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Minx nails brings bling to the fingertips

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By Chandra R. Thomas
For the AJC

Minx, a flashy new nail trend has exploded onto the celebrity fashion scene with such verve it is making cleverly-named polish seem passé.



Sweet Squared

Minx nails is a flexible polymer that is heated and applied to natural nails like a sticker.

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Derek Blanks

Minx nails have proven popular with several pop stars, including Fantasia from 'American Idol.'

The premium product, a flexible polymer that is heated and applied to natural nails like a sticker, has been spotted at red carpet events, in music videos and on runways from Los Angeles to New York. Now, it's making its way into metro Atlanta salons (at least 33 according to the company Web site).

You may have seen Minx before. Remember that snazzy little wrist-twisting move Beyoncé does in her "Single Ladies" video? It turns out that she was flaunting her Minx Golden Lightening tips at the same time.

"It's like jewelry for your nails," gushed "Real Housewives of Atlanta" cast member, Sheree Whitfield. "When I wore it people thought I had real gold on my fingernails."

"The thing about Minx is that it extends fashion to your nails," says Terrance Terry, a manicurist at Atlanta's Purple Door salon, as he worked on client Lisette Brown's glistening black and silver set of nails.

"It's real blingy; it looks like another accessory on your toes and fingers," says Nicole Phang, owner of Bella Duchess salon in Stockbridge. Her clientele has included singers Monica and Tameka "Tiny" Cottle. "I've also done Kelly Willett of Willett Toyota. She brings in all of her friends from the country club to get their Minx done."

Although gold, silver and chrome are the most popular choices (fans say Minx is the only way to achieve a true metallic finish without fake or press on nails), there are more than 100 designs that include checkerboard, leopard, polka dot and paisley. And because it isn't nail polish, there's no drying time or accidental smudging.

And less chipping, too, when the precautions are taken to preserve the finish, as with a standard manicure, says manicurist Aarika Dillard, the owner of Solo Haven Hand And Foot Sanctuary in Marietta.

"On average it lasts about four to eight days, but I've seen it last up to two weeks on the hands and up to four weeks on the feet," she said.

Here's how it works: First the client selects the desired design. The pre-cut strips are then

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matched up with the size of each finger. A basic manicure is performed before application so that the nail surface is clear of oils and residue. The coatings are heated under a lamp or with a hair dryer to make them flexible and warm the adhesive. The nail tech then lines up the rounded edge with the cuticle and, while lightly dragging it, presses the coating onto the nail. The dryer or lamp is used again to help seal the coating onto the nails, then the excess is filed away with a glass nail file. Heat is used for removal, too.

"It's a lot like shrink wrap, it expands when it's heated; when it cools it goes back to its original shape," Terry said.

The concept is similar to Avon's Instant Manicure and Sephora's Nail Patch, but unlike those inexpensive do-it-yourself products, Minx is only sold to and applied by professionals.

On average, Minx costs about \$55-\$65 for each hand or foot — much more than the average \$35 to \$45 for a mani-pedi.

With at least two weeks notice (and \$20-\$30 extra per set) clients also may choose a custom designed option, such as a favorite pattern, unique color, a specific lace design to compliment a wedding gown or even a favorite photo. The technician uploads the image, e-mails it to the company and then the custom product is returned.

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