

MAC Says 'Hello' to Kitty Collection

MAC Says 'Hello' to Kitty Collection

by [Julie Naughton](#)

Posted Friday November 21, 2008

From [WWD Issue 11/21/2008](#)

[Add Note](#)



Photo By: John Aquino

Hello Kitty items from MAC Cosmetics.

MAC Cosmetics has teamed up with Sanrio Global Consumer Products to create a Hello Kitty color cosmetics collection.

The line will arrive on MAC's Web site Feb. 10, in North American stores on Feb. 12 and into overseas stores in March.

"MAC has been mining pop culture since the brand was founded," said John Demsey, group president of the Estée Lauder Cos. Inc. "This is a sexy and innocent fashion line, and a true MAC moment. In these times, everyone can use a little fun — and a little Kitty."

"The partnership was a no-brainer," said James Gager, senior vice president and creative director of MAC Worldwide. "We cater to people who love to play with makeup."

While in many licensing partnerships, the licensor shops his or her property around, MAC went after Sanrio, Hello Kitty's owner, to do the deal. "They had never done makeup before, and I was certain that all those women who already own a bit of Hello Kitty would also want to own branded makeup," said Gager.

"We are thrilled to partner with a brand that shares the vision of offering an innovative, authentic and transforming experience to our loyal fan base," said Janet Hsu, president of Sanrio. Sanrio's worldwide retail sales of licensed products for 2007 is estimated at \$5 billion.

While the 34-year-old Hello Kitty character is usually assumed to be a cat, she is actually a girl, according to Sanrio. And a girl without a mouth, so she "speaks from the heart," the company said. "She may not have a mouth, but she's going to sell a lot of lipstick," cracked Demsey, noting that a waiting list for the items will go live on Jan. 7 at maccosmetics.com.

"To me, MAC Hello Kitty embodies the ultimate beauty icon," said Jennifer Balbier, senior vice president of product development for MAC Worldwide. "She's sweet and sexy, slightly edgy, and appeals to a wide range of customers. We wanted to reflect that through a sweet side, but also something slightly mischievous when it came to the colors. I started out by creating a palette of pinks, since they fit and always trend well in the spring. And this look is so much about the eyes that we did two eye shadow quads." The Lucky Tom quad has violet blue, brown, gold and pink-coral shades, while the Too Dolly palette has mint, blue-silver, pale pink and magenta shades.

"We incorporated glitter eyeliners because she loves anything that twinkles, and we took the coral and hot pink theme and did pretty, poppy [colored] blush," added Balbier.

While this collection is intended to have a sophisticated presentation, MAC hopes to appeal to younger fans with two shades of lip conditioners.

The Hello Kitty offerings fall into two collections: the Hello Kitty Colour Collection and the more high-end Hello Kitty Kouture. The bulk of the items are in the former category: six shades of lipstick with names like Fashion Mews and Strayin', each \$14; six Lipglass shades, each \$14; and two tinted lip conditioners, \$14.50 each; two eye shadow palettes, which each contain four shades and retail for \$38; two shades of pigment are \$19.50 each, and two Reflects Glitter stockkeeping units — one blue, one pink — are \$17.50 each. Four Glitter Eye Liners, each \$16.50, two shades of Beauty Powder, each \$22; three shades of nail polish, each \$11; a black mascara, \$12, and false lashes, \$12, round out the color offerings. Shades range from pinks and turquoises to lavenders and greens.

Hello Kitty Kouture is intended to be the high end of the collection. Two shades of Dazzleglass, each \$28, each feature a reusable silver chain pendant with Hello Kitty outlined in white Swarovski crystals on black with a pink crystal bow. Sheer Mystery Powder, \$90 and available in three shades, is packaged in a silver powder compact with Hello Kitty outlined in white Swarovski crystals with a pink crystal bow on a black background.

"We wanted to have affordable luxury and a high-low aspect, so it made sense to do the Hello Kitty Colour Collection and Hello Kitty Kouture," said Demsey.

The Hello Kitty Colour items, a Petite Makeup Bag, \$22, and a medium Makeup Bag, \$35, will be in all doors, currently about 581 department and specialty stores in North America including Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's and Macy's, as well as MAC's 138 freestanding stores in North America and at maccosmetics.com. Internationally, the items will be in 1,307 doors in 69 countries, including 296 MAC freestanding stores outside North America. Hello Kitty Kouture will be available at MAC stores and

maccosmetics.com only. At the maximum, the collection will be available for eight weeks.

A plush doll, \$42; purse mirror, \$22, and three-brush collection, \$49.50, will be available at MAC stores, Nordstrom doors and maccosmetics.com only. A mirrored key clip, \$16; beaded bracelet, \$34, will be sold in MAC retail stores and at maccosmetics.com only, and a tote, \$45 and soft vanity kit, \$55, will be exclusive to maccosmetics.com. These items are intended to animate the counter presentation and create an entire Hello Kitty world at retail, Gager noted.

While none of the executives would discuss sales projections, industry sources estimated that the limited edition MAC Hello Kitty collection could do upwards of \$12 million in North American retail sales. That projection is slightly larger than that of the hit Barbie collection.

In-store visuals, shot by Nick Knight, show the polar opposite aspects of the collection. One is an image of a blonde model holding a black vinyl Hello Kitty doll, which will be part of the accessory line. The other visual is what Gager terms “more of a dominatrix creature.” The point, said Gager, is to show that makeup can be transformative. Makeup was done by Val Garland, with hair by Sam McKnight.

And Demsey promises the surprises aren't over yet. “There will be more products to come in the next three months with this partnership,” he said.

WWD

Copyright ©2008 Fairchild Fashion Group. All rights reserved.