

Crepe de Chine top and triacetate skirt by Altuzarra. Makeup colors: Colorful 5 eye-shadow palette in Nude to Neutral and Rouge Cream Lipstick in Super Hot by Sephora Collection. These pages: Hair, Orlando Pita of Orlo Salon; makeup, Jeanine Lobell; manicure, Sheril Bailey. Prop stylist: Juliet Jernigan. Fashion editor: Paul Cavaco. Details, see Shopping Guide.

JESSICA ALBA WANTS TO MAKE YOU OVER



Sexy action-movie babe. Clean-living guru. Whichever version of Jessica Alba rings a bell, prepare yourself: She's got a whole new plan—for your face and for the world. **By Brooke Hauser**



The name Jessica Alba means different things to different people. To action fans, it conjures up scenes of sexy superheroes. To eco-conscious women across the country, it means safety and reliability—the hallmarks of products from her brand, the Honest Company. It's hard to think of another actress

who makes blockbuster movies *and* organic nipple balm, but Alba never did like being pigeonholed. "I've always been on my own path," says the star, who was recently on the cover of *Forbes's* issue on the richest self-made women in America.

Still, there are certain consistencies wherever Alba operates: She's smart, she's tough, and she has relentless drive. Since launching in 2012, the Honest Company has broken into the billion-dollar club, thanks to a fiercely loyal customer base. This month, Honest is introducing skin care and makeup, and with those launches, Alba's evolution continues. Still an actress—she recently appeared in the *Entourage* movie—Alba seems to truly come alive when discussing the finer points of creating and selling primers and eyeliners. "We have 5,000 to 7,000 touchpoints with our customers every day, and they've been telling us from day one that they want us to make beauty products," Alba says, sitting in a cozy office at the Honest Company in Santa Monica.

Touchpoints, heat maps, benchmarks: Alba drops MBA-worthy terms into casual conversation the way other actresses drop designer names, and at times our interview feels more like a boardroom presentation for potential investors. Some may find it hard to believe that this is the same person who rocked a lasso-and-leather-bikini combo as a stripper in *Sin City*, but running Honest is Alba's calling. Does she still feel strongly about acting? "I did," she says, notably using the past tense.

"What she stands for in her personal life is very different from the actress you see on TV or in movies. That's a job. This is more of a passion," says Honest's CEO, Brian Lee, one of the company's four cofounders. "She lives an honest life, and it exudes in everything she does. She uses fake grass throughout her entire yard [to conserve water]. When you go to her home, everything is reclaimed. Everything's recycled."

Most tellingly, 34-year-old Alba has reclaimed and repurposed herself into the head of a budding empire that's starting to go global. (Honest recently launched in South Korea, and there are hopes to expand into China.) She's hardly the first actress to pursue more job security outside of Hollywood with a lifestyle brand—and more than a few have inspired public vitriol. Alba is mindful not to come off as too perfect. "I try to do the best I can. That's it," she says. (Then again, she did write a book called *The Honest Life*, in which it is revealed that she whips up organic four-course

meals.) She's also aware of the fact that the media likes to compare her to Gwyneth Paltrow—and frankly, she's tired of it. "What I think is unfair is to lump actresses together," Alba says, irritated. "People aren't lumping Justin Timberlake and Ashton Kutcher together. They do other businesses. I think it's expected that when you get success in one area, you're supposed to evolve and try to do something else—especially in business, and especially if you're a man."

As the most visible face of Honest, Alba tries not to be pedantic, and for the most part she succeeds. But when prodded, she will tell you how she differs from other actresses turned entrepreneurs—without naming names. "I'm building a business around health and wellness, and it's a real social-injustice and human-health issue. That's what I'm trying to tackle, and because the government won't safeguard our families, companies have to," she says steadily. "I'm coming from a different place than other people."

It's a blurry line between crusader and capitalist, and she treads it carefully. A few critics have accused her of playing into consumer anxieties, but to Honest's faithful subscribers, Alba seems informed and sincere. More and more, they're looking to her as a reliable guide to living clean and green without going to extremes—or falling victim to fearmongering. "If you put *so* much information in front of people, they're going to feel paralyzed," Alba says. "Enough of this pointing fingers at each other and you have to live off the grid and eat everything plant-based. No. Everybody should have access to safe and healthy [products], and the information should just be easier to understand."

