



ROBERT WYATT

Opposite, "party animal" Charlotte and friends on holiday in Ibiza, 2004. From left, Alice Temperley, Tilbury, Tara Agace, Leona Naess and Laura Bailey. Above, Charlotte photographed at Petersham Nurseries. Hair: Chi Wong. Sittings editor: Fiona Golfar

It's 7.30 on a Tuesday evening. I'm in the penthouse suite of the Sanderson hotel and make-up artist Charlotte Tilbury, a blur of marmalade hair, teetering heels and creamy cleavage, has just whooshed in with a couple of wheelie suitcases and her assistant Lucia in tow. The occasion? Tilbury has promised Lindsay Lohan that she will fix her false lashes for the evening, just as she did for the actress when she worked with her on the new Miu Miu campaign the day before.

Ah, and here is Lohan herself – a freckly little thing in an itchy-bitsy black cami, smelling slightly of fake tan. “Omigod,” she says, black-nail-polished thumbs glued to her BlackBerry as she curls up in a chair opposite Tilbury, “I wish you saw me last night at Kabaret. I was like my own attorney for those lashes you gave me. I was like, ‘No-one’s going to take those away from me – ever’. But be careful, OK, ’cos I just this minute sprayed.”

All in a day's work, all in a day's work. In the past two weeks Tilbury, 33, has had Drew Barrymore for Missoni, Scarlett Johansson for Louis Vuitton and Janet Jackson for *W* magazine in her make-up chair. She has worked with Mario Testino on the Gianfranco Ferré menswear campaign, with Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott on the Roberto Cavalli campaign in Ibiza, spent the day making up Gwyneth on some private plane in Barcelona, and created 10 new lipstick shades for Helena Rubinstein (for whom she is international creative director). In between there's been quite a bit of partying, too.

“Yeah, I can't believe it,” says Lohan, taking a sip of Bloody Mary – which has just been ordered up from room service – and holding her BlackBerry above her head while Tilbury applies some kohl. “We've been going out to all the same places all this time and we weren't even friends. Did you see Paris that night at Mahiki's?”

“Yeah, I did, darling,” says Tilbury, gently patting in some concealer with her fingertips, “dancing to her own bloody record. I kept asking the DJ to take it off and put on Gnarl Barkley, but she wouldn't let him, would she?” And then, pink tweezers poised, the next glue-on ready-and-waiting upon Lucia's helpfully extended fist, “OK darling, look at me, will you. Light's not great, but you know what darling? I think we'll be absolutely fine.”

Watching Tilbury chatting and gossiping away, listening to her girly gabbing, one feels as though it could be a scene from a university freshers' week. Don't be misled,

though. Mention her name to anyone in the fashion industry and they'll tell you that Charlotte Tilbury is a very serious player indeed. But why her, rather than hundreds of thousands of other girls out there who go to beauty school and want to be famous make-up artists?

“Because her talent matches her enthusiasm,” explains her agent, Anthony Blunt at Untitled. “A lot of people get into this business because of the glamour; because of the contacts and famous friends they might make, but Charlotte doesn't care about all that, she just wants to make people look beautiful. Both clients and celebrities love her because of that...”

Kate Winslet. Mischa Barton. Elle Macpherson. Elizabeth Hurley. They have all been “done” by Tilbury for the cover of *Vogue*. Then there's the famous “Castaway” pictures, shot by Mert and Marcus, that featured in the June 2002 issue of *Vogue*, for which she body-bronzed her great

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friend Kate Moss à la Raquel Welch in the film *One Million Years BC*. The shoot has since been cited by beauty-school teachers as one of the seminal moments in make-up history.

Making celebrities look like proper celebrities, making beautiful women even more beautiful than they are, “bringing the glamour back to fashion,” as Mario Testino offers... If Charlotte Tilbury has a USP then that is certainly it.

Then of course there's her phenomenal talent for “giving good chair”. “Charlotte is a great make-up artist,” says designer Marc Jacobs, who first met her through stylist Katie Grand. “She is very, very good at what she does, but it's the way she doesn't stop talking, the way she loves to gossip – her ‘bedside’ manner, that makes her what she is.”

