



WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL?

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder... but where that beholder lives seems to be an even greater factor than personal preference. *Stylist* searches the globe in pursuit of the definition of beauty

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ontouring is *the* make-up buzzword in the UK today. Brash highlights are out;

creamy, block colours are in. Semi-permanent manicures have overtaken the old faithful Frenchie and nude has replaced red. Two fifths of us are using online make-up tutorials to perfect a smoky eye. Cellulite treatments are down, facial lymphatic massages are up and skin is being drenched twice a day by lighter yet more potent serums as opposed to the thick moisturisers of just five years ago. 'Radiance' and 'refined skin' are two of the most popular Google search terms. The look we are opting for is fresh and natural; no-one wants to be frozen anymore.

These are the current most popular beauty wants and needs of UK women. In six months they will be different, so fast is the changing face of beauty. And on the other side of the world, women just like us will be craving their own aesthetic, usually one that is totally different from our own – such is the diversity of beauty. And they often lead the way for our own future tastes. One country's latest thing is another's old news. While we are starting to grapple with the finer points of DD creams (Daily Defense, FYI) our Chinese and Korean counterparts are working their way through the alphabet and are on to EE (Extra Exfoliation) creams. And as we clamour after the latest miracle eye formulas, they are focusing their attentions on the jaw, for which they buy products to tighten and lift.

And these beauty ideals can be seen in cosmetic surgery trends too. Women in Iran – the rhinoplasty capital of the world – currently consider slender noses to be the most beautiful (surgical bandages are proudly displayed there as a status symbol) while women in Korea are far more focused on their mouths, seeking procedures to fashion a permanently upturned smile – downturned mouths suggesting a less than sunny personality compared to their ideal of a perma-smile. So what is beautiful? We take a look at the ideals of eight countries around the globe.





CHINA

Creamy skin, like that of beauty icon and actress Zhang Ziyi has always been an obsession but now it's the pronounced bridge of her nose which has Chinese women flocking to the plastic surgeon. Most recently headlines have reported a trend for 'Eiffel Tower' procedures where women's noses are made larger using tissue from their forehead to create a slope that resembles the famous French landmark. While whitening creams are still popular in East Asian countries, the demand in China has begun to wane. Solo Li, beauty editor of *Vogue China*, says that Chinese women are now "crazy for tissue-masks" such as SK-II's ultra-hydrating Facial Treatment Mask, £60 for six. These masks do the job of serum, hydrating essences (popular in Asia) and moisturiser; an about-turn in a skincare culture where previously between 9 and 11 daily skincare products were traditionally used by the average city woman. For commuters, pollution is also a key concern so formulas with a high environmental protection factor which protect skin against smog as well as the sun are also now considered absolute essentials.



AMERICA

When asked who best represents the epitome of beauty today*, 64% of Americans said a mixed race look like that of Kim Kardashian. The American-Armenian also came top in terms of the most desired body shape with her famous curves replacing the typical all-American notion of the blonde haired, blue eyed athletic cheerleader personified in Hollywood films. In 2013 after Kim took *that* selfie in the white swimming costume, 10,000 bottom augmentations were performed, a 16% rise on 2012. Perfect



skin is also coveted with 1,000 dermatologists vying for space on the 22.7 square mile island of Manhattan. As the pendulum swings away from Botox, the popularity of 'blur' creams and powders is rising – the newest, Kiehl's Micro-Blur Skin Perfector already has a waiting list ahead of its July launch because of its promise to diffuse and reflect light, veiling a soft focus filter across skin while actively minimising pores.

Alongside their nail bars, juice bars are key, with women turning

their typically dark wavy hair a blonde-brown hue similar to Brazilian-born supermodel Gisele and a boom in chemical hair straightening treatments with hair-friendly amino acids (such as carbocysteine). The constant colouring and straightening



to holistic methods to maintain their looks. NYC make-up artist Gucci Westman – part of Cameron Diaz and Gwyneth Paltrow's inner circle – says the key to glowing skin is now "feeding your skin lots of greens and vitamins, and swapping dehydrating coffees for radiance-enhancing green juices." Make-up products that enhance this radiance are the bestsellers with Nars' Orgasm Blush and Too Faced Bronzer among the most popular in drier climes and Tarte Amazonian Clay Foundation performing best in warmer cities like Miami.



