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ISSUE 01

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OUR
first
ISSUE

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NATZ NAILZ
& beauty

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WELCOME



Hello!

Welcome to the first edition of The Expert Edit!

A thoughtfully curated space for expert knowledge, honest conversations and considered beauty advice.

Created to educate, inspire and empower, each edition draws on over 25 years of industry experience to take you beyond the trends and help you better understand the treatments, techniques and choices behind beautiful, lasting results.

I'm so pleased you're here.

Nat x



NATZ NAILZ
& beauty



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NOTE FROM NAT

There are conversations I've had with clients hundreds, perhaps thousands, of times throughout my career.

Why does this keep happening to my nails?

What's the difference between these products?

Is what I saw online actually true?

Why does one professional recommend something completely different from another?

And how do I know what is right for me?

They are good questions. And after more than 25 years working within the nail and beauty industry, I believe they deserve more than quick answers.

That is where **The Expert Edit** begins.

Beauty has changed enormously throughout my career. Techniques have evolved. Products have become increasingly sophisticated. Education has advanced, and we have access to more information than at any other point in the industry's history.

But greater access to information hasn't necessarily made nails or beauty to easier to understand, no matter if you're new to all things nails and beauty or if you're a seasoned professional.

Today, professional education sits alongside TikTok advice, product marketing, beauty forums, influencer recommendations and opinions presented confidently as fact. Somewhere amongst all of that information is something that's becoming increasingly valuable: **context**.

Because in nails and beauty, the answer is rarely as simple as "this product is better", "that technique is damaging" or "everyone should be doing this."

There is usually a **why**.

And the why is often where the most interesting conversation begins.

Why I created The Expert Edit

For years, education has naturally been part of the way I work. A client might ask a seemingly simple question during an appointment and, before long, we're talking about nail structure, product chemistry, maintenance, technique or why something that works beautifully for one person may not necessarily be appropriate for another.

Those conversations matter to me.

Not because I expect clients to become nail and beauty professionals, but because I believe understanding what is being done—and why—allows you to make more informed decisions about your own treatments.

The Expert Edit is an extension of those conversations.



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*Because confidence begins with knowledge.
And exceptional results don't happen by chance.*

It is a place where we can go beyond the finished photograph and look at what sits beneath it:

- technique
- science
- craftsmanship
- decision-making and,
- professional judgement

And, honestly realise that they ALL contribute to the end result.

It is also a place where we can question some of the things we have simply come to accept about nails and beauty.

Not for the sake of being controversial. Not to tell you that everything heard is wrong. And certainly not because I believe there is only one correct way to approach beauty.

Quite the opposite.

After more than 25 years in this industry, one of the things experience has taught me is that **context matters.**



Products matter. Technique matters. Education matters. The condition of the natural nail, skin or hair matters. Lifestyle and maintenance matter. And sometimes, despite our industry's fondness for definitive answers and the "next best thing", the most accurate answer really is: **it depends.**

I think there is value in being totally honest about that.

What you'll find in The Expert Edit

Each month, The Expert Edit will explore a different collection of conversations from across nails, Brows, lashes and beauty.

Some will examine the evidence behind familiar claims. Others will take you behind a professional technique and explain why it is performed in a particular way. We'll look more closely at products and ingredients, unpack common misconceptions and answer the questions clients genuinely ask.

There will also be space for professional perspective—and for reflection.

Having worked in this industry for more than two and a half decades, I've watched techniques come and go, products evolve, trends disappear and occasionally return under a different name, and our understanding of nails and beauty become considerably more sophisticated.

I've changed too.

Experience isn't simply the accumulation of years. It is being willing to continue learning throughout them

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There are things I understand differently today than I did five, ten or even twenty years ago, because education evolves, products advance, evidence develops and good professionals should be prepared to evolve with it.

That principle will be important here.

I don't want The Expert Edit to tell you what to think.

I want it to give you the information, professional context and considered perspective to understand why—and then allow you to make up your own mind from an informed and empowered standpoint

A new kind of conversation

This first edition marks the beginning of something I've wanted to create for some time: a space where beauty can be discussed with a little more depth, curiosity and honesty.

A place where expertise doesn't need to shout.

Where questions are welcomed.

Where misinformation can be challenged without judgement.

Where professional experience and evidence can sit alongside one another.

