

HIGH STYLE Decorative Effects



These bottles from SGD showcase an alchemy of various types of silk screening inks which create a tactile feel using different textures and shades.

Fragrance flankers are a main driver of creative decorative techniques, but other materials are also benefiting from new enhancement technologies.

TOUTED AS A “COLLECTOR’S ITEM” in marketing materials, the Juicy Couture Viva La Juicy Limited Edition fragrance showcases the power of great decoration. Designed to look like treasure out of a sunken pirate’s chest, the bottle, manufactured by Bormioli Luigi, was treated to an antique finish by Providence Metallizing. The resulting crackled, antique-gold look serves as the perfect foundation for the fuchsia bow and heart-shaped charm adorning the finished bottle.

For lovers of Juicy Couture, the new limited edition fragrance shares the same bottle shape they’ll recognize from the transparent original version, but the decoration makes it look delightfully different. While this project is a good case study in advanced decorating technologies, it also points to a major driver in package decoration today.

One of the major trends in beauty package decorat-

ing doesn’t have to do with decorating techniques at all. It has to do with the bottle. Decoration experts have noted a surge in “flankers,” new products introduced in the same bottles as existing products in the line.

“Flankers are not a new thing in the industry, but lately we see more and more companies using the same bottles to launch new products,” says Sébastien Belin-guier, global sales director, Uni President Glass.

There are many reasons a brand would choose to launch in the same bottle as existing products in the line. Among them, it “identifies the brand with a consistent image,” says Ingrid Lima, vice president business development, Quest Industries, LLC, who additionally notes that it is a cost-effective way to create an attractive package.

In a struggling economy, it’s no wonder brands have increasingly turned to flankers as a way to shave costs from the packaging budget. Flankers are cost effective in

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a number of ways, says Sheherazade Chamlou, vice president of sales and marketing for SGD North America—Perfumery Department. “In using a flanker, the brand is able to capitalize on the success of the perfume that came first by catching the eye of the brand’s loyal consumers. It is also cost effective in that a new mold does not need to be created, and it requires less new marketing strategies from the company. Finally, there is less risk in launching a flanker than there would be in launching an entirely new product,” she adds.

Flankers impact this category because they have shifted the burden of innovation from bottle shape to bottle decoration. “Beauty clients in our industry are selecting standard glass forms, which can be used for both the core product as well as flankers. They are treating the bottle like a canvas, which they can decorate with countless different techniques and designs,” comments Richard Engel, executive vice president of Decotech, Inc.

No matter what the package material and shape choice, beauty brands are benefiting from the innovation of decorative service suppliers. “Although most of the decorating processes have been commercially available, the methods of application and the usage of innovative materials are constantly evolving,” comments Lima. For example, she points to recent developments in the use of organic UV inks for automated screen printing, as well as the use of organic coatings to create texture and finishes that are environmentally safe and durable.

Following is a look at several trends and innovations in the major packaging material categories: glass, metal and plastic.

Glass Reflects Values

Flankers are largely tied to the fragrance industry, which houses its product in glass. Countless flankers exist on the market today, an indicator of their success, both with brands and the consumers they serve. This trend necessitates compelling glass deco-

ration to differentiate new launches from other products and to draw consumers to buy.

“It is popular among our clients to differentiate perfumes through decoration rather than bottle shape,” says Chamlou.

Whether or not the newly launched fragrance is a flanker, great package decoration is of extreme importance to today’s fragrance consumers because it is tied to the overall experience consumers crave. “Today’s luxury consumer is looking for something that reflects their own values. They want craftsmanship and brand experience, not just a product,” says Chamlou.

Chamlou sees a number of design trends emerging this year. Many reflect cultural priorities, such as eco-friendly looks, technologic themes and the look of luxury. As can be expected, eco-friendly design concerns itself with the use of sustainable, renewable or biodegradable materials. Technologically themed packaging uses digital motifs and references, such as the symbolism in Givenchy Play. And luxurious packaging design “utilizes rich color palettes, jewel tones and decorative elements,” explains Chamlou.

Two of SGD North America’s projects—Taylor Swift Wonderstruck fragrance and Mariah Carey Lollipop Splash—tapped into another emerging design trend: whimsical and vintage looks that incorporate eclectic and innovative decorative elements. Wonderstruck combines a purple tint with a proprietary shimmer effect that alters its look dependent upon surrounding lighting and colors in the room (for more on this bottle, please go to www.beautypackaging.com). Lollipop Splash employs three trendy spray colors: pink, orange and purple. Two of the fluorescent tints—pink and orange—were first introduced at SGD’s annual Trends and Innovations presentation, while the purple was created exclusively for brand owner Elizabeth Arden.

Spray coating is currently a pop-



Love Notes by Beauty Avenues was decorated by Decotech using a reverse chromography technique.

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ular way to decorate glass bottles, says Engel, noting that “a large percentage of new products” rely on spray coating. “In this regard, we are seeing a greater demand for complex, multi-colored spray decorating techniques that we have had to develop new processes to accomplish. On a related note, we have also seen an increase in masking requests where some panels appear spray coated and other panels are clear,” Engel adds.

