



WAYNE CUDDINGTON, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Andi Marcus's new makeup line, called Mistura, can be used all over your face — as foundation, concealer, blush, eye shadow, even lipstick.

Easy beauty

One-size-suits-all makeup system launches in Ottawa

DUDS



WENDY WARBURTON

Growing up in the 1980s, Andi Marcus was caught between two worlds.

There was the fantasy world of television, where women had big hair, big shoulder pads and a big thing for makeup — lots of it in brilliant colours, daubed on with a hand heavy from too much gaudy jewelry.

Then there was the real world where she lived with her parents — Canadians connected to the diplomatic circuit in Europe. In that world, women dressed casually and wore virtually no makeup by day, then glammed up for evening — but still with restraint.

The effect on Marcus was double-bar-

relled. "I was always influenced by that clean look," she says, "but I also liked to look like I had makeup on."

Trying to achieve that balanced look has led the Rockcliffe writer (under the byline Andrea Cullen) to a new career: makeup maven.

This week, Marcus launched Mistura, her "6-in-1 Beauty Solution" for women who want people to know they haven't left the house bare-faced but don't want to be obvious about it. For \$49.99, buyers get a powder compact with mirror, makeup brushes for face, lips and eyes, and a drawstring bag to hold it all. In addition, there's a light-reflecting moisturizer and a lip gloss, both sold separately.

Most intriguing, Mistura is a one-size-fits-all, does-everything system. Worn over the moisturizer, the powder does duty as foundation, concealer, blush and eye shadow, and when brushed over lips gleaming with Mistura's vitamin E lip base or other gloss, it's also lipstick. The powder also comes in just one shade that adjusts to suit the complexion of the woman who's wearing it.

"It actually works on African-American skin, Asian skin, blonds, on my skin. It goes

on everybody differently," says the brown-eyed, brown-haired Marcus.

Not being a chemist, she's not entirely sure how her trademarked "Miracle Match Colour Blend Technology" works, but attributes it to "how the ultramarines, talc and binding agents work together with your body heat and your skin complexion." (I tried it and can attest that it worked on my skin, which is fairer than Marcus's.)

Like most new makeups, the powder is mineral-based and the materials used are hypoallergenic, but Mistura is not organic.

Organic cosmetics, says Marcus, are "expensive and complex, and I think you have to have an image that stands behind the products ... I'm not exactly the poster child for environmental living. I wear fur, I drive big SUVs, I love shoes, I drink a lot of wine, I have a big boat that burns a lot of fuel like you wouldn't believe. Not that I don't eat whole foods, I breastfed (her two sons) for three years, I used cloth diapers, I recycle like a madwoman. But I'm not an organic face, and I think when you're branding a product, it becomes your life."

In fact, Marcus's life would appear more in tune with those '80s inspirations *Dallas* and *Dynasty* than the '90s sitcom *Dharma*

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& Greg. She carries a Jimmy Choo bag, stashes Burberry slip-ons and Coach boots in her office, loves fishnet stockings and stiletto heels, and on the day I met her was wearing a slim-fitting skirt, white shirt and a large dangling gold-coloured necklace.

Brimming with energy, she's a self-described Martha Stewart type who was always too busy with her sons (now 11 and 14), her house and her husband to have enough time to put on makeup. It's one of the reasons she made the Mistura system is so simple.

Even the name comes from her own life experience. Originally, she wanted to call it Blend, but discovered that had already been trademarked. So, since she speaks four languages, she looked for translations of "blend," and discovered the Portuguese (ironically, a language she doesn't speak) was "mistura."

Marcus is aiming Mistura at women over 30 "who are a little discriminating because of the price point," and who are strapped for time. "The older you get, the more appreciation you have for easy beauty than you do in your 20s," she says. "Besides, that's a time when you really want to experiment with sticky pots and colour and have fun with it."

Marcus says women tend to fall into two camps on makeup. The first will never wear it because "they associate it with superficiality, with materialism and capitalism." The second group wears makeup, but often chooses the wrong colour. "What they don't realize is that it actually makes them look worse."

With normal use, she says, a Mistura compact should last up to 12 months.

Launched at a party at the Empire Grill on Thursday, Mistura is available globally online at misturabeauty.com. But you can also get it in Ottawa at Synergy Spa in Orléans and at Fluid on Bronson Avenue. "I don't want people in Ottawa to have to pay shipping and handling," says Marcus.

In fact, there's a lot of Ottawa in Mistura. The packaging was created by Birdog Design in Hull, Marcus wrote the words on the box, her publicist and legal team are local, and the packages are assembled by disabled adults at the Y's Owl Maclure Co-Operative Centre on Morrison Drive.

Even the women in her advertising are her friends. "I wanted everybody to just be real. I liked the diversity of their look and the uniqueness of their look," says Marcus, who cites Uma Thurman and the late Carolyn Bessette Kennedy as her style icons for their effortless beauty and natural looks. "I find unique women appealing — a crooked tooth, offset eyes."

Writing her own packaging also saved her money, she says, quoting a \$10,000 price tag an agency would have charged, plus \$2,500 to write a tagline under the Mistura Beauty Solutions name on the brown and lavender box.

