awards, where several thespians raised eyebrows with their orangey hue.

The usually flawless Charlize Theron became the evening's biggest cautionary tale against self-tanning, reminding viewers old enough to remember of QT, a sunless tanning potion known for turning wearers' skin a streaky orange.

Today's tanning options are far more vast — there are enough bronzers, lotions and liquids to fill an ocean — than they were in QT's heyday 30 years ago. Besides the ubiquitous Mystic spray-on tan — already featured on both "Friends" and "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" — popular techniques include airbrushing, makeup, three-day massage treatments and tanning bed "cocktails" designed to punch up alternate self-tanning methods.

Make no mistake about it: Being tan is in. Whatever the reason — perennially golden gals such as Jessica Simpson claim they're thinner when they're tan; others call the tan a badge of affluence. Getting that look isn't always a day at the beach, however. Sunless tanning techniques avoid harmful sun exposure but are fraught with their own peril. They can get messy, expensive and they don't even last that long. Done improperly, wearers look like they're sporting a fake bake.

Celebrity [makeup artists \(http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/hair-make-up-artists/\)](http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/hair-make-up-artists/) get constant calls before industry events to burnish star clients.

“Everybody wants to be really tan right now,” says makeup artist Gina Veltri, whose clients include Maria Bello. “The look right now is for pretty skin with minimal makeup. Having a tan makes people feel better with that look.”

She adds: “I have actresses that won't let me put any foundation on them before going on television, because they don't want it to settle into any lines — or whatever their head trip is.”

She says certain thespians visit the tanning booth first, covering their faces, neck and chest to avoid exposure — and added aging — in those areas, then have her apply airbrush or makeup tans applied to those areas.

Veltri worked from seven a.m. to 11 p.m. Oscar night applying makeup to broadcast attendees and partygoers. “The new thing is to go into the tanning booths for five minutes, then Mystic tan. That way you're getting a little boost.”

Mystic Tan poster child Paris Hilton is among those punching up her glow this way.

Portofino Sun Spa in Beverly Hills provides a solar mask and [hair \(http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/hair-makeup-artists-local-798-ny/\)](http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/hair-makeup-artists-local-798-ny/) cap for those whipping up a tanning “cocktail” on the premises. Owner Jennifer Phillips

says simply placing a towel over the head doesn't cut it.

During Oscar week, limos caused gridlock in front of the busy salon on little Santa Monica Blvd., where George Hamilton is among the regulars.

Besides old school tanning beds, the salon offers Magic Tan — a spray-on variation to the popular Mystic Tan — and a custom airbrush technique called turbo.

“We have 30 people a day doing turbo,” Phillips says. “We're booked every 15 minutes.”

Under this technique, would-be tanners can customize the tone on their legs, body and face.

“The biggest thing is people don't want their face to be tan,” Phillips says.

“They come in and say their makeup artist says their face is too tan. They get a little bit of tan there, then ask me to make their legs really tan.”

BevHills makeup artist Bobbe Joy prefers to use bronzers and lotions to achieve that glow.

“I'm completely against tanning beds,” says Joy, who frequently fields calls from thespians before they appear at events. “The end result is not worth it because there are so many other ways to get a tan.”

She mixes golden tints with a touch of pink to make “it look like you just came in from the sun. They all love that.”

The key, Joy says, is helping each person get the look that's right for her or him.

“Keep in mind what suits you best,” seconds Celestine makeup artist

Gregory Rodriguez, who numbers Lisa Kudrow among his celebrity clients.

“Obviously, if you're pale and fair, why go for that look?”

Another danger is chemical.

Use too much self-tanner and the DHA — the same main ingredient in QT all those years ago — turns skins orange, points out Jonathan Baker, a writer-producer (<http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/producers/>) who's been offering sunless tanning to industryites at his Skin Spa in Encino for 20 years.

"You have to lose some of the tan before you go back up," Baker says.

"Some people are like anorexics; they just don't see how tan they are."

Baker's spa offers a three-day treatment mixing tanning with massage for those willing to devote the time — and expense.

"You want to go to an event, what better way?" Baker says. "It's a luxurious way to get a tan."