Alba believes in transparency when it comes to her products, but her private life is a different story. Still, she softens when asked about her husband, producer Cash Warren, the father of their two daughters, Honor, 7, and Haven, 4. "Gosh, it wouldn't really be possible without him," Alba says. "He helped me put together my initial business plan. He was always my biggest cheerleader but never gave me unrealistic expectations and never criticized me so much where I felt defeated. Having someone who genuinely has your back, no matter what, there's nothing like that.... It's a real unconditional love.... The partner that you choose to go through life with you, that's your chosen family."

Her family by blood also shaped her professional ambitions. The daughter of a French-Canadian mother and a Mexican-American father who was in the Air Force, Alba spent much of her childhood on military bases (the family did stints in Mississippi and Texas before settling outside of Los Angeles). She also spent a lot of time in hospitals, suffering from various ailments, including allergies, severe asthma, and pneumonia. At one point, she even had a collapsed lung. "It was traumatizing for me as a kid," says Alba, whose mother battled cervical cancer at the age of 22, when Alba was three years old, before getting a hysterectomy. "When I became a mom, I was like, Whoa. How do I just make sure that my kid is safe, that I'm safe? I want to be around and healthy."

Alba was pregnant with Honor when she first learned

"I never wanted to play into a stereotype, where it's like, 'Oh, you're just the girl who gets saved by the guy.' ... Women are freaking resilient."

Polyester blouse by Calvin Klein. Wool skirt by Akris. Makeup colors: Couture Variation 10-Color Eye Palette in 1 and Rouge Pur Couture The Mats lipstick in 203 by Yves Saint Laurent. Details, see Shopping Guide.



that some cosmetics companies were producing lipstick containing lead, “my big aha moment,” she says now. (Studies, including ones done by the FDA, have found that many lipsticks do contain trace amounts of lead as part of their coloring additives. The FDA’s 2011 report states that the tiny amounts pose no danger; consumer-advocacy groups, like the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, say that any amount is too much, especially for pregnant women.) Alba herself errs on the side of caution. “I don’t even want to put myself out there,” she says. “What’s the point of gambling?”

Wearing a long, flowy skirt, a cropped top, and black Jimmy Choos, today Alba is the picture of feminine power, but as a kid, “I was sort of disenfranchised,” she says. It wasn’t until she started taking acting lessons at the age of 11 that she found her niche. She landed a regular part on the television show *Flipper* and eventually had a guest spot on *Beverly Hills, 90210*. “Being on a set was the first time I really felt like I belonged somewhere,” she says. “I’ve only gone to high school in movies or TV shows.” (She was tutored on sets.)

When Alba was 17, *Titanic* director James Cameron chose her to play a genetically enhanced supergirl in his series *Dark Angel*. She credits Cameron with giving her an early taste of the kind of control that she came to crave. “He really included me in so many aspects of the show...all the moving parts, versus just ‘Show up; hit your mark,’” she says. Roles followed in *Fantastic Four* and a few movies that she doesn’t care to mention. “I mean, there’s so many bad ones,” Alba says with a smirk. “But they’re fun.... You learn from every experience you have, right? I wish I found my voice as a person earlier, though, because I felt like I had to just shut up and do what they wanted me to do, even though it went against how I really felt.”

In 2003, Alba starred in *Honey*, partly because she wanted to do a “fun dance movie that would inspire young girls—which was the opposite of where I was being pushed as an action, sex-symbol, fanboy girl,” she says. In the years since, she has pushed back even more, refusing roles that degrade women. “I never wanted to play into a stereotype, where it’s like, ‘Oh, you’re just the girl who gets saved by the guy,’ and she doesn’t know how to make decisions, and she gets overwhelmed with all this stuff happening around her,” she says. “Women are freaking resilient.”

She also avoided what is nearly a job requirement for young actresses lately: onscreen nudity. Her reservations stem from an underlying awareness of the skewed power dynamics in Hollywood. “If there’s a role where I feel comfortable doing that, sure. It’s just I never felt like being naked was going to make the movie any better. If anything, it was just going to exploit me for no reason.” She struck one compromise in the 2010 movie *Machete*, where her tight underwear was digitally removed for a shower scene.