And where beauty is allowed to be more nuanced than a thirty-second answer on social media.

Whether you've been visiting me in the studio for years or you're discovering us for the first time, I'm genuinely pleased you're here.

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I hope you read something within these pages that makes you stop for a moment think, "I didn't know that".

Better still, I hope it sparks curiosity and an empowers you to make more informed choices.

Because after 25 years, my thirst for knowledge is as strong as ever and my passion for the industry burns deep inside.

And perhaps that is what expertise really looks like - not having reached the point where there is nothing left to learn, but having enough experience to understand why continuing to learn matter.

Again, welcome to the first edition of The Expert Edit. I hope you enjoy it!

Natasha O'Brien
Founder | Nail & Beauty Expert



BEAUTY BEYOND *the surface*



Why results are greater than skin deep.

We tend to judge beauty by what we can see: the shape, the colour, the symmetry, the finish. But some of the most important work happens long before the finished result appears. Behind a considered treatment sits assessment, technique, chemistry, judgement and an understanding that beauty is rarely one-size-fits-all.

There is an interesting contradiction at the heart of the beauty industry. We work in a profession built around visible results, yet much of what determines the quality of those results cannot be seen at all.

A photograph can show the curve of a nail, the definition of a brow or the lift of a lash. It can show colour, shape, gloss and symmetry. It might even make the finished treatment look effortless.

What it cannot show is everything that happened before it.

The questions asked. The natural nail, skin or hair that was assessed. The technique that was selected—and the one that was deliberately avoided. The product chosen for a particular reason. The amount of product used, the placement of it, the processing time, the preparation, the hygiene practices, the professional judgement and dozens of small adjustments made while the treatment was taking place.

We see the outcome.

The professional sees the process.

And understanding that distinction changes the way we think about beauty.

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The result is only the final layer

Beauty has always been visual, but social media and artificial intelligence has made it extraordinarily easy to separate a result from the process that created it.

We can scroll through hundreds of manicures, brows and lash transformations in minutes. We become familiar with names of products, techniques and trends, often without being shown the circumstances in which they were used.

I don't think that access to beauty information is a bad thing. Quite the opposite. Clients today are often more curious and engaged than they have ever been. But seeing more does not automatically mean understanding more.

A beautiful photograph can tell us that somebody achieved a particular result. It cannot necessarily tell us whether that same treatment is appropriate for the next person. Or if it was simply created in mere seconds by a computer.

That is where professional beauty becomes more interesting. Because the question is rarely simply, *"What treatment would you like?"*

A better question is often:

"What are we actually trying to achieve, and what is the most considered way to get there?"

Beauty begins with assessment

One of the least glamorous words in beauty may also be one of the most important: **assessment**.

Before technique comes observation.

For nails, that might mean looking at the condition and flexibility of the natural nail, existing product, length, shape, previous damage, lifting, lifestyle and maintenance history.

For brows, it may involve considering the existing growth pattern, density, symmetry, skin, previous treatments and how a requested shape will work with the brow that is actually present.

For lashes, natural lash condition, length, direction and the result being requested can all influence professional decision-making.

These observations are not there to make beauty unnecessarily complicated. They are there because people are different.

And therefore identical treatments do not necessarily produce identical outcomes.

This principle extends beyond the salon. In Australia, cosmetics are legally understood broadly as products intended to alter appearance, cleanse, protect or maintain parts of the body in good condition. Their ingredients are subject to a regulatory framework distinct from therapeutic goods.

That distinction is useful because it reminds us what cosmetic treatments can—and cannot—reasonably be expected to do.

Beauty professionals work with what is present. We can enhance, shape, coat, colour, support or temporarily alter appearance depending on the treatment.

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We also cannot ignore biology. And sometimes the most professional decision is not finding a way to perform the treatment exactly as requested. It is recognising that another approach may be more suitable.

The product is not the whole treatment

One of the most persistent ideas in beauty is that the product determines the result.

It certainly matters.

Professional products are formulated with particular characteristics, purposes and limitations, and understanding those characteristics is part of using them responsibly.

But the name on the bottle cannot assess the person sitting in front of it.

It cannot prepare a nail or the skin correctly.

It cannot determine an appropriate architecture for an nail enhancement.

It cannot decide whether additional processing is appropriate.

And it cannot compensate indefinitely for poor application.

This is particularly easy to see in nail services.

