

# Beauty Queens:



Pretty smart! These makeup lovers saw a niche—and got rich.

It's hard to believe, given just how many lipsticks and eye creams and body lotions grace the market, that there's room for yet another new beauty line to elbow its way in. But with a strong concept, a true understanding of what women want, and the guts to go for it, the women in this story prove that if you build it, they will buy.

## Stephanie Sakoff: She's one LUCKY CHICK

Four years ago, Stephanie Sakoff was a freelance footwear designer moonlighting as a sales associate in a housewares store. It wasn't exactly a fulfilling career for the woman whose favorite childhood Halloween costume was bubble bath (think pink leotards strewn with balloons). One evening,

## 7 Women Who Turned Their Girlie Dreams into Real Riches

BY HILLARY QUINN

she started sketching a playful character soaking in a tub of bubbles. She named her Lucky Chick and a brand was born.

With early financial backing from her father, that brand is now raking in nearly \$2 million per year. Lucky Chick—who vivaciously graces the packaging of all of Sakoff's skin and face products—is the star of the show. "I decided to create this amazing character that reflects my life and other women's lives," explains the 32-year-old entrepreneur, who claims that customers are enchanted with the logo long before they even indulge in the products. But once they try them, they're hooked: *Blushing Bride* (relaxing products, like body oil, lotion, and shower gel) comes in an adorable pink and white box scattered with drawings of Lucky Chick's wedding garb. In *Fab Footsies*, a flower-strewn container comes stocked with minty scrub and a pumice stone.

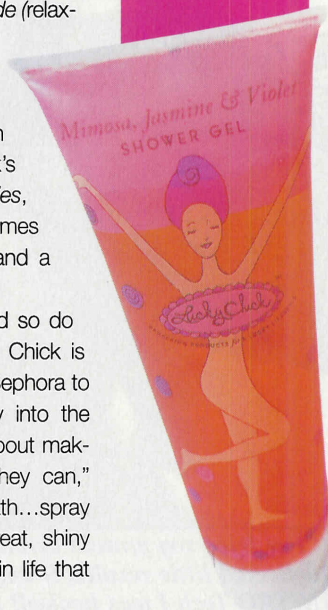
You get the picture—and so do Sackoff's customers. Lucky Chick is now sold everywhere from Sephora to Bloomingdales, fitting nicely into the indulgence niche. "This is about making people feel the best they can," explains Sakoff. "Take a bath...spray on body mist...put on a great, shiny lipgloss. It's the little things in life that make us feel good."



**Stars who use it:**  
Leslie Bibb

**Stephanie's favorite product:**  
"I love my mimosa/jasmine/violet fragrance—it's flowery, but not too sweet."

**Where to find it:**  
[luckychick.com](http://luckychick.com)



PRODUCT STILLS: KATRIN BODYKOLU; BIBB: STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE.COM.





## Scarlett Messina: Her SCARLETT beauty empire is red-hot and in the black— grossing \$5 million a year

It's probably no coincidence that Scarlett Messina, 37, exhibits the same spunk and spirit as her feisty *Gone With The Wind* namesake. "I was the little materialistic-capitalist-pig-daughter in a group of beatniks," says the founder of Scarlett Cosmetics—a beauty catalog, boutique chain, website, and makeup line rolled into one. "My father was a professor and my parents were in the Peace Corps; all I wanted to do was stay in the United States and watch *The Partridge Family*," recalls Messina, a Bucks County, Pennsylvania native. So while

her parents were out saving the world, Messina dabbled in make-up. When in London, she spent all her money on Mary Quant cosmetics; in Paris, she hung out at a five-and-ten called Le Drugstore. "I loved the boutique-y-ness of it all and thought it was the best stuff in the world," says Messina.

"I knew that's what I wanted to do."

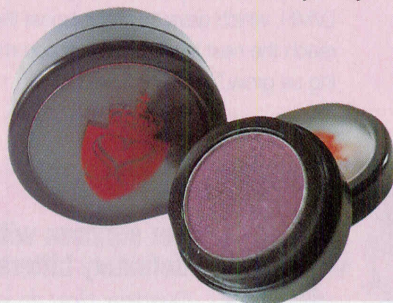
But she spent several years in what one might coin "research and development," learning the beauty trade from the inside out—first as a cosmetics buyer for Macys and Bloomingdales, then as a professional makeup artist working for magazines and fashion shows.