“Charlotte does like to have a bit of a giggle,” as Grand puts it. “Like, we were working on this shoot once, a shoot which

involved taking very tight shots of a male model's face. Suddenly we all turned around and there was Charlotte greasing up the inside of this guy's thigh. I seem to remember the same thing happening on a shoot with Jennifer Lopez.”

“Charlotte is the sexiest, hottest woman,” offers Drew Barrymore, another member of the CT fan club, with whom Tilbury worked on last summer's Missoni campaign, “and she makes whoever is in her chair the sexiest, hottest woman too!”

“She's just such fun to be with,” enthuses Kate Moss. “I don't know why but I always have such an outrageously good time with her. Her family are all the same. I remember inviting them all for lunch when I was renting in Ibiza. They arrived at 11 and didn't leave until four o'clock the following morning. Maybe it's in the Tilbury genes.”

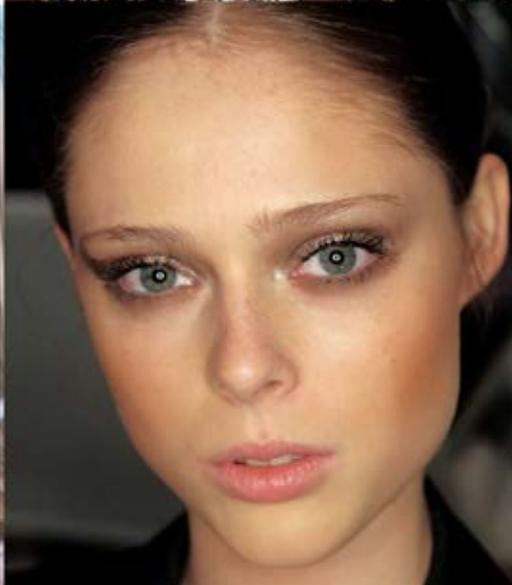
It's now the following afternoon and I am sitting in Tilbury's sparkling white skylit offices in Ladbroke Grove, the place where the six make-up ranges she creates for Helena Rubinstein each year are conceived. Strewn across the long white table are dozens of little pots of different-coloured pigments and pearls, little wooden spatulas and large jars of “goo” with which to dilute it all. Next week she will go to Paris for a marketing meeting to discuss her latest range, which is specifically geared towards the 40-plus woman, with lots of flesh-toned, neutral shades, royal-jelly-infused lipglosses and light-reflecting bases to brighten and freshen the skin, because at that age, “everything does have a tendency to become a little dull and caved-in”.

While Gemma, Tilbury's researcher and second assistant, is handing out a plate of Fondant Fancies, Olivia, her modelly, platinum-blond PA, is trying to finalise a flight to Ibiza (where Tilbury was brought up from the age of 12 – more of which later) and Lucia is making everyone cups of Earl Grey tea. “Mmm, Fondant Fancies,” murmurs Tilbury longingly, going on to explain how she had a Firezza pizza, a mince pie and some ice cream for breakfast. “The appetite from hell, right? Although not like Gisele, who really does have the appetite of a truck driver! I'm telling you, five breakfasts of maple syrup and pancakes – and the awful thing is, when you are with her, you think you can too!”

Having declined Lohan's invitation to join her at the Shadow Lounge in favour of spending a quiet evening at E&O with her husband Charlie Forbes, their mutual friend Ben Elliot and Elliot's mother Annabel, >



MAKING FACES:
SOME OF CHARLOTTE'S
LOVELIEST MAKE-UP LOOKS
Top left, Charlotte and Charlie Forbes
at their 2006 wedding in Ibiza.
Clockwise from top centre, Mischa
Barton, *Vogue* November 2006; *Vogue*
December 2003; Kate Winslet, *Vogue*
January 2003; backstage at Bottega
Veneta, s/s 2007; *Vogue* April 2005;
backstage at Zac Posen, s/s 2007; *Vogue*
February 2003; backstage at Alexander
McQueen, s/s 2007; and the seminal
"Castaway" shoot, *Vogue* June 2002



