

## Beauty at your fingertips

**Top British nail stylist Marian Newman shares her tips and the latest trends**

**Lynette Koh**  
lynettek@mediacorp.com.sg

SIXTY British *Vogue* covers. The shows of cutting-edge fashion labels such as Alexander McQueen and Gareth Pugh. Celebrities from Cate Blanchett to Kate Moss. That's one hell of a resume.

The designs by British nail stylist Marian Newman have been seen on many fashionable fingers since she joined the industry in 1987. But it's not just *Vogue* cover girls who are privy to a Marian Newman manicure. Well, kinda sorta.

Last month, nail design company Minx unveiled the Minx Professional by Marian Newman collection, featuring eight bold designs created by the nail stylist. Made of flexible film applied by heat and pressure, Minx nails are exclusively available at Vedure NailSpa in Singapore, with prices starting from S\$80 for a set.

Having recently worked on several Fall 2011/12 shows, Newman spared a few moments to share her tips on the hottest nail trends, DIY manicures, and how to take care of your talons.

**You've been working with Minx's synthetic nails for two years. How does it compare to regular nail polish?**

**Marian Newman:** Most of the work I do is about achieving the right look for a photo shoot or a fashion show. Minx is not always the right thing to use, but I have used them many, many times, and I find them amazingly versatile, with the huge variety of designs. I also love layering them and creating my own bespoke versions. They are quick to apply, are always picture-perfect and a big bonus is that there is no drying time. Traditional polishes will always be popular. I have hundreds of bottles to ensure I have the right colour, and often I still need to mix them to get the colour just right.



**Clockwise from top:** Marian Newman's nail creations spotted at the Fall/Winter 2011/12 fashion shows in Paris for Gareth Pugh, Alexander McQueen and Thierry Mugler (as seen on Lady Gaga). Newman herself (centre) backstage at the Mugler show.



Photos by Becky Maynes

Another thing about polish is that it needs skillful, precision painting to look perfect.

**What are some of the Minx designs you created for the Fall shows.**

At McQueen, we created a silver-and-black look that I describe as the view an ice queen has from inside her ice cave looking out at a midnight ocean. For Mugler, we had animalistic-like nails with finishes that were exact replicas of the fabrics used. Lady Gaga (who walked in the Thierry Mugler show) had her own version: They were much longer

and pointed nails in matte black which I "damaged" for a really unusual finish. At Gareth Pugh, nails were a waxy blue — which matched the blue Pugh used in his Fall collection — "floating" over a gold base.

**While we love getting manicures, do you have any advice for applying nail polish when we have no time to go to the nail salon?**

Painting your own nails is always tricky, especially with the deep and bold colours that are so popular now. This is probably

why salons are often busy! My advice would be to invest in a bottle holder that holds the bottle at a slight angle, and sit at a table to apply polish.

Make sure nails are clean and free from any oil or grease and apply thin coats of colour, always using a base and top coat. It's better to apply two to three thin coats, rather than one to two thick ones as you will achieve a better finish.

Some polishes don't have good brushes. If there is a brush you find easier to use than others, clean it with polish remover when the original bottle it came in is finished and keep it to use with all your colours. Buy an inexpensive flat eye shadow or eyeliner brush, and have it with you when painting your nails. Dip the brush in polish remover to correct any mistakes. This is also useful for tidying up the edges of a French manicure so you get a sharp and even finish.

**How do you keep nails healthy and looking good?**

My single most important piece of advice is to use a good nail or cuticle oil at least once a day. This will keep the nails and surrounding skin in good condition. Massage it into the base of the nails every day. If it is done this regularly, I guarantee an improvement in the condition of the nails and skin.

Also, use a very gentle file to smoothen the edges of the nails every week. This will help prevent peeling — like split ends of hair — and eventually get rid of any peeling that's already present. Buffing the nails is good but don't do this more than once a month, as excessive buffing can thin the nails and weaken them.