

# The Secret Lan

Whatever your eyes are saying, those arches above them (or lack thereof) Turn the page to see how a couple of tweak

WHAT HER BROWS SAY:

*"I'm surprised."*



WHAT HER BROWS SAY:

*"I'm arrogant."*

# Language of Brows

could be semaphoring something completely different—and unintended. How to create eyebrow-raising transformations. *By Jenny Bailly* ▶



WHAT HER BROWS SAY:  
*"I'm angry."*



WHAT HER BROWS SAY:  
*"I'm anxious."*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRIK ANDERSSON

**I** need a nap. Booring. I'm furious! Did you know that the shape of your eyebrows might be communicating a false message about what you're feeling? In a study published last year in the journal *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, researchers digitally altered a photo of a woman's face to create different eyebrow shapes and showed the pictures to 20 people, asking them to what degree the various photos conveyed emotions like fatigue, surprise, anger, sadness, or fear. "Even subtle variations in the brows had a significant effect on how the woman's mood was perceived," says John Persing, MD, a coauthor of the study and professor of plastic surgery at Yale University School of Medicine. Intrigued by the topic, we decided to conduct our own experiment. We found nine real women whose brows were telling the wrong story, and challenged master eyebrow expert Eliza Petrescu to set things right. With only her tweezers, wax, and pencils, could she help these women look as energetic, outgoing, and poised as they actually were? See for yourself—their radiant faces speak louder than words.

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**Maureen Haley, 42**

"Maureen's brows were too skinny and far apart," said Eliza. One also arched higher than the other, which made her seem disapproving. Eliza flattened the arch of Maureen's left brow by waxing underneath the inner corner and on top of the outer edge. She used a blonde pencil (a bit darker than Maureen's haircolor) to bring the inner corners of the brows closer to the bridge of her nose and to elongate their tails. Maureen's new brows—fuller and more balanced—give her a kinder, gentler countenance.



THE REAL MAUREEN:  
*Gracious,  
 accommodating*



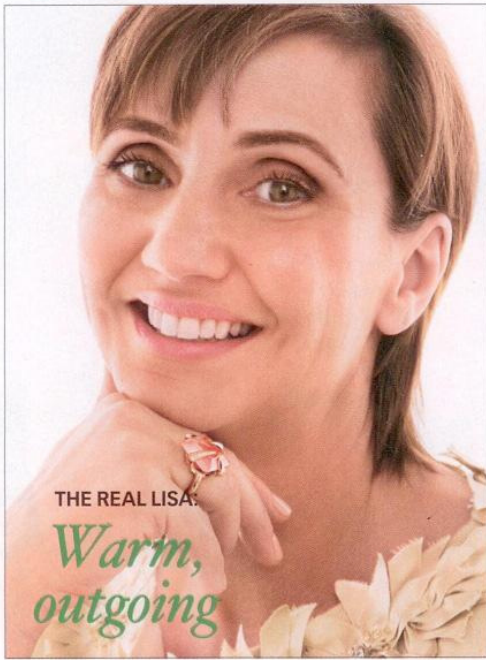
THE REAL ANGELA:  
*Serene,  
 kind*

WHAT HER BROWS SAY:  
*"I'm angry!"*



←  
**Angela Maria Santana, 50**

Angela's arches were very high and angular, and the inside corners of her brows slanted dramatically down toward her eyes. The result was a permanent scowl. Eliza lifted the inner quarter of Angela's brows by waxing away some of the hair underneath, then softened the arches by thickening the ends with a blonde pencil. Finally, because Angela's dark brows were too severe against her luminous skin and white hair, Eliza lightened them with the same pencil, making short, feathery strokes from beginning to end. "People always complimented my strong brows—I realize now it was because they were the first thing you saw," said Angela. "Now you'll see me."



WHAT HER BROWS SAY:  
"I'm exhausted."

←  
**Lisa Schalk, 52**

Lisa's brows were so close to her lids that they cast dark shadows over them. "I need to give her brows height and let the light into her eyes," said Eliza, as she waxed away any hairs that fell beneath Lisa's browbones. She also created a more prominent arch to make the lids appear lifted. "I look like the younger, more glamorous sister I never had," exclaimed Lisa when she saw her reflection. "Now I need a whole new wardrobe!"



