

Beauty Brand

Our Darling

Brand founder Angelina Sambrotto is better known as Los Angeles based makeup artist and burlesque performer Angie Alaska and Battyna Sin. Her iconic look and presence around the dark alternative scene in LA has given Angelina plenty of inspiration for her own conjuring which ultimately led to an expression of her two loves: quality beauty products and the Victorian era. We spoke with Angelina about the debut of her makeup line, Our Darling, and what it means to incorporate her love of history and the macabre into the world of beauty.

How did you get into the beauty industry?
Angelina Sambrotto: From a young age I was always interested in the beauty industry, because it really tied into art in my eyes. I loved art and creativity, so the fact that I could "paint" but on a different kind of canvas was really exciting to me. I ended up moving to LA at the age of 18 to pursue my dream and go to school for makeup and special FX. Ever since finishing school 12 years ago, I have constantly been involved in the industry, whether it was freelance work for projects or working for brands in stores.

Interview by Elizabeth Rhodes
Creative Director Elizabeth Rhodes
Photographer Steven Anthony
Models Travis Bacon, Sammi Doll, Meg Kelly, Angelina Sambrotto & Dominique Singer
Fashion Designer Dominique Singer

What was your inspiration to create Our Darling?
AS: Our Darling was actually something I had been secretly thinking up for years, but never thought the dream could become a reality. I had been working for a major cosmetic company for the last six years, and after being told we would be laid off I knew it was time to act and make my little dream a reality. I have always been drawn to the Victorian era, I have studied a lot about it over the years and was always really interested in learning about mourning practices, rituals, trends, and life. Our Darling is my love letter to an era where I found so much beauty and inspiration even in the darker aspects. I wanted to make "beauty" in a nonconventional way. I have always believed "beauty" is about being the most authentic you can be and wanted to showcase it differently. The bridge between life and death and everything in between.

What sets you apart from the other independent beauty brands in today's beauty market?
AS: Our Darling is a brand that is heavily influenced by the Victorian era with an emphasis on mourning practices and the rituals they left behind. I didn't make things kitschy or colorful; everything has meaning behind it, the names and references have so much more behind them. I hope that people finding Our Darling that may not know much about the era or practices will take a moment to either look up the name of their favorite product online or see our descriptions for their meaning on our site.

You've meticulously researched Victorian mourning practices and art. What about this era fascinates you?
AS: I am so drawn to the Victorian era for many reasons. There is so



Our Darling Lashes and Signature Palette



much respect and romance behind many of their practices. Things were made so differently and beautifully; they were made to last and to be handed down through the generations. Makeup being used sometimes was literally poisoning people. Women spent years of their lives mourning their loved ones. There were so many pieces to cherish of the time that I feel live on to this day. It's hard to not read books or articles online about the era without being entranced and wanting to know more.

How do mourning practices and rituals from the Victorian Era connect to makeup?

AS : Makeup was being used in some postmortem photography of the time, this would help make the bodies look as if they had a nice rosy flush or a clean face. Makeup has also led to many deaths

and poisonings in the era. People were using mercury, lead, arsenic, ammonia, and belladonna for the sake of beauty. I also truly believe that putting on makeup is a ritual, I know I treat it as so. For me it is a way to become one with myself, set my intentions for the day and help to manifest things to come.

What does inclusivity mean to you as it applies to the beauty industry? How is the beauty industry as a whole doing as far as diversity and intersectionality is concerned?

AS : Our Darling is a brand who bases products and their future launches on full inclusivity. Beauty should only be seen as subjective by the being wearing it, own your look and always make it yours. I think in the last couple of years there

are quite a few brands out there that I fully believe are doing some amazing lines geared toward diversity. In the coming years I would like to see some of the larger brands doing more products and lines that can be marketed to new clients, and even show diversity to lasting clients. Makeup is deeper than just a smokey eye and a nude lip, it's about who is wearing it and their story.

Where do you see the beauty industry one year from now?

AS : Beauty is becoming more of an ecommerce driven business, and I believe in the next year we will continue to see this trend rise. Everything is online and quite a bit can even be "tried on" virtually. People don't need the big brand stores anymore. Beauty is also going more towards the cleaner route, also most brands are turning to the vegan and cruelty-free route, which I am so happy about.

What is your long-term vision for this brand?

