

BEAUTY

I Feel Pretty.

More men are buying foundation, concealer and eye gel—as long as they don't have to call it makeup

BY JOEL STEIN

THE FIRST PIECE OF JOURNALISTIC ADVICE I received from the man who is now the editor of this magazine was, "Always take the makeup." So every time I go on TV and the producers offer makeup, I tell them to spackle it on thick. But I never thought about wearing the stuff off camera. Which, apparently, was stupid. Men spent twice as much on grooming products last year as they did back in prerecession 1997, and in that time, skin-care products for guys—a category that includes not only aftershave but also eye gels and wrinkle erasers—went from a \$40.9 million to a \$217 million industry. In the first half of this year, sales of L'Oréal's men's line were up 30%.

A rival skin-care line for men, Menaji, was founded in 2000 and has grown 70% in each of the past three years. Manly men, like country singer Tim McGraw, use Menaji products. When I called founder Michele Probst in Nashville, she was just back from the post office, where she had shipped 18 orders to soldiers overseas. Her products come in discreet packaging such as old cigar boxes. Her concealer—or rather "camo"—and foundation come in easy-to-apply Chap Stick-style containers. And she doesn't call any of it makeup. "The *M* word is cancer to us," she says. "We are skin care that looks good."



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Clearly, I needed to give everyday makeup a shot. Luckily, because I live in L.A., I have a male friend who wears makeup. Not Adam Lambert makeup, but something that makes him look tan and healthy. His name is Lash Fary, which is the name he was born with. He has a makeup mirror in his house, and he often carries a man purse with a photo of Barbra Streisand on it. On a separate note, he's gay.

He introduced me to Lisa Ashley, a makeup artist with her own product line and celebrity clients, including Charlie Sheen, Howie Long and Terry Bradshaw, who buys her eye cream to use at home. She started my makeover by putting this soothing cream around my eyes and then mixed a bunch of foundation colors that all looked like brown to me and put them on my face. This made me feel self-conscious and confident at the same time, which is how I imagine women feel when they're looking their best. Added benefit of man makeup: insight into the minds of women.

She used two kinds of concealer (one with pink in it, to cover up the blue under my eyes, and one with yellow for the red zit on my nose) and taught me to rub it in with my ring finger, whose purpose I had always wondered about. Then she put something on what I call the Homer Simpson lines around my mouth but which she called my nasolabial crease, a term that made me feel so unmanly, I knew I would never apply that product myself.

The whole process seemed like a lot of work. It was also a lot of money. I had no idea how much makeup cost, but I didn't think it was \$55 for 0.33 oz. (9 g) of eye moisturizer. It seemed insane—until Ashley dropped some Toppik powder on my hairline. My balding disappeared. I bought the largest jar she could find, which was either \$45 or \$12,000. I can't remember. All I know is that it's not makeup. And I'm never leaving the house without it.

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