## Eliza's 3 STEPS to Faking Fuller Brows *(Without Looking Like Joan Crawford)*

**1** Use a soft brow pencil with a slightly powdery texture (if it's too creamy, the color will smudge). It should be at least two shades lighter than your haircolor—unless you have white or very blonde hair. In that case, choose a pencil two shades darker than your hair. Eliza actually used one of only two colors—medium blonde and brunette—on all nine of these women. If you have very dark skin and dark hair, you can use a charcoal brow pencil—but no one should ever use black.

**2** With a spoolie (the wiry brush often found at the end of a brow pencil), brush brow hairs down, then softly trace (don't press) the pencil along the brows' upper edges. Brush hairs back in place.

**3** Fill the inner corners and tail ends with light, short strokes of the pencil. Run the spoolie over the entire length of the brows to soften and blend the color.

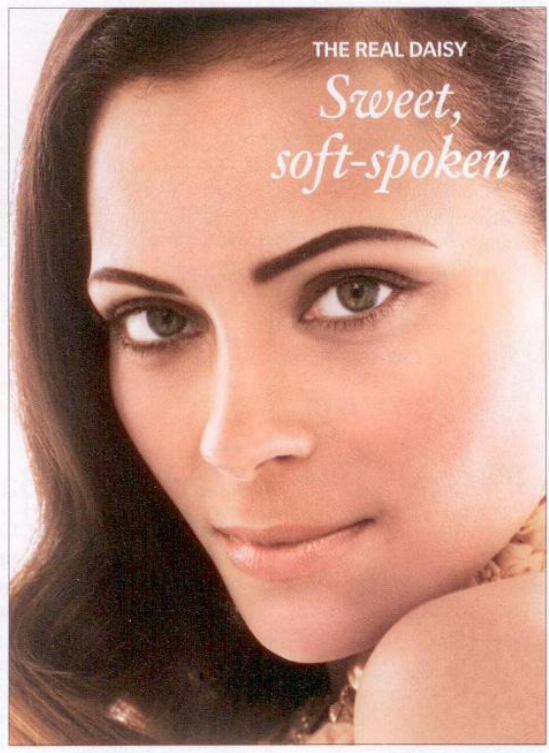
**\* A NOTE ON TIMING:** Fill in your brows after you apply foundation but before eye makeup. You will probably find that once they're more defined, you'll need less liner and mascara to look bright eyed.

*Turn to Love That! on page 192 to learn about the best products for fixing common brow problems at home. For more amazing brow makeovers, go to [oprah.com/omagextrs](http://oprah.com/omagextrs).*



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**Daisy Montanez, 37**

"The space between Daisy's eyes and her brows is perfectly proportioned—the same width as her eyes—but she tweezed way too much hair from the top, making her brows incredibly thin," said Eliza, who entreats her clients to "never ever pluck above the brows—it's too easy to overdo it." And when brows become as skinny as Daisy's, they not only add years to your face but also create a pinched, severe expression. Eliza thinks it will be a good while before Daisy's brows grow back; in the meantime, she bulked them up by tracing a brunette pencil along their upper edges, then brushed through them with a clean spoolie to ensure soft, natural lines that mirror Daisy's delicate features—and gentle personality. ▶

