

# Mining for makeup

The latest sparkly trend to hit your cosmetics bag is mineral powders

BY LEANNE DELAP

The latest trend the cosmetics world is mining is, well, minerals.

From L'Oréal's new Bare Natural powdered mineral foundation to La Mer's new mineral powder, it's all about metals in your makeup.

Cover FX, the Toronto-based company that began making complete-coverage makeup for people with medical skin-pigmentation conditions, then went into cosmetics for the larger public in 2003, recently launched Mineral FX.

Since minerals are naturally pigmented, their use in foundations means the products are free of dyes. According to Cover FX, mineral powders are also free of chemical sunscreens, talc, wax and oil. The foundation powder is "99.9 per cent minerals," says Jenny Frankel, vice-president of the company and a chemical engineer. "People hear they are supposed to want that, but they're not really sure why."

Indeed, Frankel says minerals are good for the following reasons. First, they are non-comedogenic, which means they do not block pores. Second, they do not absorb the oils of your skin (which is what the talcs in normal powders do). And third, ingredients such as titanium and zinc oxides are natural sunscreens, providing an SPF of 15 without chemicals.

Another Canadian brand, Teye, from the Calgary-based Oasis Spa (a second, mega-branch just opened in Toronto in the Distillery District) is also mineral-based. The brand's creative director, Dan Thompson, notes that minerals "do not harbour bacteria, and are natural anti-inflammatories."

Frankel says the key ingredients in Mineral FX are bismuth oxychloride and mica, both of which are natural light reflectors. "But you don't want too much light reflection, or you will look opalescent." The key is finely micronized particles.



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COVER FX

Above, Cover FX's new mineral FX, \$37 at Shoppers Drug Mart, [www.shoppersdrugmart.ca](http://www.shoppersdrugmart.ca). Left, from back, Physicians Formula talc free mineral face powder, \$20.99 at Shoppers; centre, Teye Safari bronzer and front, mineral powder, each \$63, [teye.ca](http://teye.ca).

Our favourite of the various brands on the mineral-powder bandwagon is La Mer The Powder (\$90 at Holt Renfrew), which contains tourmaline that has been broken down in a jet mill to tiny microns. Silica keeps the mix light, and each particle "is uniform and coated," a company representative says. (You can chat online with experts live on their website.)

The opaque properties of minerals mean you can get a surprising amount of coverage out of a loose or pressed foundation powder. Sometimes too much.

I went nuts for the Teye stuff, until one day at the bar at the Four Seasons my date asked me if I had been on vacation. In my mind, I thought the powder was light as air. I probably had the wrong shade: Because these mineral powders sit atop the skin, they coat more, and the colours are more intense than creams that you blend.

I was, as it were, hiding my light under some rocks.