AS : So far, the long-term plan for Our Darling is to continue to build the brand online, not just on our dot com, but sold online through other companies as well. We will be sold in some small like-minded stores and also be a great vending brand for events.

Will there be product extensions (liners, lips, etc.) beyond your current offerings?

AS : Yes, we are currently working on a couple of new products, one thing that will be launching soon will be a lip gloss that I have been formulating in-house. This gloss will of course stick to our core branding, will be vegan, and cruelty-free. We have a few other things in the works, but I don't want to give too many spoilers.

What is your personal favorite Our Darling product? Why?

AS : My favorite product personally is the Our Darling Signature Palette. This was probably the hardest product that I worked on, I really spent a lot of time creating the color story and also making sure the color formulations were exactly what I wanted to put out into the world. Before settling on the palette you see today, I went through so many different renditions.

How did you decide on your current line-up of products?

AS : Originally, I was going to just start Our Darling with false eyelashes because I had had such a hard time with finding the right manufacturers for the products, I wanted to make lashes that followed the brand's guidelines. But once I found the perfect manufacturer, I knew we could at least start with one shadow palette. Little did I know how well the first palette would do during our initial launch.

Who or what inspires you currently (music, film, books, visual art, etc.)?

AS : I am really inspired by antiques. I seem to be always looking at them whether it be online or in books. I am very inspired by art, I think there is so much put into different art pieces, and it becomes so subjective to each viewer. Lately I have been watching and re-watching a lot of shows based during the late 1800s to early 1900s. I feel very inspired by a lot of the set designs, fashion, architecture and the modern advancements in living.

What's the connection between makeup, music, and fashion?

AS : In my eyes, I believe all three go hand in hand. Music and fashion have always had their place together, but add makeup and it gives a person, group, or artist something that can be branded and iconic. Look at some makeups that have really made a look memorable: Siouxsie Sioux, Abbat, David Bowie and King Diamond. They all have iconic looks that also tie into their specific fashion and music.

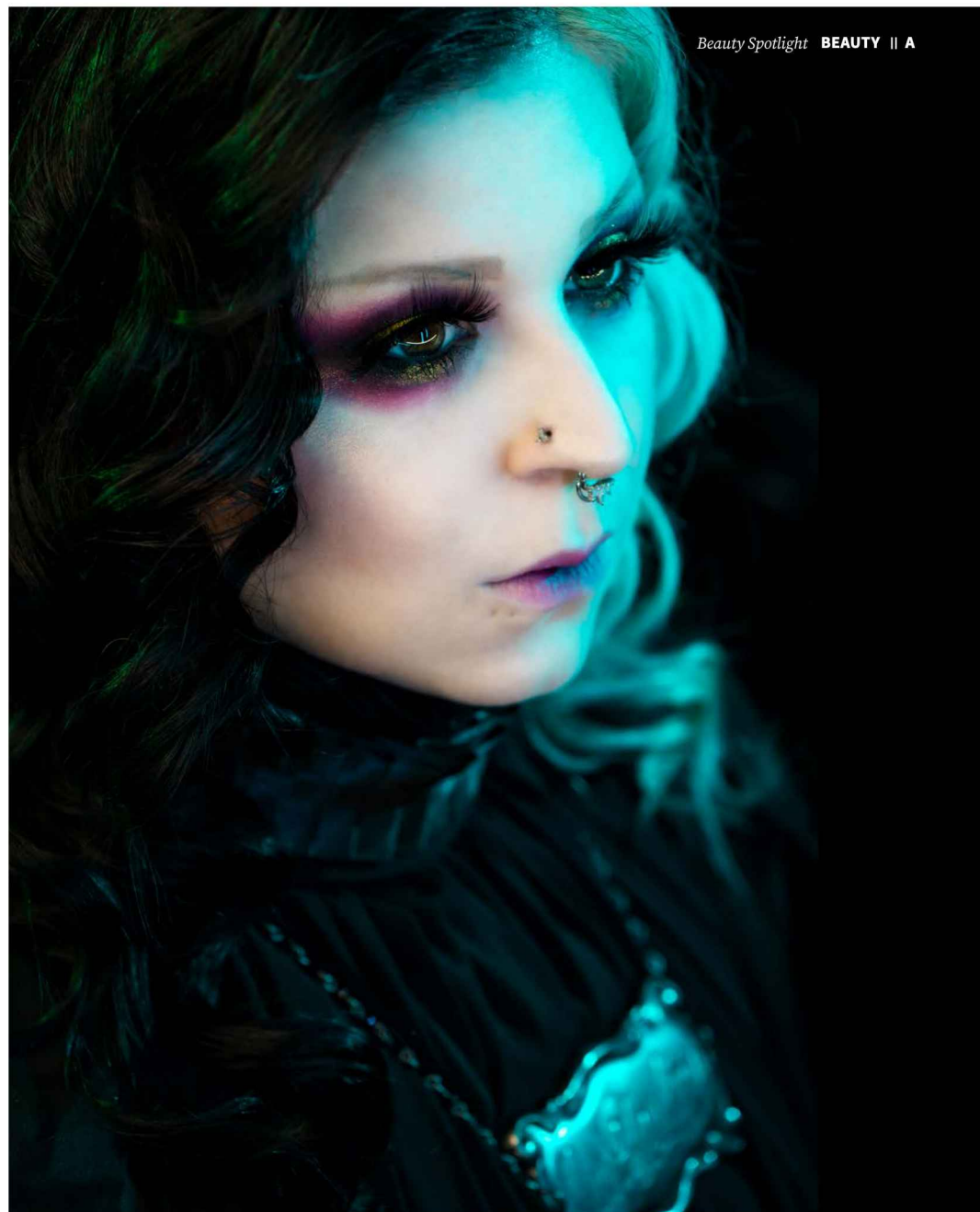
What bands/artists do you listen to while you work these days?

