



SEA-side salon speak

Nail-sleuth **ANNA LEE** investigates the controversy that swims around the SEA salon community and its product speak

Www.salongeek.com is one of, if not, the biggest international web-based forum for beauty professionals, and I've been a member since 2006.

It was founded by Samuel Sweet and renamed Salongeek from Nailgeek to accommodate its expanding community and popularity while also extending to encompass other beauty genres.

I became a member about a year after I joined the nail industry and the wealth of knowledge it gave me helped me to become the successful CND ambassador I am today.

As much as I appreciate the amount of knowledge Salongeek has given me; as a person from a Chinese ethnic background, it's difficult for me to ignore the prejudice towards the SEA nail community that I have experienced on this forum across the years.

One of the discussion threads that frequently appears and frustrates many, is the subject of 'Powder Gel', which seems to be on most SEA salon menus. Many nail professionals don't believe such a product actually exists and quite rightly. Questions, such as whether the SEA community knowingly 'created' this product to fool the general public in order to create more revenue for themselves, are often discussed.

SEA techs have been known to apply a type of liquid & powder and then seal with a UV gel top coat calling it 'Powder Gel'. Nail professionals argue that there is a lack of credibility in the way that this product is sold to the clients. As a professionally trained CND nail tech and someone who has been working closely with the SEA community for the last 18 months, I had already investigated this issue and here's what I found.

It is correct to say that any product that is dipped into a liquid and then into a powder is in fact called 'liquid & powder nails' or 'acrylic nails'. Gel products usually

come in a pot and are a ready-made (premixed) form of gel substance. These are two different types of product, so therefore calling a product 'Powder Gel' is indeed rather misleading. So where does this name come from and who named it? And is it true that all SEA techs know this product does not exist, but choose to fool their clients in order to charge a higher price?

To find out more, I asked these questions to some of my SEA students and the findings were relatively simple and interesting.

One of the main reasons why SEA salons have a 'Powder Gel' service is because the manufacturers that sell the powder gel describe them to the SEA salons as a 'powder gel'. It's not always that the SEA salons deliberately mislead their clients. Sometimes, they are misled themselves, not least because of their lack of English and chemical knowledge. The truth is that some salons do not actually understand what 'powder gel' is and are selling it according to what they've been told. It brings them business, therefore as owners of extremely busy salons, they do not feel the need to question it.

So take an obvious example of how this works. Take CND – it calls CND Shellac a 'Power Polish', therefore the salon sells that service as a Power Polish service recommended by CND, the manufacturer. It would not sell the service as CND gel polish, because that is not the manufacturer's recommended description.

Clearly, the problem stems from a lack of education, but it's not fair to accuse a person of deliberately misleading the general public, if that person does not have the knowledge themselves to know better; that person can only be described as misinformed. Many SEA nail techs are initially taught by fellow techs who lack education



themselves. It is then not surprising that they do not understand the chemistry and ingredients of the products that they're using. If they have been

taught that applying gel over L&P is called 'powder gel' and they should charge more for it, then that is what they will continue to do. That is also what they will be teaching the next person who learns from them.

Of course it's possible that there are some salons that deliberately mislead clients for their own advantage; but as nail professionals, we must understand that sometimes, it's not always the case. And, let's not forget, there are as many non-SEA salons that advertise CND Shellac, but are clearly not using it as a full system, instead mixing and matching with other brands and sometimes not even using CND Shellac at all! The product and brand name may differ, but the type of misleading technique and theory is the same. And this I've seen firsthand.

In order for a business to be successful, credibility is extremely important. It forms the backbone of the relationship between the salon and the client. So if you decide to provide a certain service, then it's important to get the necessary training with the host company in order to understand the product fully and know exactly what you're advertising. **S**

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