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Led by Aubrey Gordon, the team at **Brows by Bree & Company** offers clients natural-looking permanent makeup applications for picture-perfect brows and lips. page 20

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Unbeatable Brows

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AT **BROWS BY BREE & COMPANY**
OFFERS CLIENTS NATURAL-
LOOKING PERMANENT MAKEUP
APPLICATIONS FOR PICTURE-
PERFECT BROWS AND LIPS.

BY LEIGH STUART
PHOTOS BY JODY ROBINSON

Permanent makeup solutions such as brow tattooing and lip tinting can be a wonderful option for women looking to enhance their natural beauty and self-esteem—but only in the hands of experts such as Aubrey Gordon, proprietor of Brows by Bree & Company permanent makeup studio.

“I started off doing hair and that turned into doing hair and makeup for bridal parties, proms, etc., but I started to gravitate towards makeup,” says Gordon, who started her Bucks County-based enterprise while attending Temple University as a communications and marketing undergrad. “I was actually modeling at the time, and I would help the other models with their makeup on shoots I was booked on.”

After graduating with a bachelor’s degree, Gordon took a position managing a respected local medical spa. It turned out to be a fortuitous start that led her down the path to her true calling.

“The medical spa focused on skin care and less invasive cosmetic treatments,” Gordon shares. “I loved the job, but when the company ended up going out of business, I was at a crossroads. I didn’t want to go back into corporate, and I missed hands-on creative work. A friend of mine who owns a tattoo studio is the one who suggested that I learn to tattoo makeup. It was one of those aha moments because I grew up hanging out in tattoo shops and had already had a basic understanding of the craft. I ended up apprenticing and ultimately starting my own company—Brows by Bree.”

Gordon attended Deluxe Brows Academy in 2016 where she first learned the technique of microblading. She worked in a microblading studio for six months before transitioning to a tattoo studio for her apprenticeship. She then decided to focus on the regular tattooing application of permanent makeup instead of microblading.



"I realized pretty quickly that microblading was not a good technique for most clients skin and is actually quite traumatic," she says. "It has been marketed as a natural-looking semipermanent solution for thin brows, which couldn't be further from the truth."

She then decided she wanted to educate the public about cosmetic tattooing, which she considered the best option.

"In this industry, it is very uncommon for people to have the same kind of educational background that I have in this industry," she adds. "A lot of time, women doing microblading or permanent makeup have just taken a weekend course. I'm extremely against that because of my background in tattooing; you're never going to learn everything overnight, nor should you."

"Apprenticeship is a process I offer all my other artists, too, because you need to know how skin reacts, needle size and placement, different situations you might run into, and color theory is huge," she continues. "You have to have a grasp of that and then practice on artificial skin for a very long time before moving to human skin. Typically people apprentice for three to six months."

Gordon's own apprenticeship focused in large part on body tattooing. She also supplemented that education by taking courses focusing on cosmetic enhancement.

"I learned to combine both of those worlds, and now I teach people that you need the fundamentals for it all," she says. "During my six-month apprenticeship in shops, I also took six online courses at the same time that focused on the application and theory of permanent makeup. There are differences in working on the face versus an arm or foot; the skin on the face is very different."

The biggest difference, Gordon explains, is in the pigment used. Whereas a regular tattoo ink is made with different components that will not break down and metabolize over time, permanent makeup pigment is designed for the body to metabolize and breakdown easier.

For anyone considering cosmetic enhancement, Gordon advises researching an artist carefully to ensure that the person has had a similarly high level of training and practice.

"A lot of clients we see have not had favorable results because they'll initially see someone who watched an online course and then tried to execute that on an actual person's face," she says. "Someone might see a person's Instagram and assume that person has the proper training, but that can be far from the truth because this industry is very new. That's why I'm adamant that clients do research to see about the education an artist has had."

Brows by Bree & Company offers saline removal for those wishing to undo subpar work done by someone else. Over the past year, Gordon estimates her enterprise has seen a five-fold increase in the number of clients seeking this treatment compared to when she first started. She attributes the increase to "a massive flooding of the industry leaving behind an aftermath of people living with botched work."

Where traditional laser tattoo removal can be extremely painful, saline removal is more comfortable. Not to mention, Gordon notes, if a person opts for laser removal, that person will likely lose the natural hair near the site of the tattoo removal.

"A laser penetrates the skin and breaks down the ink to be removed by the lymphatic system," Gordon explains. "We tattoo a saline and citric acid solution that penetrates the skin to push the ink out to the surface."

The difference between the two further underscores the need to research a practitioner before undergoing a permanent cosmetic procedure.

"You can't just go by pictures you see online," Gordon stresses. "What I suggest to everyone interested in getting this done is to check out an artist's website, see their material and 'about me' section and what background they had, and ask questions. Ask if they had an apprenticeship, how long they trained, and how many models they did before actually taking clients. Healed work is also huge."

With the right research, however, and with an apex professional at the helm, permanent cosmetics can save time and money—and enhance a person's pride in appearance.

"Cosmetic tattooing is something taken care of by a professional that the client then doesn't have to do every day," Gordon says. "A lot of women have insecurity about their appearance. Cosmetic tattooing is something I can give someone that helps them feel more comfortable every day. I feel that it's something I was meant to do." ■

➔ **Brows by Bree & Company**

600 Louis Drive, Suite 206
Warminster, PA 18974
(215) 767-9505

www.browsbybree.com