"I was smart financially, so I pocketed my earnings, liquidated my possessions, and socked it all away," says

Messina. With 45K in hand, she jumped on a plane to Europe, where she picked up unique, hard-to-find products that were unavailable in the United States. She opened her first cosmetics studio in 1996 in the quaint tourist town of New Hope, Pennsylvania, stocking the shelves with her European goodies, plus a new line of makeup that she developed with a California manufacturer. "I wanted things that weren't on the market—like pancake foundation that wasn't overly pancakey, or a really good cake eyeliner...all my little invention things," explains Messina, whose shops (she now owns a second location in Philadelphia) feature animal-print rugs and colorful walls.

Today, her "little invention things" aren't so little. Messina's company now grosses \$5 million annually. Her loyal customers flock to the store and website for clever, fanciful products, like lipsticks encased in bowling pin tubes and casino-chip eyeshadows.

"All I played when I was a kid was Store," remembers Messina. "Today, I'm still playing Store." And frankly, my dear, she's damn good at the game.



**Stars who use it:**  
Jennifer Aniston,  
Sofia Coppola,  
Annette Bening

**Scarlett's favorite product:** Golden Gloves—"it's a shimmery body lotion that gives a golden hue to the skin, but it stays on until you wash it off."

**Where to find it:**  
scarlettcos.com



## Ashley Webb Dane & Elena Mazzucchelli: DOLL FACE is their (boutique-line) baby

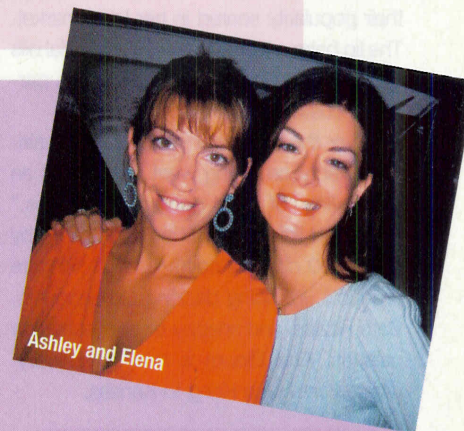
Back in 1996, Los Angeles-based jewelry designer Ashley Webb Dane was getting ready to give birth to her first child. Little did she know she was also getting ready to give birth to a new line of all-natural skincare products called Doll Face Beauty Cocktails.

That baby was conceived one evening by Dane and her best friend Elena Mazzucchelli, who was attending beauty school at the time. "We were looking at the ingredients on the back of a beauty product and we couldn't figure out what half the things were," recalls Dane, 33, who proceeded to do a bit of research about the creams that she had been slathering on herself. "I was appalled at the

ramifications to me and my unborn child, so Elena and I decided to start a company with really natural ingredients." That didn't mean brown bottles and health-food stores, though. "We wanted something that has an element of glamour to it," explains Dane, who likens her elegant bottles to "things Holly Golightly would have on her shelf."

But as with any baby, conception is the easy part; taking care of it is where

work comes into play. "Neither Elena nor I had gone to college or taken business courses," says Dane. But they knew that goal number one was to get into the best shops, not the major department stores, where Doll Face might get lost among the giants in the beauty industry. "It was a hard line to toe," recalls Dane.



Ashley and Elena

"Bloomingdales requested us, but we turned them down. We needed to make money, but we also needed to keep the prestige factor."

Clearly, Dane and her partner bargained correctly: Doll Face can now be found on the shelves of over two dozen exclusive boutiques nationwide.

Currently, the line boasts 20 different skincare wonders, including moisturizers, scrubs, cleansers, and eye treatments, each stocked with unique ingredients, like sea minerals and pure honey. "We are on the verge of being where we dreamed," says Dane.



**Stars who use it:**  
Kristin Davis,  
Cynthia Nixon, Daryl  
Hannah, Sarah  
Jessica Parker

**Ashley's favorite product:** "Beauty Spot Pure and Firm Mask—it adheres to the debris in your pores and pulls it out. If you have blemishes—forget about it! It's the dream machine."

**Where to find it:**  
beautycocktails.com





## Natalie Bloom: She watched BLOOM blossom into a multi-million dollar company

It's hard to believe that a simple tube of lip balm could morph into a celebrity beauty cult, but for 31-year-old Natalie Bloom, founder of Bloom Cosmetics, that's hardly an exaggeration. In 1993, the native Aussie was fresh out of college, living with her parents...and looking for a career. With a BA in Visual Communications under her belt, Bloom knew that she needed a creative outlet for her serious design bug.

She started small—crafting charming greeting cards, candle-making kits, and lip balms out of her bedroom, and watched as their popularity soared in her local market. The lip balm, stocked with real essential oils rather than artificial scents, became a particular customer favorite.