BRAZIL

Think of Heidi Klum with straight blonde hair and a bright lip and you'll get the current Brazilian idea of what is beautiful. The South American country considers Northern European women – Germans in particular – to be the ideal. Cue the trend for cool 'bronde' shades, turning

combined with sun exposure and humidity means Laurent Attal, executive vice president of research and development at L'Oréal, has identified Brazil as the number one market for damaged hair – inspiring the deeply repairing Elvive Full Restore 5 range.

Brazil is also infamous for its body fixation – cosmetic surgery is tax deductible and free for many lower income women as it's considered a legal right to boost self-esteem. In lieu of the once ubiquitous and now prohibited diet pills like Sibutramine, it's common to consult endocrinologists (hormone specialists) to aid slimming. They prescribe tailored metabolism-boosting aids, custom-made using a finely tuned cocktail of thermogenics (which raise body heat in order to burn more fat).

The average temperature in Brazil hits 27°C so while a natural tan is de rigueur, Brazilians know the importance of SPF. Because Brazil was colonised by different countries there are myriad

skintones among its population, but all wear sunscreen to protect from high UV index. Brazilians have no qualms spending on the best make-up available either; Brazil is the biggest beauty market in the world after America and Japan with women spending more than 11 times more of their annual income than UK women and it's the bold shades that sell the best. *Vogue Brazil's* beauty editor, Victoria Ceridono, says: "bright red and pink lipstick are in everyone's make-up bags, especially products by MAC, which has a cult following. The bestselling shade is the vivid red, Ruby Woo."



INDIA

It is no surprise that global Bollywood superstar Aishwarya Rai Bachchan remains a huge Indian beauty icon but the Indian woman's cosmetics focus is moving from heavily made-up eyes to power lips. Cosmetics brand Bobbi Brown recently opened in Delhi and reports that lipstick is outselling traditional staple kohl, particularly Rich Lip Color in Cosmic Pink, Blazing Red and Cosmic Raspberry – with women switching lip colours from nudes to vampier shades to suit the time of day.

Bollywood's preference for lighter skintones has had a knock-on effect on real women. In India, the words for "fair" and "beautiful", are the same and 78% of Indian women prefer to be two shades lighter than their natural complexion** (sales of whitening creams are estimated at \$400 million***). "The good news is that in cities such as Mumbai and Delhi women are increasingly embracing their natural skintone," says Anjana Gosai, contributor to *Vogue India*, which is realigning the concept of beauty.

The city of Mumbai is India's surgery heartland; lipoplasty and tummy tucks are becoming increasingly common (India is the world's fourth largest plastic surgery hot spot!). Electrolysis is now a popular alternative to threading as women now prefer to remove body hair permanently and aspirational hairstyles are changing too. Long hair is out of favour with newer, more modern



mid-length styles coming to the fore on celebrities like Mandira Bedi and Kangana Ranaut. There's also a return to more natural hair textures," says *Vogue India's* beauty director, Parizaad Khan. "We've moved on from the rigid perfection of severe, blow-dried hairstyles to hair with more volume and texture." Kérastase Elixir Ultime nourishing hair oil is the cult product of the moment replacing the more traditional, home-grown brands such as Kama Ayurveda, Forest Essentials and Blossom Kochhar. – Indian women are fully embracing what the Western world has to offer.



ITALY

With a beauty ideal most commonly summed up by actresses Monica Bellucci, Sabrina Ferilli and the age-old philosophy of La Bella Figura (looking your best at all times), Italian women are still mostly impeccably tanned and groomed – nails, hair (most often long, dark and styled into sleek and glossy lengths with 'piastra' – straightening irons) and make-up are all immaculate. "Most women like discreet lipstick shades like pink or a clear gloss," says Italian journalist, Eleonora Attolico, "Fashion colours play out on the nails, at the moment with smoky blues, grey and violet. The Prada show tends to inspire the season's look more than any other. When Miuccia Prada's models wore black headbands in 2010, everyone copied.

"Italian ladies were really into surgery in the Berlusconi era – everything was very OTT; big breasts, facelifts – but we are slowly leaving those behind," Attolico continues. "The new Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi is 39, very cool and fresh, and this generation of women appear to be more into discreet fillers to achieve a more naturally plump look." Still, breast augmentation and liposuction (invented in Rome) remain popular, alongside injectables. "Botox and hyaluronic acid are the number one players at the moment," says Italian skincare expert and founder of Peter Simone, Pietro Simone Lava. Women as young as 25 are paying the premium and opting



ABOVE: AN ADVERT FOR JAW SURGERY IN SOUTH KOREA. RIGHT: SOUTH AFRICAN MUSICIAN MSHOZA BEFORE AND AFTER WHITENING HER SKIN

for these quick-fixes as a route to smooth, flawless skin rather than investing in skincare products.