Terms such as *builder gel*, *hard gel*, *acrylic*, *gel polish* and *dip* can become shorthand for whether a service is believed to be “good”, “bad”, “strong” or “healthy”.

The reality is considerably more nuanced.

Different systems have different physical and chemical properties.

How appropriate a system is can depend on the natural nail, desired length, lifestyle, maintenance schedule and the way the product is applied and removed.

Even apparently simple claims about “safer” nail products require context. Nail cosmetic systems can contain acrylate or methacrylate chemistry, and allergic contact dermatitis associated with these materials is well documented in dermatological literature. Research has identified nail cosmetics as an important source of acrylate sensitisation among both consumers and professionals.

That does not mean every person using a gel or enhancement product will develop an allergy.

It means technique matters.

Avoiding unnecessary skin contact with uncured product matters.

Following the manufacturer's system and curing requirements matters.

Recognising symptoms that require medical assessment matters.

The chemistry and the craftsmanship cannot always be separated.

The product matters. But what matters just as much is understanding how, why and on whom it is being used.

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Technique is often invisible

Some of the best technical work in beauty is difficult for a client to identify precisely because, when performed well, it doesn't announce itself.

Consider a nail enhancement.

The visible impression may simply be, *"That looks beautifully shaped."*

Technically, however, the professional may be thinking about proportion, balance, length, sidewalls, free edge, stress areas, product distribution and how the enhancement will behave as the natural nail grows.

The goal is not simply to put product onto the nail.

It is to create an enhancement appropriate to the nail beneath it and the demands likely to be placed upon it.

Preparation matters too—but more is not automatically better.

The natural nail plate is living tissue's keratinised end product, and unnecessary mechanical trauma can contribute to thinning, splitting or surface damage. Dermatologists also caution that unsafe artificial and gel nail practices can be associated with brittleness, peeling and cracking, particularly where nails are repeatedly manipulated or improperly removed.

That is an important distinction.

Good preparation is not the same thing as aggressive preparation.

Precision is not measured by how much material can be removed. It is measured by knowing what needs to be done—and what does not.

The same philosophy applies across beauty.

More wax does not necessarily create a better brow.

More processing does not necessarily create a better lash lift.

More product does not necessarily create a stronger nail.

Often, expertise reveals itself through restraint.

Why "stronger" isn't always a simple answer

Clients understandably use words such as strong, gentle, natural, healthy and damaging when discussing beauty treatments.

Professionals use them too.

The difficulty is that these words can mean several different things.

Take "strong nails".

Does strong mean hard?

Flexible?

Less likely to tear?

Less likely to break under a particular type of impact?

Does it mean the natural nail itself has changed, or simply that it has been coated with a material providing additional mechanical support?

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Those are not the same thing. Likewise, when somebody says a product “damaged” their nails, several possibilities may need to be considered.

Was the nail excessively filed during preparation?

Was product peeled or picked away?

Was removal overly aggressive?

Was the enhancement left too long without maintenance?

Was the natural nail already compromised?

Was there an allergic or irritant reaction?

Was the chosen length or structure unsuitable for the client's lifestyle?

Or was there another nail condition altogether?

Sometimes the product itself may indeed be relevant.

But attributing every outcome solely to a product category can overlook the way products are applied, maintained and removed.

That is why simplistic beauty debates are so rarely satisfying.

“Gel is better than acrylic.”

“Builder gel makes your nails healthy.”

“Acrylic ruins your nails.”

“Natural products are safer.”

Each statement sounds wonderfully decisive.

Each requires considerably more context.

Even the word natural provides a useful example. Australia's industrial chemicals regulator notes that cosmetic ingredients described as natural or organic can still fall within chemical regulatory frameworks; “natural” is not synonymous with chemically absent or automatically risk-free.

Good beauty education should make room for those distinctions.

Safety is part of the result

When we think about a quality beauty treatment, our attention naturally gravitates towards aesthetics.

Did it look good?

Did it last?

Did it resemble the inspiration photograph?

Those questions matter.

But professional practice has another layer: how the result was achieved.

In Queensland, nail services and beauty therapy fall within the state's framework for personal appearance services, which exists in part to minimise infection risks associated with these industries.

For the client, many of the corresponding professional habits may be virtually invisible.

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For the client, many of the corresponding professional habits may be virtually invisible.

Cleaning.