Tilbury is looking as glamourpussish and S-shaped as ever today in a pair of Prada platforms, a flirty little vintage frock and eyelashes out to here. It's not picture-perfect – the tights are a little snaggy and there's a tiny piece of blue lint caught in those marmalade tendrils – but that, along with her peculiarly musky scent (a mixture of Paloma Picasso and some secret oil with which she admits she has haunted ex-boyfriends) is all part of the considerable allure. And it's a look, as they say at red-carpet events, she owns – one she ought to patent, judging by the speed and dexterity with which she put on her make-up for her *Vogue* portrait. And all by compact mirror, too. "Eyelashes, darling, it's all about eyelashes. If you don't have any then do what my great-aunt told me to do when I was 11 and looked like a bloody albino, and get some." Lash curlers by Shu Uemura and a brightening mask by Helena Rubinstein (that fits over the face like a cloth, making the wearer look a bit like Hannibal Lecter), are tips she swears by too. "And lots and lots of Touche Eclat – far more than you think you need!" Nobody, meanwhile, but nobody, has ever seen Charlotte Tilbury in flats – Kylie Minogue, whose eyebrows she once famously bleached for a magazine cover – is sure that's why her bottom is as firm as it is. "Permanent Stairmaster, you see, being on heels," she says. Nobody has ever seen Tilbury without her eyelashes on either. Not even Charlie. Which means that, yes, she takes her make-up off at night, but before she actually gets into bed she always puts a tiny bit back on.

"Well, you've got to keep the magic going," she shrugs, Marlboro Light aloft, "otherwise what's the point?"

Four hours later and I've just pitched up at Tilbury's boudoirish villa in Notting Hill. "Not quite ready darling," says a dripping marmalade head from the top of the stairs, "Ten, 15 minutes tops, I promise you. But Charlie will be down in a sec."

The long narrow living room is dominated by a huge Cognac-coloured sofa and a Sixties "dripping ice" chandelier. Over the fireplace is an orange splotch painting by her artist father Lance, who still lives in Ibiza with her mother Patsy and whom she fondly describes as "a mix between Keith Richards and Basil Fawlty. Honestly, they've got the builders in and my mother tells me they've no idea what to make of him suddenly appearing at the top of the stairs in one of his jellabas and silk slippers, with a great big joint in his hand!"

Soon enough, down lopes Charlie, a handsomer version of Tim Burton, sort of, dressed head-to-toe in black with Gola sneakers. He leads the way down to the Verde Guatemala marble kitchen and pours some white wine out into two smoky-brown wine glasses.

Ah, and here is Tilbury herself (or "La Tilbère" as Rachel Weisz once nicknamed her on a shoot), dressed to kill as usual in a corset-like LBD by Allesandro Dell'Acqua ("absolutely brilliant when one's feeling a little premenstrual, darling"). Tomorrow she's off for two days of marketing seminars with Helena Rubinstein in Paris, and there's a possibility she might go to Ibiza the following weekend on a shoot. Then she's got the Alexander McQueen eyewear campaign at the Shepherd's Bush Empire. "So tonight, darling, I'm definitely in the mood to party."

It was August 2005 when Forbes and Tilbury first met. But the idea of getting married and settling down had been firmly planted in her mind the winter before. At

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the time she was with a group of friends, including Alice Temperley and her husband Lars, Jacquetta Wheeler, and entrepreneur Tim Attias at Alix Goldsmith's villa in Careyes, Mexico. "I came back on the plane and had a sort of *crise*. I knew if I didn't get my act together I was going to end up being one of those make-up artists you see knocking around awards ceremonies with nothing to live for but work..."

She didn't have to wait around long. After "a teeny tiny bit of therapy" and visiting "this unbelievable shaman woman, where sparks suddenly flew out all over the room", she and Forbes, a scriptwriter and actor (he played Willie in *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*) found themselves changing overalls on a go-kart track in Middle Wallop, Dorset, at Ben Elliot's birthday party.

"I remember seeing her in these horrid blue overalls that we all had to wear, and these juicy high heels," recalls Forbes, 31.

"Open-toed high heels at that. That should have been my cue to say something marvellously splendiferous and witty but I was so gobsmacked all I could think of was 'Nice shoes.'"