It’s something of a natural progression that Alba is now spending more time behind the camera, and she seems to relish calling the shots. She recently oversaw production of a new Honest commercial, starring an interracial family of three—“Isn’t it cute? And they’re not actors!” she says after playing it for me at her desk—and she likes the idea of producing films someday: “If I can be in the driver’s seat, that would be more appealing than just being an actress.”

If anyone can make “clean” cosmetics look good, it’s Alba, whose complexion is genuinely so flawless that she looks airbrushed in person. It doesn’t hurt that she has spent the past two decades sitting in hair-and-makeup chairs around the world. “I’ve been getting my face put on since I was 12,” she says. Honest Beauty focuses less on being natural or organic and more on using many botanical ingredients and avoiding potentially harmful ones, such as parabens and phthalates. And Alba aims high: The products are meant to compete not with “natural” companies but with the likes of Nars and Laura Mercier. Early on, she collected some of her favorite beauty finds from around the world as inspiration for the line, which includes a Japanese-style powder cleanser. “It’s something that I’ve been using for years, and I always had to buy it in Japan,” she says.

As the company’s chief creative officer, Alba wants to change the “tree-hugger, granola” image associated with non-toxic products—and to elevate Honest skin care and makeup to A-list status. It’s hard not to buy into what she is selling: the vision for a healthier and more environmentally conscious world. Alba is motivated by generations both past and present. “When the going gets tough, women pull through,” she says, with the authority of someone who knows. ♦

Beauty Call

“I love a full brow,” says Alba, demonstrating her beauty-insider cred with the use of the singular. The Honest Company has new skin and makeup lines that include a brow filler. How did they make it? “It’s a secret sauce,” she says. But there are some beauty secrets she is willing to share.

Who taught you about beauty? “My mom. ‘Put your face on before you leave the house’—that’s her thing. I also was raised by my grandma on my dad’s side. She [used] one product: red lipstick. She dabbed it on her cheeks and put it on her lips, and that’s all she needed.”

What was your look in high school? “Nineties grunge. Doc Martens. I got my bellybutton pierced the second I could. I wanted to shave my head and pierce my nose, and my mom said she was going to make me stop acting. I was like, ‘Oh, that’s so mean.’”

What’s your biggest skin issue? “Dry and dehydrated skin. The hydrating mist [by Honest Beauty] is amazing.

That’s big for travel, also to refresh your makeup in the middle of the day.”

Do you wear fragrance? “Not usually. If I wear anything, I’ll wear a mix of some essential oils, like gardenia and jasmine, a little bit of vanilla. I like bergamot as well.”

What’s the worst beauty advice you’ve ever gotten? “That you need to pound on the powder to set your makeup. It’s just not true, and it looks cakey. Just spot where you need it.”

Have you ever had a bad spa experience? “I went to a Chinese-medicine reflexology place in the Bahamas. I think they were going for blood. I did cupping after that, and I ended up having, like, 12 bruises on my back—and that was relaxing, compared.”

What’s one part of your beauty routine that you don’t do around your husband? “It shocks him whenever I wear masks. Especially when I wear those big paper masks that make you look like a serial killer. My kids don’t like that, either.”



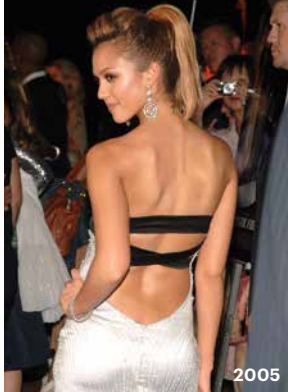
At the Golden Globes in Beverly Hills "Oh, dear. I had very skinny eyebrows, and they just look really intense. And it's too heavy under the eye. It looked better in person. It's more of an editorial [look] than it is for a red carpet."

2002



In Honey "When I was younger, in pop culture, there weren't a lot of people who looked like me. I got a lot of positive [feedback], a lot of young girls who were like, 'I'm mixed with this and that, and you look like me, and I feel like I'm represented.' So that was neat."