Disinfection.

Appropriate handling of tools.

Avoiding unnecessary contamination.

Managing product contact.

Understanding contraindications.

Knowing when something sits outside a beauty professional's scope.

None of these make particularly compelling before-and-after photographs.

They remain part of professional beauty nonetheless.

And perhaps that is an important shift in how we define an exceptional treatment.

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The quality of a treatment isn't defined only by what you can see at the end.

The question should not only be:
Does it look beautiful?

It should also be:

Was the process considered?

Maintenance is part of the treatment too

There is another part of beauty we often underestimate because it occurs after the appointment.

Time.

The minute a treatment is completed, the body continues doing what bodies do.

Nails grow.

Hair grows.

Skin changes.

Products experience:

- water
- cleaning agents
- heat
- impact
- skincare
- cosmetics and
- everyday life.

A nail enhancement that was correctly balanced on the day of application will gradually move forward as the natural nail grows beneath it.

A brow tint will not remain unchanged indefinitely.

A lash lift gradually grows out as individual lashes move through their normal cycle.

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This means longevity is not simply a test of whether a product was “good”.

The condition at the next appointment is the combined result of application, biology, lifestyle, aftercare, time and sometimes simple chance.

Professional maintenance exists partly because the relationship between the treatment and the body beneath it changes.

In nail services, for example, maintenance is not merely filling an empty area where the nail has grown.

The enhancement may need to be reassessed and rebalanced as its proportions change.

To the client, this might look like replacing product.

To the professional, it is maintaining structure. That difference between what something looks like and what is actually being done is precisely what beauty beyond the surface means.

Experience doesn't remove uncertainty

After more than 25 years in this industry, I have learnt many things with greater certainty.

I have also become far more comfortable saying, **it depends**.

That may sound contradictory.

I think it is actually one of the consequences of experience.

The longer you work with real people rather than textbook examples, the more obvious individual variation becomes.

Two clients can have the same service, with the same product, performed by the same professional, and experience different retention.

A technique that works exceptionally well for one person's nails may not be my first choice for another.

A brow shape that looks beautiful on one face cannot simply be transferred onto somebody else.

A desired result sometimes needs to be adjusted because the natural starting point will not safely or realistically support it.

That doesn't make professional beauty imprecise.

It makes assessment important.

Experience provides patterns, context and judgement. Evidence helps us understand mechanisms, risks and limitations. Manufacturer education tells us how particular systems are intended to be used.

None should replace the others.

And none removes the individual from the equation.

Expertise is not knowing one answer that applies to everybody. It is knowing which questions need to be asked before deciding on an answer.

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When beauty becomes a conversation

Perhaps this is where the relationship between client and professional matters most.

A consultation should not be a lecture.

Nor should professional knowledge be used to dismiss what a client has seen, heard or experienced.

If somebody asks whether builder gel will make their nails stronger, whether brow lamination is suitable for them, whether acrylic is damaging or why their last lash lift behaved differently, those are reasonable questions.

Sometimes the most responsible answer will be straightforward.

Sometimes it will require qualification.

And occasionally it may be: *I can't determine that from appearance alone.*

There should be room for that honesty.

Beauty is full of attractive certainty because certainty is easy to communicate.

A 15-second video can tell us that one ingredient is “toxic”, another is “clean”, one technique destroys nails and another repairs them.

Explaining that dose, exposure, formulation, technique, individual susceptibility and context can all influence the answer and can take longer to answer - because the reality is rarely as simple as a single yes or no.

But a longer answer isn't the point. Understanding is.

Looking differently at the finished result

None of this diminishes the pleasure of beauty.

A beautiful manicure can still simply make you enjoy looking at your hands.

A brow treatment can change how defined your face feels.

A lash lift can make getting ready in the morning feel simpler.

We don't have to intellectualise every beauty decision before we're allowed to enjoy it.

But there is value in understanding what sits behind the result.

Because once you begin looking beyond the surface, your questions change.

Instead of only asking:

What product do you use?

You might also ask:

Why is that product appropriate for me?

Instead of:

How long will it last?

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Perhaps:
What affects how long it lasts?

Instead of:

Is this technique damaging?

Maybe:

*Under what circumstances can damage occur,
and how is that risk managed?*

Those are better questions because they leave room for better answers.

And that, ultimately, is what I hope *The Expert Edit* encourages.

