

Heather McGowen

A shining example of someone who's come so far so fast, Heather McGowen is one beauty pro who really kicked her career into overdrive upon earning her credentials. She cut her teeth by assisting some of the industry's top talent at impressive venues like Robert Lobetta's 7 Deadly Sins show at Los Angeles' Kodak Theater in 2006 and the Cosmoprof 2006 Main Stage in Bologna, Italy. "I get inspired by those who have a passion for learning," McGowen says. Indeed she does. A self-proclaimed perennial student who radiates professionalism and is eager to excel, McGowen has taken her color craft to a whole new level with continuing education. "Not a day goes by when I'm not scouring websites like Vogue's and Google to stay abreast of runway and celebrity color trends or learning new color application techniques that demonstrate uncommon creativity." —Kelley Donahue



What inspires you?

The works of great colorists like the incomparable Annie Humphreys, formerly of Vidal Sassoon, and Beth Minardi.



AHA MOMENT

I thought I wanted a career doing special effects makeup for movies and television, so I enrolled in beauty school after finishing high school. My plan was to get licensed so I'd have more options. Once I got there, I realized it was hair that really got my creative juices going.

IN TRAINING

After graduating from Fullerton College's Cosmetology Department in Southern California, I apprenticed with Michael Polsinelli—then Sebastian Professional's global creative director—assisting him with main stage productions and photo shoots. From there, I moved to New York City, training as a color specialist at Arrojo Studio for three years before moving back to Los Angeles as an educator at Planet Salon.

STYLE PREFERENCES

While I draw lots of inspiration from all decades, I prefer the classic, romantic style of the 1920s and '30s.

BEAUTY MUST-HAVES

I'm a colorist, so naturally I'm very loyal to my color line, Wella Professionals Magma. My gold Y.S. Park tail comb and clips are likewise essential.

MY MENTOR

My first boss, Polsinelli. He's an amazing artist, and he set me up to be one, as well.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Not losing all of my clips!

BEST PIECE OF ADVICE I EVER GOT

Set a long-term goal; when you work hard toward something many doors will open along the way.

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

Some of my best moments have come when I was onstage or teaching a classroom filled with hairstylists. There's nothing better than having your peers say "thank you" for something you've taught them. It's a great acknowledgment and ranks right up there as one of my proudest moments.

NEXT STEP

I'll be teaming up with Director of Color Education Dean Roybal to get the color department at Planet Salon set up with an amazing training program for junior and senior staff. Becoming a color educator for Wella is also on my radar.