



MUAH!!

Whoo hoo! I received a package the other day and I ripped it open, as soon as I saw how cute the contents were, my “animalistic-me-as-a-little-girl-opening-presents-what’s-in-it-face” turned into “aye-tan-cute-que-es-esto-face.” What was in it you are wondering? Well Mija, I will tell you. There it was a beautiful, petite, burgundy and gold bag with an emblem that said, “Bésame” after kissing the bag, I noticed there was something inside it. I picked up the little suede-like burgundy pouch and looked inside ... it was

makeup Mija! “Aye does heaven have a leak?” I screamed! This gold bullet full of cherry red lipstick was applied directly on my big luscious lips. And this was all brought to me by Gabriela Hernandez, who just launched her new 1940’s inspired cosmetic line called “Bésame Cosmetics.”

Bésame (Meaning “Kiss me” in Spanish) is not the only Latina owned and operated business in the nation, but it is the only company that manufactures every piece of their line, from custom containers to the formulas for colors. “We don’t just put our name on existing cosmetics. We make everything we sell. You will not find anything like our signature designs anywhere.” says Hernandez. Bésame’s line includes 10 shades of Enchanting Lipstick, 8 shades of Alluring Shadow, 2 shades of Lip Glaze, Souffle Foundation Concentrate, 3 shades of Boudoir Rouge, Feather Light Dusting Powder, Luxurious Trio and a Vanity Case or set.

Gabriela got into this business by designing cosmetic packaging and displays for other companies. One day when one of her clients suggested she make a luxury line for Latinas, because they felt the market was not well represented. “I wanted to do it only if it would be a unique product and package that was truly artistic and made a woman feel glamorous. I played with the idea, thinking that they would help finance the project. When they backed out, I had already invested so much time that I decided to do it on my own. I took me 5 years to find the money and start manufacturing the line a wanted to make.” Wow five years!

Her line has similarities to other Latina ran fashion lines and that is the 1940’s. She chose the 1940’s theme because the 40’s were a period of rapid change for the United States. “Having ended the war in 1945, people were free of the limitations and shortages of wartime and a period of re-birth emerged, bringing with it an interest in beauty and fashion. Ladies were very glamorous indeed, colors were vibrant, patterns were bold, and fabric was available to make rich billowy dresses. People were fascinated with movie actresses, emulating their looks, from exotic sirens to sweet girl next-door types. More attention was paid to details in hair and make-up. Women wore their hair in rolls and up-do’s that took time and effort to keep. They were very careful in the way they dressed for the office. That kind of formality is gone today from most workplaces, but I somehow miss the innocence and attention of that time. I think I sought out to capture in a small way, the pride and preciousness of being a woman that seems to be lost today.”

While reviewing her website you will automatically find “Margo” a 26 year old fictional character who moves to New York from her native Ohio in 1946. The story follows her as she discovers the city, finds work and pursues her dreams of being a famous journalist. She is a typical romantic girl, who is discovering her independence in a time when women’s roles were changing to being more self sufficient. She signifies the beginning of the working girl, the rebel, the dreamer, all things I see in myself.” says Gabriela.

Bésame’s top selling products are the lipsticks in Cherry Red, Besame Red, Merlot and Chocolate Kiss, the Vanity Case, which is a gold cigarette case, converted into a vanity that holds concealer, powder, rouge, and beige, brown and black shadows, and the Vanilla Glaze. Gabriela’s personal favorites are the Enchanting Lipstick, “the shape and size are so unique and it is very long-lasting”, the Raspberry Rouge, “it is a perfect natural blush color for olive skin and the small round case is perfect for an evening bag”, and the Vanilla Lip Glaze, “it is so thick it lasts, and has the perfect amount of sheen to look great alone or over any color of lipstick.” Her Latina customers love the small gold cases and the bright semi-matte colors of our lipsticks. “We tested all the colors to make sure they complement olive skin tones. Our powders are very soft, and Latinas know the quality they want when it comes to make-up.”

You can’t deny that color was definitely in Gabriela’s blood. As a child growing up in Buenos Aires, Argentina, she was always artistic and loved to create things. “I experimented with color and chemistry since I was a child. It has always been my dream to change the world in a positive way. That is what I plan to do with our contributions to the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and a Bésame scholarship for the arts coming soon.”

Gabriela is taking things slowly but surely as far as Bésame’s concern. They have plans to be in boutiques across the U.S by midyear, and department stores by Christmas 05! But for now who needs to go out in the cold weather to buy makeup? Stay at home and shop online at www.besamecosmetics.com Margo would love to see you!

Some advice Gabriela leaves us is with is, “Don’t underestimate your initial investment in time and money. If I didn’t secure an SBA loan toward the end of our first production run, I could not have paid all the balances due. It always takes longer than your best estimates to get things done.”

And for Mija Magazine’s golden question:

Any words for inspiration for anyone getting in your type of business?

“Have a great concept and take it to ten. There are many private label brands out there, so it is very difficult to stand out unless you have a unique selling point. Don’t compromise your ideas, everything is possible, it just takes a little more time to do things right. Finding great vendors are the only way to get a great product.” Great advice from a great Mija progressing to do big things. She made my lips look good and now my abuela’s because she stole my sample! That thief!

For more information on Bésame Cosmetics please visit them online by going to www.besamecosmetics.com or call (818) 548-2628.

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