AS : I have been listening to so many different bands and while I work, it's kind of all over the place, some of my top plays are probably Contracult Collective, Statiqbloom, Bauhaus, Christian Death, Darkthrone, Gvallow, Ghostemane, Depeche Mode, Nine Inch Nails, Switchblade Symphony, Chelsea Wolfe, Skinny Puppy... the list goes on. I have also been really into watching/listening to lots of various serial killer docs, murder mystery shows, and travel shows. I like to learn while I work.



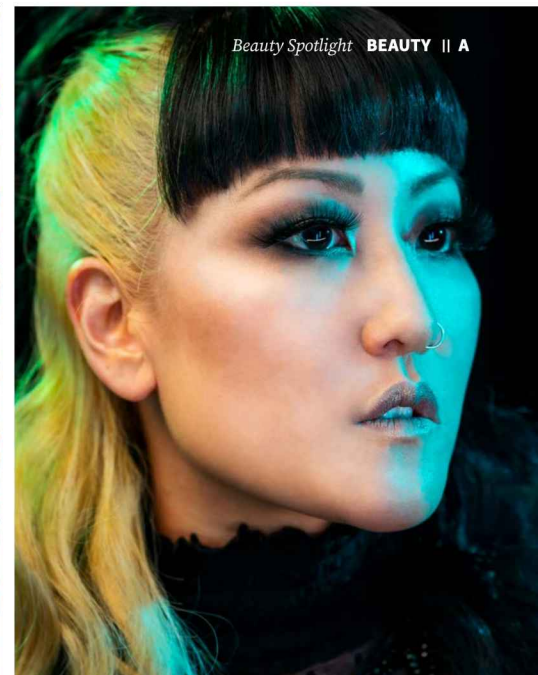
“Our Darling is my love letter to an era...”

—Angelina Sambrotto





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What is your current favorite beauty tip?

AS : My current favorite beauty tip is showing people how you can use the Our Darling Signature palette for not just eyes. This palette can be used on lips, cheeks, can be mixed with a setting spray to make liner. So many possibilities.

“I truly believe that putting on makeup is a ritual.”—Angelina Sambrotto

Going into business for yourself is never easy. How are you handling the current climate as an entrepreneur?

AS : Our Darling is my dream come true; I feel like I have worked for a major part of my life to put this all together. Sometimes I work from 9am-1am, but it is all worth it to me, I am doing something I believe I was meant to do.

What advice would you give to someone starting their own business in these uncertain times?

AS : Make sure you have enough passion and drive to fill the room and then some. Have a plan on how you will execute your business fully, your notebook is your BFF. Know your market, who is your target client and have a vision of your brand as a whole. Know this is you putting a lot of yourself on the line, you may feel vulnerable about what you’re putting out into the world, just know... it’s because you really care about it with your whole being, it’s all normal. || A

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