



Meredith Gilbert

Making Over Vacaville, CA

Staff Writer

A self-described “determined soul,” Meredith Gilbert reminds all of us that we can do anything if we just put our mind to it. With a strong support system to back her, Meredith evolved from Veterinary Technician and Cake Decorator to Esthetician, Permanent Cosmetics Technician and Make-Up Artist, thus proving her point. At first meeting, Meredith is obviously humble and somewhat subdued. But get her on the subject of makeup and she quickly lights up with enthusiasm. It’s not hard to figure out what her passion is!

“Makeup was my first passion, so I was disappointed when, in beauty school, it was not a subject that was given adequate attention,” states Meredith. “For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated with makeup. Before attending beauty school, I worked for a major makeup company that provided professional insight into makeup application and various techniques.” Boredom never becomes a factor in her chosen career as she is constantly seeking out classes in advanced techniques and products. Being a Make-Up Artist has afforded her some very exciting opportunities.

A professional Make-Up Artist since 2002, Meredith has perfected her airbrush application techniques. As an Esthetician, she believes in using products that promote healthy skin. Airbrushed makeup rests on top of the skin, instead of going into the pores, thus allowing the skin to breathe. It is light-weight, natural looking, water and smudge resistant and stays put until washed off with a mild cleanser. “I absolutely love the artistry behind airbrushing!” she says. “My specialty is eyes, brows and body art. I can apply makeup for dramatic and bold eyes, but I am drawn to natural, soft and smudgy looks.” She continues, “Great looking brows are so important for putting the focus where they belong, on the eyes! I use a template to airbrush on perfect brows. For body art, I use stencils to create little stars all the way up to flowers, or grapes and vines sweeping across the chest.”



Meredith's favorite colors are browns and earth tones, complimented with pearly white or very pale pinks. She begins by airbrushing the entire face, cheeks and eyes and then further enhances the eyes with "conventional" makeup. She states, "I love a smudgy look which 'pops' the eye color. I use Dinair Airbrush Makeup and Glomineral. Mac is a must for eyeshadow." Meredith prefers a lipstick that lasts all day and only needs to be refreshed with gloss. "For lips I love Max Factor Lipfinity and Cover Girl Outlast. My favorite mascara is Maybelline Sky High Curves," she adds.

Meredith shares her application techniques, "I like to keep cheeks subtle by using a very soft color. If the emphasis is on the lips and a very bold color is chosen, I down play the eyes, keeping the colors simple and soft with just a hint of liner in dark brown, not black. On eyes, I love using the darkest color in the crease, midway to the outer eye in a V shape, which is very flattering. I then compliment that by finishing with a smudgy look above and below the outer corner of the eye. Sometimes I sneak in a little kick of color along the upper lash line or gold along the lower lash line." She continues, "I find that most people are not comfortable with false lashes or aren't good candidates for

them. By applying creamy eyeliner, thicker towards the outer edge of the eye, it gives the appearance of thicker, upswept lashes. I apply mascara to both upper and lower lashes with a little more on the outer corners."

Photography: Heather Carr



Bridal makeup is an avenue that keeps Meredith busy. Applying makeup with superior holding power is a must for brides, who cannot be bothered with smudging, smearing, streaking and wearing off. "Some of my brides even sleep in their makeup so they look great on the morning after the honeymoon!" Meredith says. "However, I learned the hard way that as an artist, you should always require a consultation prior to booking a wedding party. I once airbrushed a bride who communicated very little to me about what she wanted on the day of her wedding. When I finished (right on time), she looked in the mirror and said that she looked 'evil' with her shadow swept upwards. She wanted her shadow swept downwards, and other changes that I felt were not becoming of a beautiful bride. Airbrushing once applied stays put, so I had to remove all the eye makeup

and start over. I had under 15 minutes to change it all. It was a nightmare! I hope she never told a soul who did her makeup!"



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Meredith's tips for success to up-and-coming artists include:

- Seek out training specifically for makeup application.
- Continue with advanced specialty classes.
- Do lots of research about trainers before signing up for classes. Make sure they are the best in the business.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Build a website that includes lots of before and after pictures of your work.
- Network with other artists.
- Work in Day Spas and Salons where you can trade referrals with other service providers.
- Have a good portfolio.
- Read books and study other people's style.
- Find a mentor.
- Be willing to work very hard, 6 and 7 days a week.

And finally, Meredith advises, "Take time for yourself! I enjoy hanging out with my husband. He makes me laugh! I treasure rare moments with my teenage daughter, walks on the beach, movies and shopping. Girls day out is important too; a pedicure and manicure with a friend can always revive the soul. I enjoy reading, walks with our three dogs, gardening, photography, watching my taped episodes of Dr Phil and Oprah at the end of a long day, and something I haven't done in a long time...baking."

Meredith's website can be viewed at www.transformationsbymeredith.com C



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*Other examples of
Meredith's work.*