"I came up with my own over dinner one night," she says, snapping her fingers. "Beauty Simplified. That's what it's going to be."

Wendy Warburton is deputy editor of Style Weekly.

Re-packing the emotional baggage

HOUSE RULES



DEIRDRE MCMURDY

There are many marvelous things about planning a family vacation, none of which have anything whatsoever to do with actually executing one.

Given that we're all in the final throes of cabin fever these days, the anticipation has been building for weeks around our annual March Break getaway.

But anyone who maintains that it's all about the journey rather than the destination, has never tried to jump off the hamster wheel of daily life and dramatically re-orient two strong-minded children, a sullen cat and an itinerant husband. Let's not even talk about the dog, who shares my obsessive attachment to routine.

All of which means my emotional baggage is packed long before I get around to the actual suitcases.

My principal role in this mass mobilization effort is similar to that of one of those specially trained canines that scuttles around airport baggage carousels in a smart little green vest, sniffing out illegal sausages and other banned substances. (Except for the

vest part — I find them unflattering.)

It is up to me — and my acute maternal sense of smell — to detect who's got something spectacularly bulky and useless in their bag, like a hockey helmet (we're heading south) or a doll-sized tea set, and remove it.

For some reason, my children just can't imagine leaving home without every single pair of shorts, every T-shirt and bathing suit — not to mention all their toys — stuffed into a bag. Even things they haven't played with for years suddenly become objects of deep, sentimental attachment from which they cannot under any circumstances be separated.

This has become even more problematic since the small, stuffed scourge known as Webkinz entered our lives.

In terms of addiction, Webkinz are right up there with crack cocaine. Each toy animal comes with a log-in code that permits a child access to Webkinz World, where a virtual version of the adopted pet can shop and play. The log-in code is only good for a year, and then you have to buy a new one and "retire" the previous generation.

In fact, when we finally got the dog our son had been lobbying for since he first began to speak, I'm convinced he was secretly disappointed that she didn't come with her own website and a virtual room that could be extravagantly decorated with loot purchased with the Kinzcash he routinely earns from online gambling.

Needless to say, when the time came to start packing for the March

Break vacation, both kids crammed all their Webkinz into their carry-on bags. Only the warning that these plush parasites would be quarantined by cruel Caribbean customs officials convinced Sunbeam and Little Precious to leave them behind.

(When he was sternly told that each passenger is only allowed one carry-on bag, my son earnestly informed me that Prime Minister Stephen Harper once took four carry-on bags on a flight. I have absolutely no idea where that information came from — unless the Liberal party website has a link to Webkinz World — but I'm now waiting for the writ to be served in a pending libel suit.)

At the same time, of course, there's the ongoing sidebar issue of how many electronic games and devices each child should be permitted to bring along to entertain them during the journey.

Personally, I'm a staunch believer in the developmental benefits of boredom. Ever since I was a mere tot, I've cultivated the ability to sit stock still and stare into the middle distance for hours, keeping all alpha wave activity to a bare minimum. This skill proves to be remarkably useful in my career as a journalist.

None of this is to say that I will ever be one of those people who can blithely travel anywhere with just a toothbrush and a change of socks. But while I may never qualify as a hard-



core minimalist, I do discipline myself to pack just three strapless sundresses and five T-shirts I know I'll never wear.

In fact, I have a pair of Burberry pants in a bold and dashing No-vacheck pattern that I pack every single time I go away and have never worn yet.

And that's by no means my only travel weakness.

Perennially convinced that we won't find potable water or adequate sustenance at any point on our journey, I'm prone to compulsively stashing baggies full of granola bars, Goldfish and cereal, juice boxes, fruit, cheese slices, carrot and celery sticks and sandwiches in my hand luggage.

I do this even I we're just going as far as Kanata, and I do it despite the fact that, in all the years we've been schlepping our kids around, neither child has ever once asked for — or accepted — a proffered piece of wilted cauliflower or a sweating cheese slice.

The end result is that by the time we

reach our final destination, the interior of my tote bag is coated in a rich sludge of crushed crackers, rancid, misshapen sandwiches and the sticky residue of warm, leaking juice boxes.

That's not to say the gastronomic challenges end with our arrival.

Despite every effort to educate his palate, my son will eat only a handful of things — none of them bearing any resemblance to food items that occur in nature.

If it's not breaded and fried, if it's not processed beyond recognition, Sunbeam won't bite. Literally. That means his sister will happily snap up Creole trout puffs and anything else on offer just out of spite — a sibling strategy that, needless to say, often has dire consequences of its own when in transit.

But the family member who takes travelling the hardest is, without question, the cat.

Although she stays home and is lovingly tended by our saintly nanny Emma, Grace descends into a deep funk when we go away for more than a day or two. Usually she bolts from the house and takes residence under our expansive cedar hedge for the duration. But given that she despises cold even more than solitude, I look forward to spending weeks after our return assessing the cost of her passive-aggressive retribution.

In the meantime, I have to ensure that the children haven't already packed her. Which means my pre-departure check list always includes letting the cat out of the bag.

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