



BEAUTY

TO
BOLDLY
GLOW

Zoe Saldana may have starred in sci-fi blockbusters Star Trek and Avatar, but the Hollywood actress is surprisingly down-to-earth when it comes to staying beautiful

She has wowed audiences in some of Hollywood's top-grossing movies and now Zoe Saldana's latest role sees her following in the footsteps of some of the film world's legendary beauties. The 35-year-old was recently unveiled as the latest face of L'Oréal Paris, joining a roll-call that reads like a Who's Who of Hollywood, and includes Jane Fonda, Julianne Moore, Aishwarya Rai and Eva Longoria.

The beauty giant says Zoe is worth it and it's not hard to see why. The actress has two major roles coming up – playing Nina Simone in a biopic of the jazz legend and superhero Gamora in comic-book blockbuster *Guardians of the Galaxy*. And later this year she will start filming a trio of sequels to James Cameron's 2009 hit *Avatar*, in which she will reprise her role as blue-skinned alien Neytiri. For the moment, however, the self-confessed red lipstick addict is refreshingly comfortable in her own (envious) skin, as she talks exclusively to HELLO!'s beauty editor.

What is it like representing a beauty brand as iconic as L'Oréal Paris?

"I feel very grateful and humbled, but it also feels like it is happening at just the right time in my life. It's something I've dreamt of for a long time – to be honest, it was on my bucket list, so to be able to tick it off feels like Christmas."

Just what makes L'Oréal Paris such a great fit for you?

"I wanted to partner with a company that respected women and that constantly looks to offer things for all women of all colours, with as many skin tones and hair textures and lip sizes as there are in the world. I feel that, as an American woman of colour, I am in good hands."

Which products do you love best?

"Volume Million Lashes has been my favourite mascara for a couple of years now. I like it because my eyelashes grow in lots of different directions, so to have a good brush that combs through them, combined with a

product that doesn't flake, is important. Sometimes I don't have time to apply more mascara later in the day so I like a mascara that works in one great coat, and I honestly never travel without this in my purse."

Would you say you are high- or low-maintenance when it comes to your day-to-day looks?

"I'm always on the run because I'm such a workaholic so I'm pretty low-maintenance. A red lipstick and a ponytail and I'm good to go. I just need my basics: foundation, red lips, mascara and blush. That gets me through my day, every day. For me, less is more. I don't really wear foundation all over my skin; I'll just apply it where needed and pull my hair back in a ponytail."

Finding a great foundation that suits darker skin tones can be tricky. Has it ever been a problem for you?

"No, because L'Oréal True Match represents all women of all skin tones, not just the three or four cream shades. I like to call it the coffee colours in skin: there's espresso, cappuccino and latte, to mocha and Americano. That's the way I see it. My skin tone is very specific because of my heritage [her mum is Puerto Rican while her father came from the Dominican Republic], so to be able to find a foundation that I can apply easily myself – that matches but doesn't mask my skin – is ideal. I can go out in public, be really close to people and talk to them, and to have them compliment my skin is really good."

And is it true that you are a red lip addict?

"Yes, I always have at least three on the go; usually blue-based reds as they suit my skin tone."

I hear you are a fragrance aficionado, too...

"I own a lot of perfumes and particularly like the Frederic Malle collection – they are sensational. I wear Carnal Flower, Vetiver Extraordinaire and Portrait of a Lady." 

Your skin is great – how do you ensure it stays that way?

“Good hygiene. It sounds simple, but cleansing morning and night. I have to wash my face, especially after a day on set or after a red carpet event – even after walking in the city where you are surrounded by so much pollution and toxins settle on your skin. I have to wash with water; I don’t feel clean unless water touches my face. My favourite is a good, gentle, soap-free, wash-off cleanser.”

What about your hair?

“It is so unruly that I rely on hair serum and oil all of the time, just on the ends. I like it to look like a horse’s mane – completely uncombed and a bit bed-head.”

As an actress, how important do you think hair and make-up are in helping to create a character?

“Along with prosthetics and wardrobe they are the key elements in putting a character together, and they have the power to completely transform you as a person.”

Is it a process you enjoy?

“It depends. For Gamora in *Guardians of the Galaxy*, which comes out in August, make-up was a three- to five-hour process every day, six days of the week, for almost five months. That was challenging, but I’m happy that I did it.”