New technologies continue to raise the bar of innovation. For instance, although the technology is fairly young in glass decorating, Engel sees UV inks as “the future of the industry. We have already integrated UV decorating technology into our primary production lines.” Engel has also seen increased interest in direct digital printing to glass, but cautions that there is still “some way to go before digital printing on glass becomes efficient enough to incorporate into high speed production lines.”

Sleever International has recently introduced a unique sleeve glass decorating solution that aims to replace traditional glass decorating techniques while offering shorter deadlines and lower costs, says Bruno du Plessix, marketing manager. The sleeve technology offers 360-degree printing and enables the use of graphics

even on difficult-shaped packaging.

Finally, secondary glass decorations offer another chance to differentiate. Belinguier has not necessarily seen an influx of new techniques, but he has seen creative use of things “not seen or used on glass before,” such as metal, leather, glued-on glitter and paper transfer.

For customers looking to stretch their marketing impact with an innovatively decorated glass container, Engel also encourages brands to look for new twists on existing technology.

“The key is not in discovering a brand-new glass decorating technique, although when that does happen it can be very exciting,” says Engel. “The real trick is to find new combinations or applications of existing decorating techniques.”

For example, Decotech recently completed a project that leveraged 11 decorating processes, ranging from spray coatings to custom printing to hot stamping. In a different take, the company has worked with a client to use “very precisely positioned bursts of spray colors on specific panels. This is very difficult, but it pushes an established decorating technique to achieve new effects,” says Engel.

Metal Shines with Upgrades

Aluminum accounts for the lion’s share of metals used in beauty packaging applications. Anodization, a process that creates a thin top layer of aluminum oxide, is a widely used finishing technique in the metal packaging category.

There has been increased interest in “upgrading” packaging by adding metal, as well as the use of anodizing to decorate metal, says Steve Rusch, director of marketing for Anomatic Corporation. “As more consumers become aware of the advantages of anodized packaging, not only in design characteristics but also its environmental properties, we anticipate the trend of replacing lacquering and metallizing with anodizing to continue.” Anodized aluminum is “infinitely recyclable” adds Rusch.

Anodized aluminum can be customized through the use of techniques such as screen printing, embossing and debossing. Anomatic annually produces more than 400 custom colors, which enable brands to differentiate through color. For example, Bath & Body Works Signa-





Anomatic worked with Bath & Body Works to produce caps utilizing more than 30 custom anodized colors.

ture Collection tapped the expertise of Anomatic Corporation to produce caps utilizing a debossed logo and more than 30 custom anodized colors.

Many brands today push decoration capabilities further by choosing double anodizing. In this technique, two surface finishes and two colors are combined on a single component. “The double anodizing process involves printing a design, logo or artwork using a specialized masking ink onto the anodized surface, followed by a secondary anodizing process to strip the anodic finish where the ink is not present and subsequently re-anodized in a second color or finish,” explains Rusch.

Transforming Plastic Componentry

In an ironic twist, package decoration specialists are also hard at work transforming plastic componentry into what looks like metal.

“We continue to see an increased demand in making plastic items look like metal. Although silver and gold shades are always popular, different colors such as pink or gunmetal are being utilized,” explains John Feeley, director of sales and marketing for Providence Metallizing.

For example, in a project for Estée Lauder’s Tom Ford brand, Providence Metallizing created a deep, burgundy-toned metallic finish on a square, plastic cap. The look was achieved with an electroplated undercoat of hematite, followed by a dark, burgundy overspray. A special lacquer formulation was also employed

to enable gold hot stamping in a debossed area of the ABS injection molding.

While electroplating was used for this project, Feeley says customers are turning more and more toward physical vapor deposition (PVD) processes, like vacuum metalizing, because of the “sharp rise of precious metals and metals in general.”

A PVD process was employed by Providence Metallizing for the pump container of Avon’s Reversalist skin care package. The pump was first molded in a brightly pigmented, translucent plastic. Utilizing enhanced PVD techniques such as plasma etching, a metallic layer was applied on the inner and outer surfaces of the pump. The silver color is a color match to the hot stamping on the package. What made this particular project especially challenging was the need for precise masking to block metallization to specific areas. The end result, says Feeley, “is one of the most innovative finishes I have seen on plastic in the last couple of years.”

In response to industry demand for the metallization of plastic parts, Marca Coating Technologies has recently launched Revolution 3D, a new way to metallize caps, closures, jar lids and bottles automatically. This development is enabling cosmetic packaging decorators to bring this previously labor intensive batch process back in-house, says Jim Noyes, director of sales and marketing.

Eliminating a number of steps in the traditional process, the Revolution 3D metallizer, designed specifically for the cosmetic packaging industry, “can be placed in line with base coating and top coating, drastically reducing part handling,” says Noyes.

Noyes adds, “High quality decorative packaging is at the core of every brand in the field of cosmetics. Revolution 3D allows suppliers to again take control of this critical element of their product.” *l*



Providence Metallizing gave a Juicy Couture bottle an antique, crackled finish.