



# 2016 BEST IN BLACK BEAUTY AWARDS

Along with more than 1,000 ESSENCE BeautyBox subscribers and ESSENCE insiders, we've voted on the hottest people, places and products that are rocking our beauty world  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN HENN

## MOST SPLURGE-WORTHY BEAUTY BRAND...

**IT'S A TIE! CHANEL & NARS**

It was a split decision between two companies that not only offer huge color payoff for brown skin, but also pump out gorgeous collections season after season. While Chanel wows with brilliant blush compacts and lipstick formulas, Nars flourishes with foundation, color for lips and just about everything else.

**NARS** lipstick, lip gloss and foundation (\$26-\$48, [narscosmetics.com](http://narscosmetics.com)); **CHANEL** lipshine, lip color and blush (\$36-\$70, [chanel.com](http://chanel.com)).

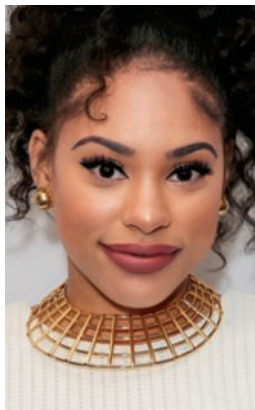
# BEAUTY



**WERRRKK, GIRL!**

**CELEB OF THE YEAR...  
TARAJI P. HENSON**

It would be a total understatement to say that Taraji is having a well-deserved moment. Between the success of *Empire* and her amazing Golden Globes win, she's on fire. Taraji continually serves up beauty and style inspiration in classic Cookie fashion, which makes us love her even more.



**FAVE MAKEUP (& HAIR) MAVEN...  
ITSMYRAYEAYE**

The lips, the lashes, the locks and the way she skillfully shows us how to pull it all together on her YouTube channel keep us tuned in and coming back again and again.

**FRAGRANCE THAT MADE US SUPERFANS...  
AERIN**

If there's one brand with a range of scents so diverse that every gal in your crew can find her perfect match, this is it. There's something sweet, soft or sexy for every fragrance personality.

**AERIN** Eau de Parfum Sprays (\$110-\$155 each, aerin.com).



**BRAND WITH THE BEST SHADES FOR US...  
IMAN COSMETICS**

**"Iman has a solid understanding of the varying degrees of skin tones and eliminates much of the frustrating guesswork in selecting products."**

**—ROSLAND MARTIN, SNELLVILLE, GA**

**IMAN COSMETICS**  
Second to None Liquid Makeup (\$16 each, Walgreens).

**MOST USEFUL BEAUTY APP...**

**MAKEUP GENIUS**



This is the easiest way to try before you buy without having to smear on messy (and questionable) testers.



**STYLE STEALS!**

**BARGAIN LINE WITH MAJOR COLOR PAYOFF...**

**IT'S A TIE! NYX & MAYBELLINE**

There's no compromising on impact with these wallet-friendly brands. If you're in need of a bold lip or vibrant blush (that works for us), start here.

**NYX** Ombre Blushes (\$10 each, nyxcosmetics.com); **MAYBELLINE NEW YORK** Vivid Matte Liquid Lip Colors (\$8 each, Target). ▷

HENSON: STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE; RAYE: CHELSEA LAUREN/GETTY IMAGES FOR NYX COSMETICS; PRODUCTS: COURTESY OF BRANDS.



**MANE MARVEL**

**PRODUCT GAME-CHANGER...  
COWASH**

Our beauty gurus agree that cleansing conditioners have completely changed the game for both curly and straight girls. Moisture-rich formulas that clean without stripping or overdrying and leave behind hydrating ingredients help whip strands into the best shape (and curl pattern) ever.

**DEVACURL** No-Poo Conditioning Cleanser (\$20, 12 oz, devacurl.com); **R+CO** Analog Cleansing Foam Conditioner (\$29, Neiman Marcus); **ORIBE** Cleansing Crème (\$44, oribe.com); **MISS JESSIE'S** Co-Wash (\$11, 12 oz, missjessies.com).

**INGREDIENT YOU LOVE  
MOST FOR MOISTURE...**

**SHEA BUTTER**

Slather your skin, lips and hair with this tried-and-true all-purpose hydrator.

**SKINFIX** Ultra Rich Body Butter (\$15, Target); **S.W. BASICS** Shea Butter (\$16, swbasics.com); **DRUNK ELEPHANT** Lippe Balm (\$22, Sephora).



**MOST  
COVETED  
HOT TOOL  
BRAND...  
CHI**



Flat irons were just the beginning for this heat-styling authority. Chi's assortment of irons, dryers and products equips even hair novices with the essentials to be pros at home.