Among those who've indulged: Theron, Renee Zellweger and Pamela Anderson along with industryites Mark Burnett and Jeff Probst.

At \$200 a pop, the treatment isn't cheap. Mystic Tan treatments, by contrast, run about \$20 a squirt, while airbrush treatments cost \$55 and up. Add an exfoliation and you're easily ringing up a Ben Franklin. All for a tan that'll be gone in a week.

Jennifer Flavin Stallone just created a home airbrush system for those who don't have time to keep dashing into a salon for Mystic Tan.

"All these actresses are doing it, but that doesn't work for my lifestyle," she says. "You can do this at 9 o'clock in the shower after the kids have gone to sleep."

Myriad self-tanners and bronzers are available from Clarins, Lancome and other skincare lines, but the key again is careful application. Beauty pros always advise applying self-tanners the day before an event to allow the tan the four to six hours it needs to develop.

“Makeup can get very messy, but if it’s for an evening it can be a great last minute thing,” says makeup artist Christine Laguna of Santa Monica’s ESP salon, who previously maintained the glow for “Baywatch Hawaii” thespians. “If you use a spray-on tan, you have to be careful with the hands and the feet. That’s where you can see the streaks.”

Makeup artists say tanning must be applied with the unforgiving eye of the camera (<http://variety411.com/us/new-york/camera-sound-equipment/>) in mind — especially now that more programming is being transmitted in high definition.

“I noticed a difference in this year’s awards shows with the shift toward high def (<http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/high-def-3d-digital-cinema/>) TV,” Veltri says. “There’s a difference and the makeup artists need to switch over. It happened with the soaps. All the actresses looked orange. So they changed what they do.”

Regardless how Theron got her Oscar night look — explanations range from too much self-tanning, too much time in the sun and overly dramatic makeup (makeup artist Shane Paish has said he wanted to make her dress “pop”) — her experience is unlikely to dissuade others from doing their best to keep golden.

Besides, some thought she looked just peachy.

“A lot of people came in and said, ‘what did she do? I don’t want to do what she did,’ ” Phillips says.

Then again, she notes, after “Friends” had a field day with Ross’s mishaps in a spray-on booth, “a woman came in and said she wanted to look like that.”

Want to read more articles like this one? [SUBSCRIBE TO VARIETY TODAY](http://pubads.g.doubleclick.net/gampad/clk?id=126980977&iu=/3782/Variety_CM/below-tags/ros) (http://pubads.g.doubleclick.net/gampad/clk?id=126980977&iu=/3782/Variety_CM/below-tags/ros).

by Taboola (http://www.taboola.com/en/popup?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_utm_

Promoted Links (http://www.taboola.com/en/popup?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_

YOU MAY LIKE

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/news/star-wars-the-force-awakens-john-boyega-lightsaber-finn-video-1201579773/>)

'Star Wars: The Force Awakens': Watch John Boyega Wield a Lightsaber in New Teaser

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/news/star-wars-the-force-awakens-john-boyega-lightsaber-finn-video-1201579773/>)

(http://madamenoire.com/461375/celebrity-couple-splits/?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=cpc&utm_content=widget&utm_campaign=MadameNoire.Desktop.global.safe1&utm_content=pmc-variety)

I Told You: Celebrity Couple Splits We Saw Coming
MadameNoire

(http://madamenoire.com/461375/celebrity-couple-splits/?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=cpc&utm_content=widget&utm_campaign=MadameNoire.Desktop.global.safe1&utm_content=pmc-variety)

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/news/by-the-sea-trailer-brad-pitt-angelina-jolie-watch-1201558181/>)

Watch: First Trailer for Brad Pitt-Angelina Jolie's 'By the Sea'

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/news/by-the-sea-trailer-brad-pitt-angelina-jolie-watch-1201558181/>)

by Taboola (http://www.taboola.com/en/popup?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_utm_

Promoted Links (http://www.taboola.com/en/popup?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_

YOU MAY LIKE

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/news/star-wars-the-force-awakens-john-boyega-lightsaber-finn-video-1201579773/>)

'Star Wars: The Force Awakens': Watch John Boyega Wield a Lightsaber in New Teaser