Not suspicion.

Not fear.

Not the belief that every beauty decision requires hours of research.

Simply curiosity.

An understanding that there is usually more happening than the finished photograph can show.

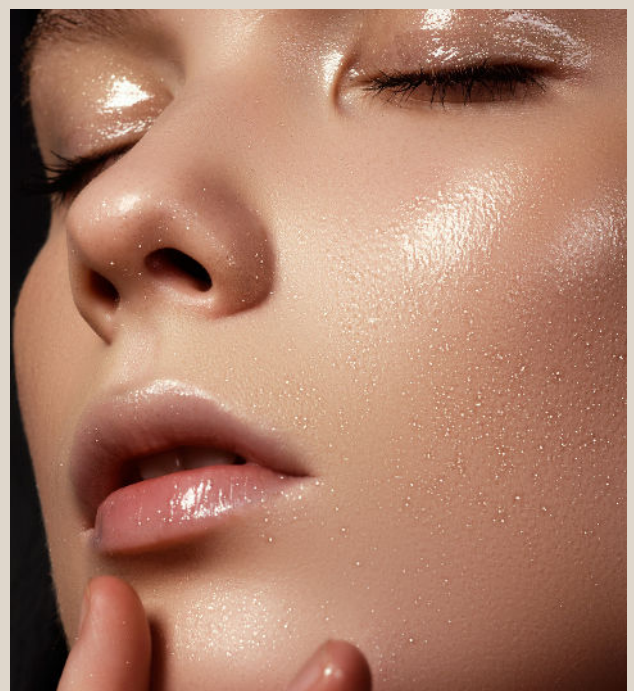
Because beautiful work isn't created only in the moment we see the finished result.

It begins much earlier—in the assessment, the education, the decisions, the technique and the willingness to recognise that the person sitting in the chair matters more than the trend being requested.

That is beauty beyond the surface.

And perhaps the most valuable thing we can learn about beauty is that knowing why something is done often tells us far more than simply knowing what was done.

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THE EXPERT PERSPECTIVE



An evidence-led perspective on the issues, misconceptions and conversations shaping the beauty industry, separating fact from assumption without bias or hype.

What is BIAB?



More than a trending manicure name, BIAB™ is a specific builder gel system — and understanding what it actually is begins with separating the product from the category.

BIAB™ is The Gel Bottle Inc (TGB) trademarked “Builder In A Bottle” soak-off builder gel system. Like Glitterbels, IBD, Dream Nail Store and other professional brands, it belongs to the builder gel family.

This professional-only enhancement has a thick, rubber-like consistency - thicker than gel polish but thinner than acrylic - creating a smooth, self-levelling application and a glossy, natural-looking finish with minimal manipulation and finish filing required.

Cured under UV or LED light, BIAB™ acts as a durable yet flexible overlay that protects and strengthens natural nails. It offers the resilience of hard gel or acrylic with added flexibility to encourage growth, delivering zero dry time, long-lasting wear, and a flawless, natural finish.

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The Origin of Builder Gel

The concept of gel nails was born in Europe, where chemists experimented with light cured polymer technology, with early experiments involving pre-mixed formulas that hardened under UV light, unlike acrylics which used liquid monomers and powders and air to cure the product.

The Beauty Industry Meaning

The Gel Bottle™ is credited with inventing “Builder In A Bottle” (BIAB), an original builder gel system that significantly shaped the modern nail industry by creating stronger, longer-lasting nails. While the term “BIAB” is a registered trademark, any other brands offer similar builder gel products, which are often referred to generically as “Builder Gel” or “Builder in a Bottle” to avoid trademark infringement.

Brand vs Product

There are 3 important distinctions to consider when it comes to branding and products:

1. Builder gel = the product category
2. BIAB™ = The Gel Bottle’s trademarked version of builder gel
3. Other brands make their own builder gels, but only The Gel Bottle™ can call theirs BIAB™

Why it matters to know what “BIAB” really means**CLARITY WHEN BOOKING**

This distinction becomes particularly useful when making an appointment. Many clients ask for “BIAB” when what they truly mean is builder gel nail enhancements. Understanding the difference ensures clients receive the exact service they after, without jargon – and for nail professionals, it allows service delivery with precision while educating clients on the distinction between product and brand.