He proposed to her the following January while they were staying at Alix Goldsmith's other Mexican estate, Hacienda de San Antonio, up in the mountains of Guadalajara. "I remember panicking slightly about exactly when I was going to pop the question," recalls Forbes, "so I waited until everyone else had left, begged the housekeeper to make spaghetti carbonara and chocolate ice cream – Charlotte's favourites – got the houseboys to light all these little candles on the rooftop terrace, and got down on bended knee with this ring (although bloody difficult, that, trying to get anything out of your jeans pocket when you are on bended knee, isn't it?). Eventually I managed to get the words out, though not quite in the right order – it was sort of 'Wife be mine. Thank you. Please.' Anyway she jumped me, which I took to be a yes."

It was August last year when the couple got married in Ibiza, with a reception at Terry-Thomas's former villa, Can Talaias, afterwards. The bride wore champagne Allesandro Dell'Acqua; the groom "some Savile Row number by Peter Kent", and Mario Testino proclaimed the affair "better than Studio 54". After three days of solid partying with the likes of Kate Moss, Jade Jagger and Dan Macmillan, where even Charlie got on the dancefloor ("Charlotte's like a whirling dervish on it," Elliot explains, "but I'm afraid Charlie absolutely loathes it"), the couple took off in a cream convertible vintage Mercedes and spent their honeymoon at The Pellicano in Porto Ercole, Tuscany. But only for five days, because Tilbury had to be in New York for the collections straight afterwards (this season she estimates she'll be doing make-up for 30 shows on the New York, London, Milan, Paris circuit).

Happily, though, Charlie came along, with his computer, as he often does. "I suppose that's the nice thing about being a writer, that I can do that," he says, having just this week completed his first film script, a political thriller based in Paris, "but only if she's going for more than 10 days, because unlike her I need to settle down in a place before I'm comfortable." Since their wedding day, meanwhile, Tilbury has not taken one weekend off.

"That energy," says Marc Jacobs, "it's the first thing I think of when you mention the name Charlotte." As Alice Temperley puts

it, “We all like to work hard and we all like to play hard, but nobody does it quite as hard as Charlotte. It’s quite extraordinary how she manages to harmonise the two.”

“Acupuncture and Rhodiola capsules, darling, I’m telling you,” says Tilbury with that raspy, easily summoned laugh, “Rhodiola is what cosmonauts use to focus, and I’m telling you once you take them you go *whoomph*...”

“But then, like my mother always says about us orang-utan freaks [Tilbury inherited her red hair not from her mother, but from her Irish great-aunts], we’ve got that extra energy gene, we go on and on until physically we can’t go on any more. Thank goodness I have Charlie now to stop me burning out.”

Charlotte Emma Tilbury was born in Fulham, the daughter of artist Lance and former actress Patsy, in 1973. Two years later, when her younger sister Leah was born, Patsy and Lance rented a crumbling *finca* in Ibiza, with no running water or electricity, for the summer. At the time the island was a bohemian backwater for characters like actors Terry-Thomas, Denholm Elliott and Leslie Phillips, with dirt roads, buckets for loos and just one bar in town. “It was absolutely beautiful,” recalls Patsy, “and just too depressing for words to imagine the idea of pushing a pram round ‘Foulham’, or living a twee Agatha Christie life somewhere in Haywards Heath.” And so they decided, when it was time to leave, simply not to go back.

It was the ultimate bohemian Seventies upbringing. Charlotte and Leah, attending the local Ibicenco school, were willingly dragged round Full Moon parties – as raves were called then – and Bob Marley concerts at the Ku Club, crashing out in the back of the car whenever they got tired. At the same time, recalls Patsy, an unusually well-preserved blonde (who part-times under her maiden name, Patsy Dodd, as a production manager on Mert and Marcus’s shoots), “It was by no means ‘anything goes’. In a way we were very traditional. Manners were paramount and we were very much Mummy and Daddy as opposed to Patsy and Lance.”

A determined, precocious, confident little girl, despite being pelted with stones and called “licehead” in the playground because of her red hair, Tilbury had always been fascinated by the power of make-up, intrigued by the idea, as she studied her mother’s copies of *Vogue*, “that maybe, if I knew how to do it, I could make myself look like that, too – it was all about maximising my effect on the world.”