**CHI** Onyx Euro Shine Dryer (\$130, Ulta).



**HAIRSTYLE  
YOU'RE  
DYING TO  
TRY... FAUX  
NATURAL**

**"A faux natural would allow me to keep my desired look without having to spend so much time washing and styling my own hair."**

**—RO ALEXANDER-MCLENDON, METAIRIE, LA**

**KURLY KLIPS** Hair Extensions (\$160–\$200, kurlyklips.com).

**BEST ONE-STOP  
BEAUTY SHOP... ULTA**

**WORTH EVERY PENNY!**

**SPLURGE-WORTHY HAIR BRAND...**

**IT'S A TIE!**

**MOROCCANOIL & MIZANI**

One thing's for sure, our readers know what's best for their hair. Money isn't a factor if the products work, and these brands topped the list for reliability and consistent results for both curly and straight textures.

**MOROCCANOIL** Treatment Original (\$44, moroccanoil.com); **MIZANI** True Textures Intense Moisture Replenish Treatment (\$18, Ulta). ▷



WOMAN: GLENFORD NUNEZ; PRODUCTS: COURTESY OF BRANDS.



**FIERCE FIRST LADY**

**STRAND SLAYER...  
MICHELLE OBAMA**

In this beauty election nearly half of voters agree that FLOTUS has served her country (and our “inspo” boards) well with almost eight glorious years of fierce bobs, lobs and updos.



**BRAND THE WHOLE FAM LOVES...  
IT'S A TIE! DOVE & VASELINE**

**“We all have supersensitive skin and Dove doesn’t irritate it.”**  
—ANGELA WILLIAMS, BROKEN ARROW, OK

**DOVE** Deep Moisture Nourishing Body Wash (\$9, dove.us).

**“Vaseline is a staple we can count on to help with dry skin.”**  
—KIMBERLEY COLEMAN-SMITH, AURORA, IL

**VASELINE** Intensive Care Deep Moisture Jelly Cream (\$8, Walgreens).

**COILS, REJOICE!**

**BEST CURL KEEPER...  
LEAVE-IN CONDITIONER**

When it comes to maintaining those spirals, panelists voted this as the product they can’t live without.

**GARNIER** Whole Blends Coconut Oil & Cocoa Butter Leave-In Conditioner (\$7, CVS); **CAROL’S DAUGHTER** Almond Milk Leave-In Conditioner (\$11, Target); **INFUSIUM23** Moisture Replenisher Leave-In Treatment (\$6, 8 oz, Walmart).

**DESERT ISLAND ESSENTIAL... IT'S A TIE!  
CLEANSING WIPES & COCONUT OIL**

**“I need to stay fresh in case my rescuer is cute.”**  
—AYANNA LASHLEY, BROOKLYN

**KLEENEX** Facial Cleansing Wipes (\$8, kleenex.com/facialcleansing).

**“There’s not much you can’t do with it from hair care to moisturizing to cooking.”**  
—CHEVON BOSTICK, YONKERS, NY

**365 EVERYDAY VALUE** Organic Coconut Oil (\$11, Whole Foods). ▷



**BEAUTY IT GIRL...  
TEYANA TAYLOR**

Through social media she lets us in on her rising career, dope hair moves and cool style.

**STAY YOUNG**

**BEST ANTIAGING LINE... OLAY**

Potent potions without a hefty price tag—25 percent of our beauty buffs chose this as their stay-young secret weapon.

**OLAY** Regenerist Micro-Sculpting Cream SPF 30 (\$34, Walmart).



**FAVE IMPORTS...  
DR. JART+, ERBORIAN & SK-II**

These three lines that originated overseas made the grade stateside for having innovative, powerful ingredients that really do the job!

**DR. JART+** Water Drop Hydrating Moisturizer (\$36, Sephora); **ERBORIAN** Bamboo Matte Lotion (\$34, Sephora); **SK-II** R.N.A. Power Essence (\$195, sephora.com).



OBAMA, CHERISS MAY/NURPHOTO/SIPA VIA AP PHOTO; TAYLOR, JOHNNY NUNEZ/WIREIMAGE; PRODUCTS, COURTESY OF BRANDS.



**BOLD NEW FACE**

MODEL OF THE YEAR... **AYA JONES**

We can't get enough of this doe-eyed, pillowy-lipped Parisian beauty. She has dominated every major runway since making her debut for Prada in 2014.



**BEAT THE HEAT**

MUST-HAVE PRODUCT FOR STRAIGHT HAIR... **HEAT PROTECTANT**

If flat irons and blow-dryers are part of your routine, add these scorch-shielding potions to your arsenal.

