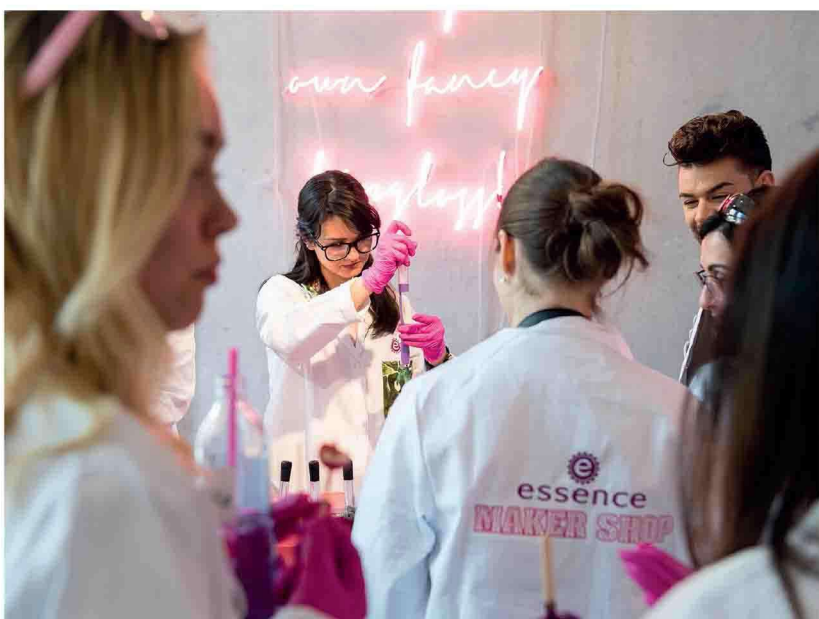


Text: Lyndsey Dennis

IN THE MIX: BEAUTY RETAIL

Beauty retail is putting the making process in the hands of the consumer, allowing them to create unique shades and scents, and encouraging experimentation and discovery.



The sale of prestige beauty products in the UK is firmly entrenched in store, where the market reported sales of £2.2 billion in 2016 according to The NPD Group, a global information company. Sales in bricks and mortar retail grew by two per cent in 2016 compared to 2015 and demonstrates the continued importance of the in-store shopping experience.

'There's a continued love affair with the hands-on shopping experience and this looks set to continue,' says June Jensen, director of NPD UK Beauty. 'The retail sector has responded to the threat from online beauty retailers by enhancing the in-store offering. Trained consultants offer expert advice, there are also in-store events, roadshows and an interactive customer journey which not only enhances the experience it also increases footfall and retail sales. Many brands are now offering add-on services like spa treatments and makeovers. It's something that online platforms simply can't offer.'

David Asfour, vice president of CallisonRTKL, says in-store beauty has always been about the demonstration and application of products and services for the customer. 'It is also a significant touch point and acts as a display to draw in other potential customers. In-store beauty has evolved in recent years to be even more focused on the customer's experience and interactions, bringing together playfulness and experimentation alongside professional artistry and application.'

GARNIER ULTIMATE BLENDS ROOM, SOHO

Earlier this year L'Oreal opened The Blends Room pop-up in London's Soho as part of a campaign to re-launch its Ultimate Blends shampoo. Shoppers took part in a Beyonce-themed workout, free hair braiding and got to take home personalised bottles of Ultimate Blends. A 'Pose & Post' gif booth, provided by The Flash Pack, encouraged consumers to share their experience on social media. The pop-up was designed and created by Worth Retail.

ARMANI BOX, COVENT GARDEN

Luxury makeup brand Armani Beauty popped up in Covent Garden earlier this year with a striking red coloured 'Armani Box'. The store was very much focused on brand awareness, with free WiFi and the hashtag #armanibeauty featuring heavily. Offering a sensorial and playful experience, different coloured swatches of fabric were used to demonstrate the textures of lipsticks and eyeshadows. The pop-up store offered a complete digital experience as well: a connected mirror (personal video of a make-up session so visitors

could re-create their look at home). Look Book (overview of all the latest beauty looks used during the Giorgio Armani Fashion Show) and a photo booth.

NEUTROGENA BEAUTY BOX, BOXPARK

Similarly, skincare brand Neutrogena opened a five-day pop-up at Boxpark Shoreditch in May to promote its Visibly Clear Light Therapy Acne Mask and Spot Proofing Range. The dedicated store featured modern, impactful product displays complete with bright pink lighting, neon artworks and a photo booth where shoppers could take selfies and share on social media.

BENEFIT GLASTONBROW, GLASTONBURY

Cosmetic giant Benefit is known for taking to the road (and water with its Good Ship Benefit in 2016), and recently set up camp outside Glastonbury Festival to offer festival-goers a brows and beauty drive-thru. The brand also gave away festival essentials and encouraged people to share photos of themselves on social media inside the festival with their Benefit goodies to win a year's supply of Benefit's cult brow products.