QUALITY, HYPE & SAFETY

Not all brands are created as equal. BIAB™ by The Gel Bottle™ is just one of many professional brands that stock and supply builder gel. It’s important to understand the difference between a brand name (“BIAB”) and a product category (Builder Gel) and why it matters. A trusted salon carefully selects from only premium, safe, and professional-grade systems – choosing what’s best for a client’s nails, not just following a label.

AVOIDING CONFUSION

Knowing what “BIAB” actually means helps separate a specific branded product from the broader category of builder gels. That distinction matters when discussing services, comparing products or deciding what may be suitable for your nails, because two salons may use very different systems while referring to them by the same familiar term. Clear terminology makes it easier for clients to understand what is being applied, what properties that product has, how it should be maintained and what expectations are realistic. It also supports clearer communication between client and professional, reducing the chance that marketing language, social-media shorthand or brand recognition is mistaken for a universal product category.

EMPOWERMENT

Knowledge gives clients a more meaningful role in the decisions made about their nails. Understanding that “BIAB” is a brand name rather than a catch-all term for every builder gel makes it easier to ask informed questions about the product being used, why it has been chosen and whether it suits your natural nails, lifestyle and maintenance needs. For professionals, that same clarity supports more transparent recommendations and more accurate conversations about technique, product performance and limitations. When both sides understand the language being used, expectations become clearer, decisions become more considered and trust is built through knowledge rather than assumption.

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Cuticle oil may be one of the simplest steps in nail-care routine, but what sits inside the bottle matters. This month, we take a closer look and explore why consistent use can contribute to better-looking, more resilient results between appointments.

CUTICLE OIL



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MORE THAN A FINISHING TOUCH



Cuticle oil may be one of the smallest products in a nail-care routine, but its role is more considered than its name suggests. From the lipids surrounding the nail plate to the ingredients hidden inside the bottle, here is what regular oiling can realistically do - and what it cannot.

At the end of a manicure, cuticle oil can look almost ceremonial: a drop around each nail, a quick massage, the final photograph.

It is easy, then, to assume its purpose is largely cosmetic.

The more meaningful work begins afterwards.

Our nails and the skin surrounding them are exposed every day to water, hand washing, detergents, sanitiser, solvents, weather, household chemicals and ordinary mechanical wear. The nail plate itself is a compact structure of keratin containing both water and small amounts of lipid. When its balance is repeatedly disrupted, the nail can become less flexible and more inclined to split, peel or fracture.

Dermatological reviews of brittle nails consistently identify repeated wetting and drying, dehydration and changes in the nail plate's water and lipid content as factors in nail fragility. Topical moisturisers and oils are among the measures used to help manage that brittleness.

That gives cuticle oil a rather less glamorous, but considerably more useful, job: **conditioning**.

Can an oil really “nourish” a nail?

This is where beauty language needs a little clarification. The visible nail plate is made from keratinised cells. It is not living tissue in the way the skin beneath and around it is, so an oil does not “feed” the nail or send nutrients into it to make it grow.

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When we describe an oil as nourishing, what we are really talking about is **conditioning the nail plate and supporting the surrounding skin barrier.**

Oils act as emollients, helping to soften and smooth dry skin, while some also reduce moisture loss or contribute lipids that support the outer skin barrier. Research into plant oils shows that their effects vary considerably according to their fatty-acid composition, processing and formulation; “botanical” does not automatically mean effective, just as synthetic or mineral-derived does not automatically mean inferior.

Certain botanical oils, including jojoba and sweet almond, have been studied for their effects on skin hydration and barrier function. Jojoba is particularly interesting because, despite its familiar name, it is technically a liquid wax rich in wax esters rather than a conventional triglyceride oil. Research suggests it can support stratum-corneum moisturisation and barrier function, although much of this research relates to skin rather than nails specifically.

The distinction matters. Cuticle oil is useful — but it need not be surrounded by mythology to be worthwhile.

SO WHAT ARE “FILLER OILS”?

You will sometimes hear inexpensive carrier oils in commercial nail products described as *filler oils*.

It sounds convincing. Scientifically, however, “filler oil” is not a recognised category of cosmetic ingredient.

A carrier or base oil makes up the body of an oil-based formulation. Depending on the product, that might include botanical oils, triglycerides, esters or highly refined mineral oil. Some are inexpensive. Some are extremely stable. Some provide excellent slip. Some are highly occlusive. And some perform several functions at once.

