

A MODERN BEAUTY ICON

Brazilian super influencer Camila Coelho on making her mark in make-up, and why Michelle Obama is her dream dinner guest...

“I have been a beauty lover since I was a young girl. I remember watching my grandmother put on her make-up and was so fascinated by the power of it,” says Camila Coelho. “As I got older, I worked at a make-up counter and went on to become a make-up artist. I started sharing make-up tutorials on YouTube and, to my surprise, I gained a large audience.”

“Large” is an understatement: 8.8 million follow her on Instagram for her beauty, fashion and travel updates. It’s been a dizzying ascent for the Brazilian-born influencer, who at 14 left her home town in the state of Minas Gerais for Pennsylvania in the US with her mum, making a name in vlogging and modelling and going on to launch her own fashion label. Now 32, she lives on the West Coast with husband Icaro Brenner and has this year launched her own beauty brand, Elaluz, inspired by the bounty of her homeland.

Global influencer, brand founder, jet-setter... it all sounds idyllic. But Camila has been open about her struggles, too – particularly her childhood epilepsy diagnosis. “Luckily, the type of epilepsy I have is controlled, so I was able to live a normal childhood. It was harder as I got to my teenage years because I felt different, insecure and like I didn’t belong. It was a dark moment in my life and I actually stopped taking my medication without telling anyone,” says Camila, who saw this as a wake-up call.

“Once I started to accept myself fully, my inner light started shining through again. I shared my story this year and so many people reached out to me...”

I realised I was able to help people by just talking about my own journey.”

Here, she talks Brazilian beauty, female icons, her can’t-live-without make-up and fashion secrets...

Camila, tell us about your new beauty brand...

“Elaluz means ‘she is light’ in my native language, Portuguese. It is a lifestyle brand that starts with essential beauty products and will cover hair, make-up, body and skincare. I am proud to say that Elaluz is clean, sustainable, cruelty-free, gluten-free and vegan.”

At the moment the range focuses on lips...

“I have always been a lip girl – it’s a Latina thing. Growing up, I was surrounded by a lot of women and they were always wearing lipstick.”

“While we do have plans to expand into the skincare and hair space, I wanted to start with lips as they are my favourite. The **24K Lip Therapy** [(1) £26, from net-a-porter.com] is an intensely hydrating treatment that leaves lips looking and feeling softer, smoother and healthier the second it melts on. The **Lip & Cheek Stain** [(2) £31] is for both lips and cheeks and is perfect for a natural flush. These are the everyday essentials you should have in your make-up bag.”

Who are your own personal icons?

“My beauty icon is absolutely my grandmother. My style icon is Diane von Furstenberg. She is a fashion icon and has accomplished so much in her career.”

“I have many business icons. I love Oprah Winfrey and Rihanna. They came from such humble backgrounds and created huge careers.”

What was it like being diagnosed with epilepsy?

“I was nine years old. When my doctor told me, I didn’t have an exact idea of what the diagnosis meant other than I wouldn’t be able to drink alcohol. This was such a relief because I thought he would say that I wouldn’t be able to play certain games as a kid.”

Was it harder to manage as you got older?

“I had a seizure in front of my friends at school and it was the worst moment of my life. Then I realised I was going to have to go back to school and everyone would know what had happened to me.”

“After the incident, my mom really put things into perspective when she reminded me that people are fighting for their lives every single day and don’t know if they will be alive tomorrow; I take one pill every day and I know I will be okay, so I had to remind myself that I’m very lucky.”

“I have epilepsy but people have it worse than I do, with seizures every day. From that moment on, I started to look at everything very differently and became more positive in the process.”

So mindfulness is important to you?

“Mindfulness is everything. I believe that if you think negatively, more negative energy will come through. If I think my day is going to be terrible, it will be.”

“When I am struggling, I remind myself of three things I am grateful for in order to cancel out the negativity. It can be very simple things, like my loved ones or having a roof over my head.”



QUICK-FIRE WITH CAMILA

- ◆ **Trainers or flats?**
Trainers
- ◆ **Coffee or green juice?**
Coffee
- ◆ **Eat in or takeaway?**
Eat in
- ◆ **Maxi or mini (dress)?**
Mini, mini micro!
- ◆ **Bright or nude?**
Both – bright for summer, nude for winter
- ◆ **City or seaside?**
Seaside
- ◆ **Liner or lashes?**
Liner
- ◆ **Necklace or earrings?**
Earrings

INTERVIEW: ALICE MANNING. PHOTOS: CAMILA COELHO, RAUL ROWO

‘My beauty icon is absolutely my grandmother – when I was six years old she gave me red lipstick to wear for my passport photo’

How have you spent your lockdown?

“I have been giving myself more time to prioritise my family. I call and FaceTime them often. As for my beauty routine, I keep my look as natural as possible with **Pat McGrath Labs Dark Star Mascara in Extreme Black** [(3) £26, from selfridges.com] and **Nars Radiant Creamy Concealer in Custard** [(4) £24; visit narscosmetics.com].”

What were your social media aspirations when you were starting out?

“I started my YouTube channel in 2010, uploading a new video every three weeks or so. I started my Instagram account when the app was still fairly new – I never expected anything to come out of it. I already had Twitter, Facebook and my blog, but Instagram changed it all. It was such a new form of expression and allowed me to connect directly with my followers and those I follow.”

What are your top tips for aspiring influencers?

“It is not easy to stand out and create content, but there is no such thing as perfection. We all face criticism, so the best thing you can do is work hard, be true to yourself and be transparent with your audience.”

What is your best style tip?

“Learn which styles and cuts work best on your body. Some people will look at certain trends and think it would never work for them, but you can pull off many trends if you know what pieces make you look and feel your best.”

What is your earliest memory of make-up?

“My earliest memory of wearing make-up was when I was six years old. My grandmother gave me red lipstick to wear for my passport photo.”

Is fitness important in your life?

“Yes, I love being active. I have the most energy in the afternoon, so that is when I get my workouts done. I also love going on bike rides with my husband.”

Finally, your four dream dinner party guests?

“I have to have five: Oprah because I could learn so much from her; Michelle Obama would be an absolute dream; *Modern Family* star Sofia Vergara would make me laugh so much; Rihanna would be my dinner date and accompany me to the after-dinner party; and *Avengers* star Chris Hemsworth would be there for some eye candy.”



Camila (above) in one of her Instagram photos; she has nearly 9 million followers on the social platform