**BB.** Repair Blow Dry Elixir (\$31, 5 oz, bumbleandbumble.com); **KÉRASTASE** Elixir Ultime Original Oil (\$58, 100 ml, kerastase-usa.com); **ALTERNA** Multi-Vitamin Heat Protection Spray (\$30, Sephora); **GHD** Heat Protect Spray (\$22, sephora.com).



FAVE E-COMMERCE BEAUTY SITE... **SEPHORA.COM**

**"It has everything that you need to enhance your beauty from the comfort of home."**  
—**MONIQUE LATRICE, NEW YORK CITY**



EASY WHITENING FIX... **COLGATE**  
Infused with the same ingredient used by some dentists, this can get your choppers white in just six weeks.

**COLGATE** Optic White High Impact Toothpaste (\$5, Target).

BEST BLEMISH FIGHTER... **NEUTROGENA**

**NEUTROGENA** Rapid Clear Stubborn Acne Daily Leave-On Mask (\$9, neutrogena.com).



MOST COVETED CURLY HAIR BRAND... **SHEAMOISTURE**

**SHEAMOISTURE** Fruit Fusion Coconut Water Weightless Crème Rinse (\$11, ulta.com).



**SHEAMOISTURE** Fruit Fusion Coconut Water Weightless Crème Rinse (\$11, ulta.com).



**SKIN TREAT**

BEST SPA BRAND... **KATE SOMERVILLE**

A line developed by an experienced aesthetician who knows how to treat some of our skin's most complex concerns, it offers the substantial effects of a spa facial at home.

**KATE SOMERVILLE** Goat Milk Moisturizing Cream (\$65, sephora.com).

BEST DARK SPOT SOLVE... **AMBI**

**AMBI** Fade Cream (\$7, Walgreens).

**BEAUTYBOX PICK**

FAVE ESSENCE BEAUTYBOX ITEM... **L'OCCITANE**

**"This makes your hands feel like a baby's bottom: soft and supple."**

—**SHEILA MCDANIEL, SNELLVILLE, GA**

**L'OCCITANE** Shea Butter Hand Cream (\$12, usa.loccitane.com). ▷



JONES: VICTOR VIRGILE/GAMMA-RAPHO VIA GETTY IMAGES; PRODUCTS: COURTESY OF BRANDS.

TECH WORLD

BEST NEW TOOLS...  
**GAME-CHANGING GADGETS**

We rounded up innovative tools that will transform the way you look at beauty and get you summer-ready from head to toe—literally. Some of our favorites include an electric foot file that can be used wet or dry, to keep your heels in order; a brush that emits steam for healthy and sleek strands; a facial shaver that spares you the pain of hair removal; a phone case that lights up to ensure the perfect selfie; an all-over body shaver that banishes hair without nicks; and a vibrating flat iron that smooths strands without heat damage.

**AMOPÉ** Pedi Perfect Wet & Dry Foot File (\$60, Target); **JOSÉ EBER** Straightening Brush With Steam (\$165, joseeberhair.com); **DERMAFLASH** Facial Exfoliating Device (\$189, qvc.com); **TY-LITE** Protective Lighted Phone Case (\$80, ty-lite.com); **REMINGTON** Smooth & Silky Smooth Glide Shaver (\$40, Target); **BIO IONIC** 10x Pro Styling Iron (\$230, sephora.com).



FAN FAVES

HAIRSTYLIST I'D MOST WANT TO VISIT... **IT'S A TIE!**

**KIM KIMBLE & LARRY SIMS**

With celeb clients like Beyoncé, Lupita Nyong'o and Gabrielle Union under their belts, it's no wonder these mane masters topped wish lists.



HAIR ENVY

NATURAL HAIR CRUSH...  
**TRACEE ELLIS ROSS**

Her curls have just as big a personality as Tracee herself, which is only one reason why we're all pretty much obsessed. She stays true to her style and continues to motivate curly girls everywhere to rock their texture loud and proud.

BEST TAMER FOR UNRULY EDGES...  
**ORGANIC ROOT STIMULATOR**

**ORS** Olive Oil With Pequi Oil Smooth and Easy Edge Gel (\$5, Sally Beauty).

ONES TO WATCH...  
**OIDIDAD & MADAM C.J. WALKER**

These lines are taking the industry to new heights! Between Ouidad's collection for kinky strands and Madam C.J. Walker's concoctions for all hair types, our tress troubles could be a thing of the past.

**OIDIDAD** Curl Immersion Triple Treat Deep Conditioner (\$38, ouidad.com), available June 2016;  
**MADAM C.J. WALKER BEAUTY CULTURE** Curl Define Milk (\$26, sephora.com).



KIMBLE, SIMS: COURTESY OF SUBJECTS; ROSS: SYLVIE BLUM; PRODUCTS: COURTESY OF BRANDS.