SOUTH AFRICA

An outdoorsy healthy glow accompanied by plump skin and even skintone is the epitome of beauty for all South African women, as represented by homegrown beauties Charlize Theron and Bonang Matheba. Pigmentation is the number one area of focus for women here, according to Kim Gray, South African journalist. "Even young women use products like QMS Medicosmetics Sport Active Cream and Optiphi which help even skintone. We've also been inundated with argan oil from Morocco and Rooibos tea (red bush tea) is one of our biggest beauty ingredients as it's

"IN SOUTH KOREA MANY WOMEN HAVE THEIR JAWBONES SHAVED INTO A NARROWER V-SHAPE"

a powerful anti-oxidant." Health conscious South African women understand the benefits of treating skin from the inside out which is why these nutritional products appeal, such as Baobab Powder by South Africa's Aduna.

"We've also gone from super skinny to focusing on health and fitness," Gray explains, which means a more athletic shape is currently seen as beautiful.

Subtle age-appropriate procedures are on the surgery wishlist. Plastic surgeon and founder of the Environ skincare range based in Cape Town, Dr Des Fernandes, says: "My younger patients choose non-invasive procedures like skin needling – rolling ultra-fine needles across the face to stimulate collagen production and keep skin firm." Like trends seen in Asia,

skin-lightening for black women is also a big trend. According to the World Health Organisation, 35% of South Africa women regularly use aggressive skin lightening products. Kwaito musician, Nomasonto "Mshoza" Mnisi was criticised by local media after lightening her skin, but argued it's a personal choice – like having your breasts augmented.

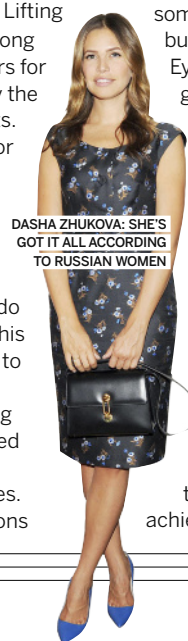


SOUTH KOREA

Once revered throughout East Asia, the 'round face' is no longer the ideal in South Korea. Manga character Sailor Moon has become the look women here covet. The allure of a heart-shaped face and big eyes are leading many to have their jawbones shaved into a narrower V-shape

(one in every 77 women here has had cosmetic surgery*).

This means lifting products, such as the Taiwanese import Shills Miracle-Lift Facial Lifting Serum, fly off shelves along with mini massage rollers for the face, which intensify the effects of these products. Bora Kwon, beauty editor of *Tank* magazine, and former South Korea resident, says: "When I visit I'm constantly having my chin pinched by friends telling me to do more facial massage." This ideal has bounced back to the UK in the form of Crème de la Mer's Lifting Contour Serum, launched in January to define jawlines and cheek bones. Body shape aspirations



DASHA ZHUKOVA: SHE'S GOT IT ALL ACCORDING TO RUSSIAN WOMEN

have also changed, seemingly under a manga-esque influence. The Asian Plastic Surgery Guide cites the body ideals and the most coveted – S-Line (ample breasts and buttocks) and X-Line (long legs and arms with narrow waist) – inspire breast augmentation, liposuction and body contouring.

Make-up trends are evolving too, Korean TV drama *My Love From Another Stars* prompted a lipstick to sell out worldwide when actress Jeon Ji-Hyun was said to be wearing YSL's Rouge Pur Couture No 52. It sparked a bulk-buying frenzy with stock on eBay going for US\$95.



RUSSIA

According to Yana Zubtsova, beauty director for Russian *Allure*, fashion blogger and magazine editor Dasha Zhukova is a huge inspiration. "Russians value strong characters as well as beauty and she is cool, well-educated and smart." To attain a polished look like Zhukova's, Russia's new generation of working women now spend more of their income on cosmetics than any European country.

And more is still more in Russia, where heavily made-up women are still seen as beautiful. In fact, the smoky eye is

something of a status symbol but in more natural colours.

Eye make-up is the fastest growing sector with women turning to eBay to buy Urban Decay's Naked Palette as the brand still isn't available here. "It's about a hint of colour on the eyes or cheeks," says Russian beauty blogger, Katia Matoian. "It's almost mandatory to have a dermatologist and things like peels, fillers and Botox are considered simple seasonal beauty treatments in order to achieve a polished look."