Mineral oil is a useful example because it is frequently dismissed as a cheap filler. Cosmetic-grade mineral oil is highly refined and has good evidence supporting its safety and effectiveness as an emollient and occlusive ingredient. It can reduce transepidermal water loss and soften skin remarkably well. Its lower cost does not make it useless.

The better question is therefore not:

Does this product contain a cheap oil?

It is:

What is the formulation designed to do?

A formula dominated by an inexpensive base and containing tiny amounts of beautifully marketed botanical oils may offer a different ingredient profile from one deliberately built around a considered blend of plant-derived emollients. Equally, an expensive ingredient list does not guarantee better performance.

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In Australia, cosmetic ingredients are generally required to be declared in descending order by mass or volume, with some flexibility for ingredients present below one per cent. That makes the ingredient list useful — although it still cannot tell us everything about concentration, raw-material quality or how well the finished formulation performs.

THE FORMULATION MATTERS

This is where the philosophy behind the Natz Nailz & Beauty cuticle oil collection becomes important.

The oils are hand-mixed and poured in small batches and formulated around a curated blend of botanical oils rather than treating the oil simply as a fragrant finishing product. The intention is conditioning first: supporting the dry skin surrounding the nail, helping maintain suppleness around the nail folds and providing ongoing care to the nail plate itself.

The sensory element still matters. Different fragrance combinations turn a practical aftercare habit into something enjoyable enough to use regularly, while an unscented option provides an alternative for those who prefer to avoid added fragrance.

And that choice is worth having. “Natural” fragrance and essential oils are not automatically gentler; fragrance compounds and botanical extracts can cause allergic contact dermatitis in susceptible people. An ingredient can be natural, beautiful and entirely appropriate for most users while still not being right for every skin.

That is the kind of nuance good formulation should allow for.

The quality of a cuticle oil is not determined by how luxurious its ingredient names sound, but by what those ingredients contribute to the finished formula.

WHAT ABOUT NAIL ENHANCEMENTS?

This is another area in which claims can become exaggerated.

Regular oiling is routinely recommended within professional enhancement systems. Manufacturers such as CND advise daily conditioning of the nail and surrounding skin, and professional practice has long associated well-conditioned nails and skin with greater flexibility and fewer dry, brittle edges.

What we do not have is a large body of independent clinical research proving that applying cuticle oil will add a particular number of days to gel, builder gel, hard gel or acrylic wear.

The relationship is more practical than miraculous.

Oil cannot correct poor preparation, inappropriate structure, insufficient curing, excessive length, repeated trauma or an enhancement that is unsuitable for the individual nail. Nor should it.

What it can do is support the condition of the natural nail and surrounding skin between appointments. When nails are less dry and brittle and the skin around them remains supple, there is less temptation to pick at rough cuticles or dry edges, and the natural nail growing beneath an enhancement is being cared for rather than ignored.

In other words, **cuticle oil supports good maintenance; it does not replace good technique.**

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CONSISTENCY MATTERS MORE THAN QUANTITY

There is little benefit in flooding the nails with oil once every few weeks and forgetting about them in between.

Regular, modest application makes more sense.

Massage a small amount around the proximal and lateral nail folds, across the nail plate where it is exposed and, where appropriate, beneath the free edge. Daily application is a practical professional recommendation rather than a magical dosage: the objective is simply to restore conditioning repeatedly as normal washing, cleaning and everyday life remove it.

Like most good aftercare, its value is cumulative rather than dramatic.

Perhaps that is why cuticle oil is so easily underestimated. There is no instant transformation to photograph. Its benefit is found in what happens gradually: skin that feels less tight, dry edges that become less troublesome, nails that remain better conditioned and a manicure that is being cared for long after the appointment has ended.

THE FINAL TAKEAWAY

Cuticle oil cannot make a poorly treated nail healthy overnight, but used consistently, a well-formulated oil can help create the conditions in which nails and the skin surrounding them remain softer, more flexible and better cared for.

THE
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*Like most good aftercare,
its value is cumulative
rather than dramatic*



AUG 26

THE FINAL EDIT

Beauty gives us an extraordinary number of names, promises and opinions. Perhaps the most useful thing we can learn is not how to remember them all, but how to look beyond them.

THE VALUE OF



There is a tendency in beauty to search for certainty in a name.