2003



At the premiere of Fantastic Four in New York City "I look like my mom. My mom is a redhead, and she's been dyeing her hair blonde since she was 15. [The dress] is covered in the front, and it's not showing anything. It's sexy but long."

2005

With Eva Mendes at a Chanel show in Santa Monica "She's so gorgeous. This was my first Chanel show. I wish I had that dress; it's very chic. It's girly, and I'm sort of embracing a little more of a girlie thing."



2007



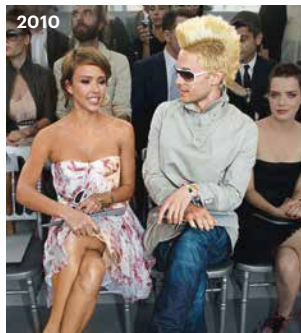
At the Academy Awards in Los Angeles "So pregnant. I remember I actually left the ceremony and went to In-N-Out instead of the afterparty. First put on sweats because my legs were aching. It's hard to be in heels when you're pregnant. A lot of people do, though. Kudos, man."

2008



In The Love Guru "That was very silly. Pretty clothes. I've never gone to India. That's one place I've never been that I want to travel to."

2008



With Jared Leto at a Dior show in Paris "Oh, God. I remember his hair. It was crazy. You know what, when you're that good-looking, you can do anything, right? He's beautiful."

2010

With Robert De Niro, Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson, and Dustin Hoffman at the premiere of Little Fockers in New York City "So many men. I did feel like a bit of a princess that night. I love Bob, and all the guys are really great. Dustin Hoffman, I was sick one day on set, and he sent matzo-ball soup and some orange juice to my house. It was so sweet."



2010



With Cash Warren at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute Gala in New York City "This was Ralph Lauren. I really loved this. You don't always feel glamorous when you're preggers, especially when you're this far along. But I felt really beautiful in this dress."

2011

At the premiere of Spy Kids: All the Time in the World in 4D in Los Angeles "Very pregnant. That was literally right before I had Haven. It was hard to find a dress that would fit. I'm not one of those 'I gain five pounds when I'm pregnant' girls. I gained 25 in my first two months. And the doctor was like, 'Twenty-five is all you should gain.'"



2011



At the Golden Globes in Beverly Hills "I loved that. It felt like old-Hollywood glamour but with a modern twist because the color was this coral... and then the really fun bag, and matching the lip with the dress. That was a really fun night."

2013



With Zac Efron and Rita Ora at the MTV Movie Awards in Los Angeles "They both have very, very good figures. I'm like, 'Check it out.' He is really attractive."

2014

With Warren and daughters Honor and Haven at a Helping Hand of Los Angeles event, where she received a Mother of the Year Award, in Beverly Hills "Ooh, my kiddos. I felt like it was early... like, I'm just getting started as a mom. But I think [accepting the award] was more about the company."



2014



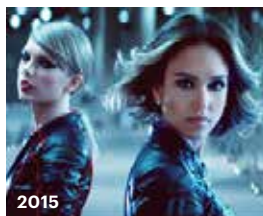
In Sin City: A Dame to Kill For "That was a pretty fun movie. It was hard, though. My hip flexors got really sore, because I'm not a dancer. I did this thing where I'd slam my hands, and it kept bruising my palms. I was inspired by Channing Tatum in Magic Mike, when he does the slide on his knees. I was like, I should do that. It kills your knees."

2014

With Aaron Paul and J. K. Simmons at a live reading of The Empire Strikes Back in Los Angeles "I've never done anything on stage before, ever. It's weird to hear your voice in a space like that. I found it as we were going along.... At the end of it, I liked it. In the beginning, I was so nervous that I couldn't enjoy it."



2014



2015

With Taylor Swift in Swift's 'Bad Blood' music video "Fierce. She is a cutie-patootie. It's unbelievable how sweet and lovely she is. You know what I like? I feel like I was really serious when I was in my early 20s, and she has the spirit of a kid. Not like a child, but she has this vibrant, fun, silly [side]. I was surprised by that."



2015

On the cover of Forbes "I'm wearing Narciso [Rodriguez], who is one of my best friends. It's business casual. We do have a tech company—we're not very stiff people. I've never been on the cover of Vogue, but I've been on the cover of Forbes."