Over the next nine years, this industrious twentysomething went on to build an entire line of “feel-good indulgences.” Today, her little lip balm has been joined by some 400 different cosmetic and skincare products, including dazzling Lip Lacquers, Bath Fizzies, and snappy silver eyeshadow palettes. And Bloom is now sold everywhere from Hong Kong to Kansas.

**Stars who use it:**  
**Liv Tyler, Demi Moore,**  
**Kate Hudson**

**Natalie's favorite product:** Bloom Pamper Packs (pictured, above)—body, face, sun, hair, and bath products, done up in artsy little take-with-you packets. “They represent the true essence of Bloom, as they are whimsical yet practical.”

**Where to find it:** bloomcosmetics.com



**Stars who use it:**  
**Nellie Furtado, Cher,**  
**Britney Spears,**  
**Cameron Diaz**

**Wende's favorite product:** Sky-scraper Mascara. “We wanted a mascara with Rogaine in it, but we couldn't, so we ended up using an herbal equivalent. It's insane!”

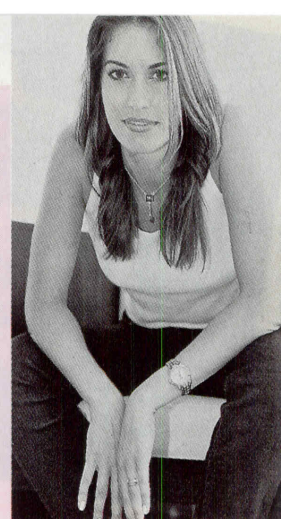
**Where to find it:**  
urbandecay.com

## Wende Zomir: At her URBAN DECAY, “pretty” is “gritty” but it's all a beautiful thing

Sometimes, when you're cruising the makeup counter, one brand sort of blends into another. A lipstick here is called Pink Ice...there, it's called Soft Rose. Not so at Urban Decay, the world's “grittiest” brand, according to Texas-native Wende Zomir, executive creative director and co-founder of this unique line of cosmetics.

Gritty, because in the land of Urban Decay, cosmetics have shock-worthy names like Mildew, Smog, Oil Slick, Gash, and Uzi. (Yes, they sell pink, too—but it's called Chaos.) The story started six years ago when Zomir was introduced to Sandy Lerner—of Cisco computers fame—who “had all the money in the world to buy nice lipsticks, but didn't want them in just pink and red.” Zomir, a marketing whiz with a college degree under her belt, had done a stint in advertising and was looking to trade her corporate life for a little surfing and writing. Next thing she knew, she was “mixing up nail polish” in her Laguna Beach cottage.

Urban Decay expanded by leaps and bounds: In February 2000, the pair sold their beauty business to the French luxury goods conglomerate LVMH, which gave them the boost they needed to reach the next level. “They are committed to helping us grow,” explains Zomir.



## Maureen Kelly: Her success with TARTE is definitely bittersweet

Question: How do you know when you've hit the big time? Answer: When *InStyle* magazine puts one of your products on its 135 Best Beauty Buys list. That's exactly what happened to 29-year-old Maureen Kelly, founder and CEO of Tarte Cosmetics, known to some as “the little company that could.”

It's a happy milestone in a bittersweet story. Just one year ago, Kelly lost her most precious advisor (and investor), husband Mark Ludvigsen, in the WTC tragedy. “In light of the events [of this past year], sometimes I'm amazed that Tarte's still standing,” says Kelly.

When Tarte first hit the market in 1999, customers flocked to the counters for everything from the nifty double-ended lip glosses to the leatherette-and-suede powder compacts. Most sought after, however, were the Cheek Stains, which hit *InStyle*'s March 2002 list and won raves from customers. These chunky tubes of water-based blush and bronzer boast a gel push-up stick that delivers just the right hint of sheer color.

Such success in the notoriously finicky beauty business is impressive for a woman who, only a few years ago, was working towards her Ph.D. in psychology. “I started to think about what I really wanted,” recalls Kelly. “I'd always been a product junkie and working in the beauty industry seemed a good way to combine all my interests: a little psychology, a little design...and a little fun.” **W**

*Hillary Quinn, former copy director of Mademoiselle, is a Seattle-based freelance writer specializing in beauty and fashion.*



**Stars who use it:**  
**Sarah Michelle Gellar, Kim Cattrall,**  
**Jennifer Garner**

**Maureen's favorite product:** Double-ended lip gloss in Danny & Sandy (think: *Grease*!)

**Where to find it:**  
tartecosmetics.com