You recently finished filming *Nina*, the story of jazz legend Nina Simone. Did you enjoy portraying her?

“I felt a huge responsibility and a lot of pressure to be true to her, to respect her legacy because she was real and so iconic and one of the most beautiful women to walk this Earth. So in a way it was a difficult role for me. It was heartbreaking at times as it demanded a lot of emotional work, and some days I did not look forward to going into make-up and wardrobe and becoming this person; to walk in her shoes was sometimes not a happy place to be.”

Many of your roles – like superhero Gamora – have been very physical. Have you always been super-fit, and what sort of exercise do you prefer?

“Well, I used to be a dancer so moving comes quite naturally to me. But recently I began to associate working out with work so I took a break as I was tired. I swear by reformer pilates as it gets you fit in a very balanced and healthy way because you use your own body weight. It can help back, knee, shoulder

and hip problems, ease joints and get you in shape. Garrett Warren has been my stunt trainer in films for years; he gets me in shape for action roles, then I rely on Steve Moyer in LA who I met on *Avatar*. They are my go-to trainers for life.”

Do you have to watch what you eat?

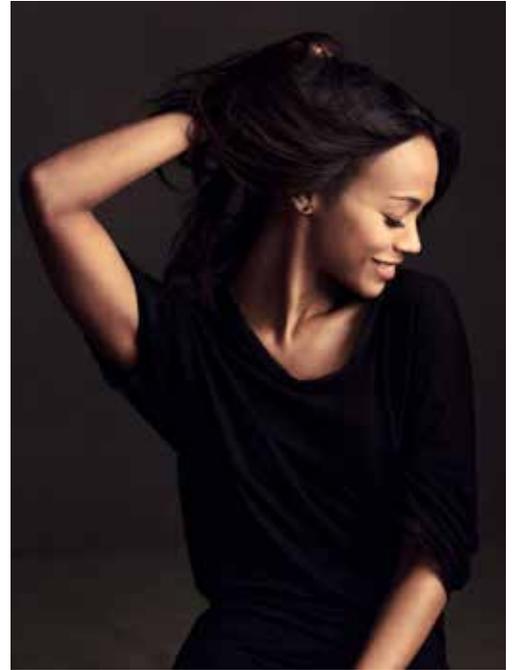
“Just recently I’ve been enjoying Chinese food and pizza a little too much. But, for me, food is about being healthy and having energy. I like to respect my body, treat it well and listen to it, to look after it from the inside out. I am a huge advocate of eating healthily – not for vanity but for health. I believe that as we overpopulate the planet and we mass-produce food we lose touch with nature and start to introduce chemicals that are not good for the body. I am a firm believer that cancer, for example, starts with what we put in our mouths. I’m not vegan or organic, I am simply a careful consumer. I want to know where my food comes from, how it has been produced and what has gone into it. That’s the least I can do for my body. Your job can fail you, your community can fail you, even your partner can fail you, but if your body fails you, you cannot go on.”

You have a busy time ahead of you filming three *Avatar* sequels back-to-back. How do you relax and pamper yourself in your downtime?

“When I was younger I couldn’t even get my nails painted as I was too impatient to wait for my polish to dry. But now I have spa treatments and I enjoy them because I work so hard.”

Finally, if there was one beauty trend you could change, what would it be?

“I would like to change the pressure put upon women to be hairless. Unless you choose to do it yourself, or for hygiene, then why should we conform to what men think is attractive? That, to me, is absurd and a waste of time.” ❏



ZOE'S MAKE-UP MUST-HAVES 1. L'Oréal Paris True Match Foundation No 5.5, £9.99 2. Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser, £8.99, from Boots – “I am meticulous about cleansing morning and night” 3. L'Oréal Paris Volume Million Lashes Excess in Black, £10.99 4. Frederic Malle Portrait of a Lady, £200, from lessentours.com 5. L'Oréal Paris Color Riche Lipstick in Red Passion, £8.19 6. L'Oréal Elvive Aqua Smooth and Polish Serum, £5.99 7. Senna Form-A-Brow Kit, £30.50, from oonaghbomanmakeup.com – “Because I’m obsessed with darkening my brows to give my face expression and definition” 8. Laura Mercier Crème Smooth Lip Colour in Hollywood, £21, Zoe’s lip colour of choice for the premiere of *Star Trek Into Darkness* in Los Angeles last year