

*Beauty Enquirer*

# Faux Glows

As our love affair with bronzing shows no sign of slowing, Jessica Hough road-tests the revolutionary treatments vying to make tanning history

**I**S TANNING BEAUTY'S MOST DANGEROUS pursuit? The natural route risks skin disease, pigmentation and premature ageing but, if you fake it, you're in danger of committing more crimes against beauty than the scrunchie.

Yet there's such sweet glory in a good tan – the healthy glow, the acute slimming effect, the envy of your friends and colleagues – it's worth the pitfalls. My ability to tan is second only to my ability to sleep anywhere (I am equally proud of both these skills), but seldom getting the opportunity to bask in the sun, I've become a seasoned faker.

John Lewis recently announced its self-tan sales are already up 19 per cent on last year and they are set to increase further. The mounting interest has driven brands to dream up high-spec formulas and colours so bespoke that they belong on Savile Row. Paint jobs just got technical.



## THE LONGEST LASTING

For those who don't relish continual tan upkeep, **Vita Liberata Phenomenal Long Lasting Tan Mousse**, £37.50, has so much science in the can it lasts a whopping three weeks. Far from just a stronger dose of DHA, it has patent-pending pHen02 to ensure the formula takes to the skin in a way that regular self-tans can't. This is then combined with a unique moisture-lock complex called Pentavitin that hydrates and helps maintain the tan for longer.

### *Tanned and tested*

It has to be said, the application process is a bit of a bore – apply a coat, let it dry

“THIS STAYED ON MY SKIN FOR TWO WEEKS BEFORE IT BEGAN FADING”

for three hours before showering and reapplying three times over. My advice before you start would be to check no one needs the bathroom for the next 12 hours. Labour intensive but true to its word, this stayed on my skin for two weeks before showing signs of fading, and then the colour went down slowly and evenly. In my experience, that's a better performance than most natural tans. *(continued)*



## THE DARKEST

Working on the assumption that you can never be too tanned, **St Tropez Self Tan Dark Bronzing Lotion**, £33, goes five times darker than your natural skin tone, but with the crucial ability to match the individual, giving you a made-to-measure tan. It contains an impressive patented ingredient, Allo-melanin, which is hailed as the world's first active DHA designed to imitate skin's natural melanin, ensuring a sun-baked, yet home-grown tan.

### Tanned and tested

I have been known to err on the dark side, so I happily slick it on. But even I wasn't prepared for just how dark the colour would go. Tanned doesn't begin to cover it. It's the kind of colour you see coming through the arrival gates of Heathrow with a year's worth of belongings on its back. Dark brown is definitely the new black.

## THE FASTEST

Fake Bake is about to take the bronze medal for the first 60-minute tan. For those last-minute invitations (or more likely the ones that had completely slipped your mind), **Fake Bake 60 Minutes Self-Tan Liquid**, £24.95, develops at lightning speed to give a sunkissed glow after one hour, a golden colour after two and a deep bronze after three. You can wash it off whenever you wish, to control the depth of colour, but don't leave it on for longer than three hours.

### Tanned and tested

For a mid-week work event, I washed it off after the minimum hour and was really rather impressed at the subtle warmth it gave my skin. Revolutionary, providing you wear a watch to track its development.

“IT DEVELOPS AT LIGHTNING SPEED TO GIVE A SUNKISSED GLOW”

## THE REAL DEAL

If your experience of fake tan has been less than successful, but pale skin isn't appealing either, try a tan optimiser. A word to the wise, though: while the more technical ones will boost your natural melanin production, some simply contain a small dose of fake tan. **Lancaster Sun Beauty Silky Milk Fast**

**Tan Optimizer**, £21, is one of the clever ones. With its reformulated Tan Activator Complex, it brings melanin quickly to the skin's surface, so you achieve your full tan potential.

### Tanned and tested

On a recent long weekend in the sun, I took it poolside to shield me from nasty UVs and test the level of brown I could achieve. The result was a duly earned tan that's a bit more impressive than I've managed before. Needless to say, we will be holidaying together again soon. ■

Photograph by Florian Sommer at Cream Photography. Still lifes by Full Stop Photography

## FAKING IT

Four tips for achieving the perfect glow

**1** Be logical about it and think how you tan in the sun. According to self-tan expert James Harknett, you need to **match your tanning product to your natural pigment**. If you go pink, don't choose a green-based fake tan – it is never going to look natural with your skin tone.

**2** The proteins on your skin change throughout your monthly cycle, so you might find that a **self-tan doesn't take very well during your period**. Wait a few days and try again.

**3** James recommends using olive oil to take a tan down a few tones, and whitening toothpaste on a dry flannel to get rid of tango hands.

**4** Knowing your tanning ingredients can help you **select the right product**. **DHA** (dihydroxyacetone) is derived from the sugar-cane plant. When it touches the skin, a natural reaction occurs, making an orangey brown colour. Imagine taking a bite out of an apple – after a few minutes, enzymes in the apple react with oxygen in the air to create brown colouring. **ERYTHRULOSE** works in a similar way to DHA, but is much slower to develop. Using both together gives the benefit of a quick result that lasts longer. As it's less irritating, it can sometimes be used as an alternative for those allergic to DHA.

**Rodial** BRAZILIAN TAN CLEAR

**IF YOU WANT TO TAN BEFORE BED**  
**TRY: Rodial Brazilian Tan Clear Non-Tinted Self Tanning Gel, £35.**  
 Free of guide colour, so you can tan just before bed. Genius.

**TOP BRONZING AMMO**  
 Here to solve your self-tanning dilemmas

**TanGO** TAN REMOVAL CLOTH

**TO ERASE STREAKS**  
**TRY: TanGO Tan Removal Cloth, £21.95**  
 (victoriahealth.co.uk)  
 Removes pigment from skin, ensuring your last fake tan is all gone before applying again.

**Xen-Tan** Scent SECURE GOLD TINTED MOISTURISER

**IF YOUR SKIN LACKS LUSTRE**  
**TRY: Xen-Tan Scent Secure Gold Tinted Moisturiser, £26.99**  
 Contains thousands of 24ct gold flecks to lift dull skin.