

# American

## BEAUTY

JUNE 2008

### **RUNWAY REPORT**

We talked to the makeup artists who created spring's freshest faces during fashion week in New York City

### **Backstage Beauty**

Vincent Longo at Yeohlee

### **Lashing Out**

The skinny on everything from mascara to eyelash extensions

### **Getting Cheeky**

Everything you wanted to know about blush

### **All Eyes**

How RevitaLash became one of the country's best-selling cosmetic products



## SUCCESS STORY

# Lash Love

Created by an ophthalmologist as a gift to his wife, a cancer survivor, RevitaLash is now one of the best-selling cosmetic products on the market.

As a six-time cancer survivor who's been through chemotherapy eight times and had two stem cell transplants, Gayle Brinkenhoff has experienced firsthand what it means to lose her eyelashes and brows. Inspired by these events, her husband, Michael, an ophthalmologist, created RevitaLash, a lash conditioner,

as a personal gift to his wife. Within just a few months of using the product, Brinkenhoff noticed a dramatic difference. "People saw my lashes and couldn't believe it," she says. "Most people thought I had fake eyelashes on."

Hoping to help others who suffer from sparse lashes and

brows, the couple launched RevitaLash nationally in 2006, and today, it's one of the most successful cosmetic lash products on the market. The product, which contains a derivative of an ingredient commonly found in glaucoma medicine, conditions the area where the lashes come through and stimulates the follicles to promote longer, fuller and thicker lashes. People who've lost lashes and brows due to cancer, thyroid disease or menopause can all benefit from using RevitaLash, but anyone who wants to bulk up their lashes and brows can still use the product. When RevitaLash is applied daily, the time it takes to see results varies from as little as three weeks to as long as three months. At that point, users can maintain the results by using the product once or twice a week.

Working with RevitaLash has turned into a full-time job for Brinkenhoff, who serves as the director of sales for the parent company, Athena Cosmetics. The company has 34 sales representatives nationwide and distributors in eight countries. RevitaLash is only available on the company's Web site and in salons and spas, and the company has no plans to take the product into department stores or drugstores. "I really prefer for people to have contact with one person, whether it's an esthetician or a med-spa owner, who can give instructions for how to use the product," Brinkenhoff says.

Brinkenhoff's husband, who is Athena's CEO, is currently working on another product slated to launch this summer after testing is complete, but Brinkenhoff says the plan is to keep the company's offerings limited. "We don't want to flood the market with products," she says. "We're here to give people something that really works."

Despite RevitaLash's overwhelming success, Brinkenhoff says she hasn't lost sight of what's most rewarding to her about her work: helping others. "To me it's most important to always keep our philosophy of giving back," she says. Athena donates a portion of the proceeds from sales of RevitaLash to fund breast cancer research. The company also participates in many fundraising efforts and even offers low-income cancer survivors their first bottle of the product for free. Brinkenhoff especially loves hearing from all of the people who've gotten positive results from using RevitaLash. "We get letters from people who say, 'Oh my God, I see something! This is a miracle!'" she says. "It makes us really happy when we get those letters." —LOTUS ABRAMS



FROM TOP: Best-selling author Jackie Collins, *Big Love*'s Daveigh Chase and *Big Shots*' Amy Sloan pick up RevitaLash at the Oscar Gift Suite in Hollywood; RevitaLash promises to produce thicker, fuller, longer lashes.