

# Oh, the glossy, glossy

M.A.C Viva Glam spokesperson, singer/songwriter and actor  
Fergie dishes on inner beauty, style and philanthropy.

If celebrity came with a nutritional information label, you know, like food, it could break down all the primary benefits — glamour, professional acclaim, attention — followed by smaller print outlining additional perks such as (but not limited to) a movie-star handsome boyfriend, an opportunity to don designer clothes and maybe develop a fashion line.

If these were the results of nibbling on such a product, then Fergie, the blonde, pierced-brow, midriff-baring singer from the Black Eyed Peas and solo star of *The Dutchess*, could easily be its most successful spruiker: a Grammy nomination, hits such as *Fergalicious*, *Glamorous* and *London Bridge*, nights out clad in Gucci, a handbag line for Kipling, front-row seats at Chanel couture and a recent engagement to actor Josh Duhamel.

But the panel would, of course, have to list the possible side effects of "excess consumption". In particular, constant scrutiny, thanks to the marriage of paparazzi and the internet, which will subject you to an often-caustic dissection of your appearance, wearying even the most talented and confident.

"To a certain degree, I know in this industry you are going to be seen and that's what you do and I've accepted this is the way it is," says Fergie, 32, who, even away from the limelight (for our interview she's clad in black jeans, black leather jacket and red patent Louboutin ankle boots), has a star's aura.

"I've had to work through therapy on negative comments I see. Most of them are about my looks, very superficial things. I had to learn how to not put as much value on those comments, because really, what are they commenting on? 'Oh her face is ugly, oh she looks like a man ...' I have to put that in a corner and say, 'OK, if that's how they feel about that, that's fine, but what do I really hold myself worth?'"

"And to tell you the truth, looks are one part of it — yes I care about my looks, I take care of myself — but also in another sense, I care a lot about taking care of my insides, and through that comes beauty."

"I am not going to change the world in that sense [the paparazzi]. If I am going to change the world in any way, it's better to be doing something like this."

The "this" she is referring to is becoming the spokesperson for the new M.A.C Viva Glam VI campaign (100 per cent of proceeds from Viva Glam products go to the M.A.C AIDS Fund), and the new face of the fund's Global Youth Prevention Initiative.

Fergie's Viva Glam shade is a limited-edition Lipglass in a soft, pink-tinged mauve — "I like it as it fits a lot of different skin tones" — and her mantra? Responsibility is glamorous.

It's also extremely sexy and very dramatic, judging by the new ad campaign styled by Patti Wilson and shot by Michael Thompson. There probably wasn't a whole lot of breathing going on as the camera worked, if Fergie's outfit of skin-tight corset studded with oversized crystals and draped in metallic chains is anything to go by.

"Hopefully I can have a voice and be influential because of who I am, my platform and my music," she says of the campaign that since 1994 has raised \$111 million for AIDS education and prevention.

It's easy to harbour scepticism when it comes to celebrities and causes, but Fergie is the real deal. You can't see her leaping on board because she needs publicity. Yes, she loves makeup ("I have enjoyed it too much at times," she laughs) and even tours with a makeup artist. (She says when Duhamel first asked her out, she "kind of forgot what to do and called her up"). But the singular motivation is the life she now lives. Since joining the Black Eyed Peas in 2002, touring and travelling the globe has placed the AIDS crisis right on her radar.

"I have been to Ethiopia, Nigeria, India. I have been to Soweto to orphanages," she says, explaining that she has held babies with AIDS. "I took the day off and Will [from the Black Eyed Peas] and I went." Now as the face of Youth Prevention, she'll appear at the M.A.C AIDS Fund activities that specifically target youth. "What this campaign does is, it doesn't judge ... we know that you're doing this basically, it's not saying, 'OK we want you to stop and everybody's going to be saints.' It's saying 'Be responsible, and we will be here to provide this education for you.'"

"At least possibly ... I can talk about my struggles and what I have overcome, how I have had to be strong in different areas."

Despite her Fergalicious status, it's a good bet her audience will relate, too. Upfront she's candid and seems absent from any celebrity bullshit.

"She's so genuine and kind and doesn't want you to go out of your way, just because she's Fergie," confirms James Gager, senior vice-president and creative director of M.A.C, who hand-picked her to join the campaign, whose star line-up already includes Dita Von Teese, Pamela Anderson, Debbie Harry and Eve. "We're a naughty brand, we were founded as being the rebel," he adds, the implication being anyone who sings about their London Bridge going down fits right in.

Fergie, born Stacy Ferguson, grew up in Hacienda Heights near LA and tasted fame early after appearing on the American kids television show *Kids*

*Incorporated* and voicing Sally in the *Charlie Brown* specials. Later she was a member of the girl group Wild Orchid and when that broke up, she became worryingly thin after succumbing to a crystal meth addiction. She has been clean now for six years.

"I have definitely put out all my dirty laundry for people to nitpick at," she says confessing there were times the media became her shrink. "I have a hypnotherapist — I am really big into hypnotherapy. I call her almost every day."

"For me, if I hadn't called her for a while, an interview would become my therapy session." Then again, she says, "Why not be human and say how it really is? It's just a lot more interesting to me."

After meeting Will.i.am of the Black Eyed Peas and singing vocals for what would become their monster album, *Elephunk*, Fergie joined the group and her life started moving at a million miles an hour. Besides touring with the Peas and The Police, songwriting (a new album is in the works) acting (most recently *Poseidon*, *Grindhouse*, a voice in *Madagascar 2*) and business, dressing has also assumed a new importance.

"When I was younger it wasn't like I wasn't into fashion, but I was inspired by what I saw, like cholas [trashy girls], or skaters. When I was with Wild Orchid, I was around girls all the time and [our look] was more sexy because we wanted to look sexy, divas ... As things change, I used to go to the mall, and then I started going to Melrose, and now I have evolved to going to fashion shows."

Fergie's got a killer body and enviably great legs thanks to daily exercise and disciplined eating, and while her wardrobe doesn't contain much you could wear to the office — witty teeny (plaid) miniskirts, minidresses, shorts and low-slung pants mixed with Chanel, Gucci, and Max Azria for the red carpet — it will certainly get your attention.

"Designers for me now ... it's a whole new world. It's actually something that's feasible in my life so I have opened that part of myself up to it, like 'Wow, I can have these, or I can at least borrow them.' I have started learning about the different designers and meeting them, and now I'm going back and studying past collections. It's like hip-hop; you can learn where it's going by learning where it came from."

It's amazing when you think Fergie's already spent a lifetime in showbiz, but she's still pumped, full of ambition. "I have paper and put 'You are here' and 'Goals' at the top of the page and dream high. For me now there are different papers: charity work, acting, music. I will see where my path takes me." ■

By Sharon Krum



M.A.C's latest Viva Glam spokesperson, Stacy Ferguson, aka Fergie. Above right: M.A.C Viva Glam VI Special Edition Lipglass, \$34.