The right product. The right treatment. The right ingredient. The right technique.

We want to know whether something is good or bad, whether one system is better than another, whether a particular product will make our nails stronger or whether a treatment is the answer we have been looking for.

But if there is one idea worth carrying from this first issue of The Expert Edit, perhaps it is this:

The name on the bottle, jar or service menu rarely tells us enough.

AUG 26



A builder gel is not automatically suitable because it is called BIAB. A beautifully marketed ingredient does not guarantee a beautifully formulated product or a flawless result. Cuticle oil cannot compensate for poor technique, just as the most technically advanced nail system cannot compensate for an enhancement that has not been properly matched to the person wearing it.

Beauty is more contextual than that.

After more than 25 years working within this industry, one of the things I have come to appreciate most is that professional expertise often lies less in knowing what to use and more in understanding **why, when and for whom.**

Two clients may ask for exactly the same treatment and require two quite different approaches. Two products may appear almost identical while behaving very differently. A technique that performs beautifully on one set of nails may be entirely inappropriate for another.

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That does not make beauty unnecessarily complicated. It simply makes it individual.

And perhaps that is where a more informed relationship with beauty begins: not with knowing every technical term, but with becoming comfortable asking better questions.

What is this designed to do?

Why has this been recommended for me?

What affects the result?

What are its limitations?

What matters once I leave the appointment?

Those questions shift the conversation away from trends and towards understanding.

They also leave room for something beauty culture does not always accommodate particularly well: **nuance.**

Sometimes there is no universally “best” product. Sometimes the answer depends on the condition of the natural nail, the formulation being used, the skill of the professional, lifestyle, previous treatments or what someone is realistically prepared to maintain at home.

And occasionally the most professional answer is simply: *it depends.*

That is not uncertainty through lack of knowledge. Quite often, it is evidence of knowledge being applied properly.

Expertise is not simply knowing the answer. Sometimes it is knowing which questions need to be asked before an answer can responsibly be given.

That is ultimately what I hope *The Expert Edit* becomes.

Not another place telling you what you should buy, what treatment you should have or which beauty trend you should follow next.

Not another place telling you what you should buy, what treatment you should have or which beauty trend you should follow next. A place that helps you understand the thinking behind those decisions.

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Because when you understand a little more about the product being applied, the technique being performed or the reasoning behind a professional recommendation, beauty begins to look different.

You notice the details.

You question absolutes.

You become less persuaded by a clever name and more interested in what something actually does.

And you become better equipped to make choices that are right for you.

There will always be another trend, another ingredient and another treatment promising to change the conversation.

But perhaps the most valuable thing we can take with us is considerably simpler:

**Look beyond what something is called.
Understand why it matters.**

Until next month.

THE
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EDIT



Professional expertise often lies less in knowing what to use and more in understanding why, when and for whom.

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The conversation continues beyond these pages.



The *Expert Edit* is created to make beauty a little clearer — through considered education, professional perspective and the kind of conversations that deserve more than a passing social-media trend.

If you have enjoyed this first issue, you can continue exploring with me between editions. Follow **@natznailzandbeauty** on Instagram and Facebook for shorter expert insights, studio stories, practical beauty education and a closer look at the techniques, products and thinking behind the work.

You can also visit the **Natz Nailz & Beauty website** to explore *The Expert Edit* online, discover more about nails, brows, lashes and beauty, or learn more about the personalised approach behind the studio.

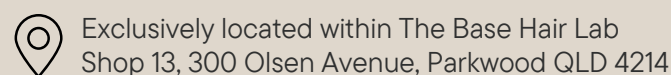
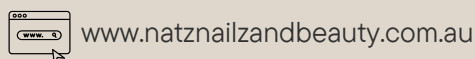
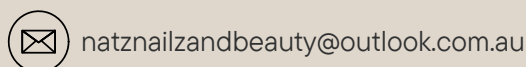
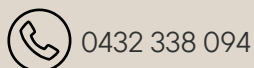
And if you prefer your beauty conversations in person, you'll find me at the studio, **located within The Base Hair Lab in Parkwood on the beautiful Gold Coast, Queensland Australia** — where the same philosophy behind these pages shapes every appointment: thoughtful recommendations, professional care and an approach tailored to the individual.

Follow along. Read a little deeper. Ask better questions.

Because confidence begins with knowledge.

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