Top: The Essence Maker Shop in Berlin was designed to encourage experimentation, allowing customers to create their own unique products.

Above: Benefit set up camp outside Glastonbury Festival to offer festival-goers a brows and beauty drive-thru.

ESSENCE POP-UP, BERLIN

In celebration of its 15th anniversary, cosmetics brand Essence opened a pop-up store in Berlin. Designed by Dfrost, the Essence Maker Shop was designed to emphasise the 'do-it-yourself' spirit, allowing customers to create their own unique products. The pop-up encouraged experimentation, inspiration and creating individual products. There were features everywhere throughout the space that encouraged customers to take photos and share them on social media.

ST. IVES POP-UP MIXING BAR, NEW YORK

Skincare company St. Ives has opened a pop-up in New York, featuring a mixing bar where guests can choose from 50 ingredient combinations to create their own products. 'Inspired by the best of nature, we're thrilled to unveil the Mixing Bar this summer where guests can create their own unique St. Ives face scrubs and body lotions, all while learning about the benefits our ingredient-led products provide,' says Suzanne Palentchar, St. Ives marketing director. Features include an education ingredients wall, sink stations to sample products and a mirrored infinity room with life-size apricots - the ideal selfie opportunity.

SEPHORA BEAUTY TIP WORKSHOPS

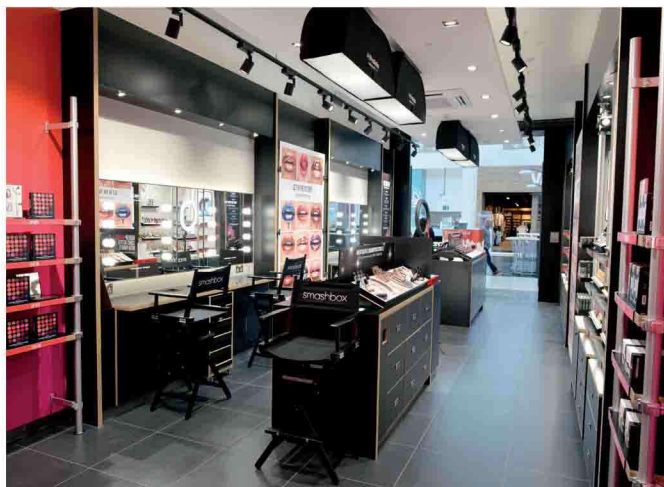
French beauty chain Sephora is transforming two of its New York stores into Beauty TIP (teach, inspire, play) Workshop concepts. Located on 34th Street and Fifth Avenue, in-store features will include visual artist technology on iPad stations, a digital moisture metre that measures skin moisture, Pantone Color IQ touch screens for foundation, lip and concealer shade matching, and a fragrance studio featuring InstaScent sensory technology. The 34th Street store will offer beauty workshops with more than 25 seats providing a space for education and learning.

SMASHBOX, BLUEWATER

Los Angeles-based beauty brand, Smashbox Cosmetics has opened its debut standalone store in the South East at Bluewater in Kent. The store recreates the look and feel of the legendary Smashbox Photo Studios in Los Angeles, where the cosmetics brand was created. 'The fixtures and fittings are inspired by the photographer's kit box and the furniture, studio lighting, ceiling bulkhead and cyc backdrop gives a slightly urban photography studio feel. The makeup stations have specialist adjustable lighting to enable the makeup artists to show looks within different lighting environments, offering a professional artist service,' says Sarah Saunders, senior design manager, store planning department at Estee Lauder.

Saunders says the beauty experience has evolved massively in recent years. 'Social media and how-to videos mean customers are very clued up on products and applications. The store now needs to be a place to play and test, and our artists need to be able to offer advice on techniques, trends and individual tips to personalise your look for you. For the future we need to be designing stores that are consumer led. We need to be offering choice, expertise and validation, whilst ensuring our brand stays true to its roots. This will be a continuing evolution to keep shopping fun, exciting and rewarding.'

Duncan Hill, managing director at HL Display, agrees:



Top: Sephora is transforming two of its New York stores into Beauty TIP (teach, inspire, play) Workshop concepts.

Above: Smashbox in Bluewater offers a professional artist service, mimicking the legendary Smashbox Photo Studios in Los Angeles.

Below: The Garnier Blends Room pop-up offered customers a Beyonce style workout, free hair braiding and personalised bottles of Ultimate Blends.



'Providing an interactive shopping experience is one way in which retailers can encourage consumers away from the internet and into stores. Enabling customers to handle products and see colours, feel textures and smell fragrances first hand rather than guessing from a computer screen creates a more engaging and emotional experience that will not only drive sales but also loyalty.'

Stuart Geekie, managing director at HMY Group (UK), notes the role of technology in today's in-store beauty experience: 'If they're not looking for the next big thing in technology, digital savvy millennials are reaching for the next trend in health and beauty - that's why beauty retail and digital innovation go hand in hand. This health-conscious generation expects new and exciting experiences when purchasing products - and they are unlikely to settle for anything less.' **RF**