As a pupil at the Rudolf Steiner School in Sussex that she begged her mother to send her to, aged 11, she hung pictures of heroines such as Brigitte Bardot and Charlotte Rampling on the wall, and conducted impromptu lectures on the virtues of the Mason Pearson hairbrush for her somewhat awestruck dorm-mates. There were lots of makeover sessions, too. One term she advocated the “country *Vogue*” look – “Well, that’s what my mother told me it was called, anyway, you know – a lace-up brogue, a little Arran sock sort of thing.” Another look she practised on herself and her friend “when the hormones kicked in and my hair suddenly frizzed” was more “T’Pau”.

It was meeting the make-up artist Mary Greenwell, a friend of her parents, in Formentera when she was 11 “and realising that there was actually such thing as being a make-up artist, and that here was this person who’d just worked with people like Marie Helvin and Jerry Hall, and whose

As a schoolgirl, Charlotte conducted impromptu lectures on the virtues of the Mason Pearson hairbrush for her awestruck dorm-mates

fingers were actually tingling at the idea of how she’d make me up”, which cemented the idea of what Tilbury wanted to do.

“My first impression of Charlotte was of this beautiful wild creature with this incredible determination and sense of herself,” recalls Greenwell, “so Patsy rang me up and said, ‘Darling, Charlotte wants to be a make-up artist just like you; what should she do?’ So I said, ‘well, she can come and help me, but first she must go to make-up school, because it’s not enough, just practising on her friends.’”

After a stint at the Glauca Rossi make-up school, and supporting herself with a little “jobette” – as Patsy calls it – waitressing at the Chelsea Arts Club, Tilbury started assisting Greenwell and pursuing her career with a tenacity and energy that made those around her reel slightly in awe.

The jewellery designer Peter Adler, a neighbour in Ibiza and the Tilbury girls’

legal guardian, remembers getting her her first proper job – on a Joseph campaign being shot on location in Poland. “She was only 17 and I remember renowned fashion consultant Maureen Doherty and the photographer Perry Ogden being very concerned about her lack of experience, but she was very, very cool under fire, insisting at one point, despite what everybody else said, that yes, the model would be wearing red lipstick.”

“She’s always had this ability to absorb and filter information very quickly,” says stylist Bay Garnett, who first met Tilbury in the early Eighties at a school disco in Deptford. “Style-wise she’s always somehow one step ahead of the game. I remember once seeing her at a party, long before we became great friends. I was wearing this Chloé headscarf and big gold earrings and she was like, ‘Darling, darling. Gorgeous face, but fortune-teller look *not* working.’ The thing is she was right, and I never did that look again!”

Tilbury’s career took a leap in 1998. She was 25 and was taken on by the agency Untitled, who introduced her to photographic duo Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott. “I’d known Marcus from just sort of pottering around and going out, but then when the three of us worked together, it was kind of an epiphany the way we gelled, how our sense of aesthetics, our desire to make women look like a million dollars – untouchable almost – all met.”

That same year Tilbury started sharing a flat (owned by her godfather, Karma Kars founder Tobias Moss) in Bassett Road with Sheena MacKichan, a childhood friend from Ibiza. “It was all a bit *Bridget Jones* in those days,” recalls MacKichan (sister of *Smack the Pony* comedienne Doon), whose parents also live in Ibiza, and who was maid of honour at Tilbury’s wedding. “Neither of us had enough money to pay the rent – poor Tobias, we were the worst tenants – but somehow we managed to have dinner at 192 and have our hair done and keep a steady supply of Stolichnaya in the flat. There’d always be some psychic consultant on the other end of the phone, advising Charlotte on her latest crush, and someone from the sound-pollution police knocking on the door. There is that hedonistic, party-animal side to Charlotte, it’s sort of hard-wired into her genes.”

“I’ll never forget her,” recalls Rita Konig, a neighbour at the time, who, along with Laura Bailey, Liberty Ross, Alice Temperley and Luella Bartley, was part of Tilbury’s gang, “this figure teetering down the road in sky-high heels carrying these > 370