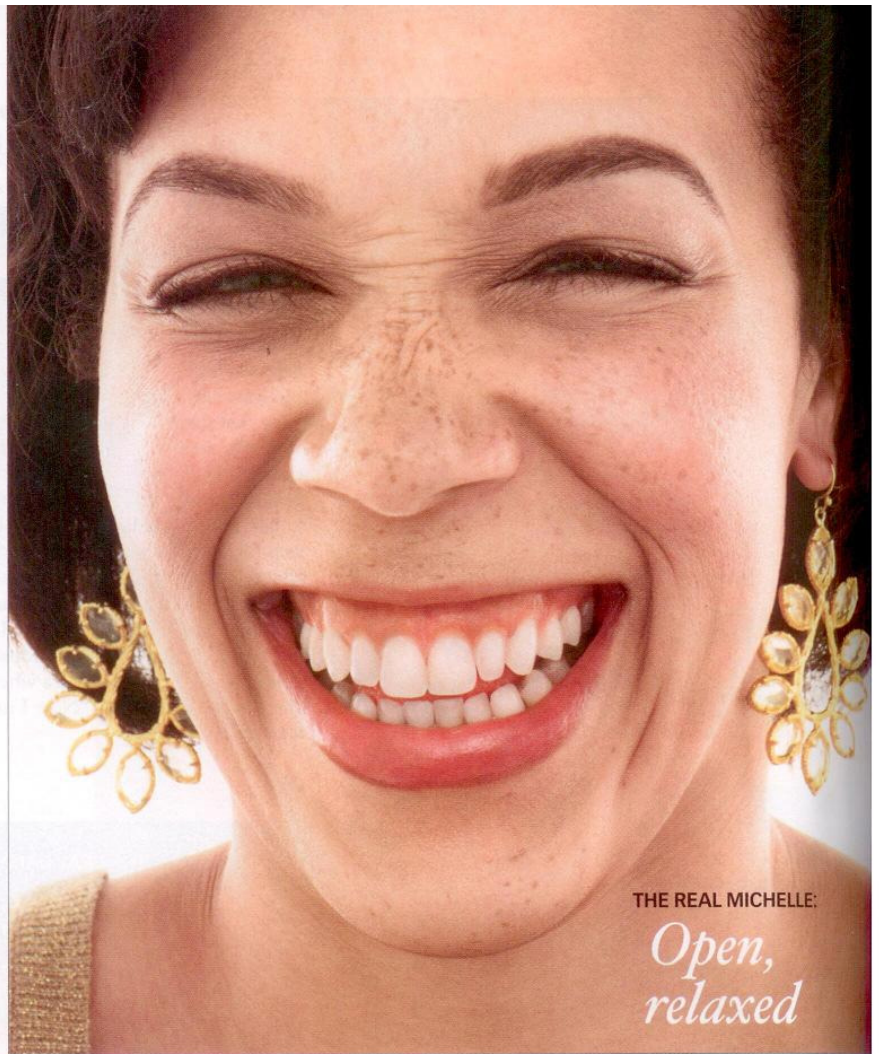


WHAT HER BROWS SAY:  
*"I'm anxious."*



→  
**Michelle Falchenberg, 35**

Michelle had overlooked her brows at both the inner corners and the ends, so they were only about half the length of her eyes. "Short brows make all your features seem closer together, which creates a tense expression," said Eliza, who waxed away a little bit of hair underneath Michelle's brows to make a soft arch before using a blonde pencil to fill the inside corners (lining them up with the outer edges of her nostrils). Eliza used the same pencil to elongate the tail ends, tapering them about a quarter inch past Michelle's eyes and lifting them up a bit "to make her face look more open and alive."



THE REAL MICHELLE:

*Open,  
relaxed*

THE REAL CATHERINE:

*Easygoing,  
unaffected*



WHAT HER BROWS SAY:  
*"I'm surprised."*



←  
**Catherine Baker, 53**

After years of tweezing, Catherine's brows had become thin and were positioned too high. "When you have a lot of space between your eyelids and your brows, not only do you look surprised but your eyes seem smaller than they are," explained Eliza. And because the color of Catherine's brows had faded, she also looked a bit washed-out. "All I have to do is wax away the light peach fuzz above and below Catherine's brows, and they'll instantly stand out more," said Eliza. She then used a blonde pencil to fill them in underneath, lengthen the ends, and even out patchy areas. The pencil also darkened Catherine's brows enough to define them without making them too harsh against her pale skin.

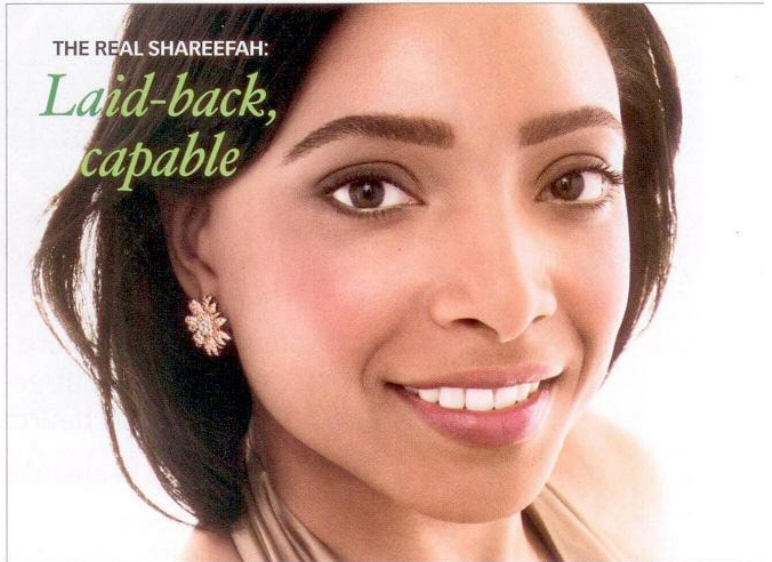
WHAT HER BROWS SAY:  
*"I'm confused."*



→ Shareefah Mapp, 30

The most flattering arches peak above the outer edges of the irises. "Shareefah's arches were too close to her temples, which gave her a dazed expression," said Eliza. "They also weren't doing anything to complement her gorgeous almond-shaped eyes." To move the arches inward, Eliza waxed hair from underneath the inner half of her brows and filled in the ends with a brunette pencil. The result brings a beautiful symmetry and confidence to Shareefah's face.

THE REAL SHAREEFAH:  
*Laid-back,  
capable*



THE REAL MARIA:  
*Thoughtful,  
considerate*

← Maria Ramos, 48

Maria's brows were too thick at the inside corners and overplucked everywhere else—an unfortunate shape that Eliza gives an equally unfortunate name: "the sperm." When brows are so unbalanced, it creates a sullen appearance. To make Maria's brows—and her perceived mood—softer and more even, Eliza thinned the inner area with wax and a little trimming. She then used a blonde pencil to bulk them up, both on top and under the arch. She went over a few stray white hairs with a thicker, slightly darker pencil—and warned Maria not to start plucking them: "If you do, eventually you'll have no brows left."


WHAT HER BROWS SAY:  
*"I'm bored."*

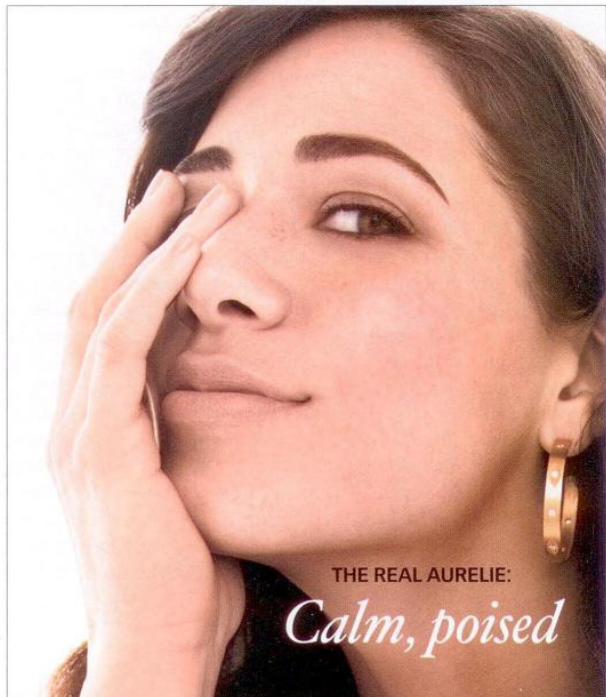


WHAT HER BROWS SAY:  
*"I'm depressed."*



→ Aurelie Barthaux, 31

Aurelie retired her tweezers about a year ago, after noticing that her brows had become too thin. Lucky for her, they grew back thick and lush—but also became a bit too boxy, with a downward slant at the ends that made her eyes look sad and droopy. "Raising those tails will instantly take the sad look away," said Eliza, as she waxed just beneath them. She also thinned the inner corners a bit from underneath to create gentle arches that brightened Aurelie's eyes even more. 



THE REAL AURELIE:  
*Calm, poised*