

WAXES AIN'T WAXES

EVER WONDER WHAT THE DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN ALL THOSE WAXES?

By Lilliane Caron.

Waxing is a salon's bread and butter. As a highly conducted treatment, perhaps we need to consider what makes each wax different when selecting what we put in our wax pot.

As beauty students we move into the salon environment continuing to use the wax we were taught with, like some sort of heirloom. This is partly due to our experience when we first go into a beauty wholesale store. We are given a huge variety of options but little opportunity to try or learn about the products so we just go with what is familiar.

We put a massive amount of research into the skincare brands we use and sell but give far less attention to the product that makes our salons able to run day to day.

At school we are taught how to apply wax but not the difference between them in order to make an informed choice. With such a broad range of clients these days, there has never been a higher need to be proficient with a spatula using both strip and hard waxes. Fears associated with the use of hard wax still exist today. However, technology teaches us that with a little product research, there's no need to fear.

To make a truly informed choice, we need to look at the core ingredient in wax – resin. This ingredient is the base of all strip and hard waxes and generally the first ingredient you will see on a label. Over the years, the resins used in professional waxes and the processes to manufacture them have become more refined. To make it easy, there are two real categories we can put resins into, those derived from the sap of trees (generally pine or fir trees) and those that are synthetic (man-made).

Usually we are told "natural" is better but when it comes to pine (tree) resin in waxes, unrefined resins can cause allergic reactions and product instability. Tree resins are generally referred to as Colophonium, or Rosin, on the ingredient listing, but unfortunately you are not going to know if it is good quality until you open the jar. Resins are cheaper to buy if they have strong smells or dark colours and the parts of the resin that cause this also generally cause a negative reaction in the client. If the wax has a strong acid/chemical smell or a very dark brown, dirty colour then it will also probably be very cheap to buy and be more likely to cause a negative reaction. If you are trying a new wax, alarm bells should ring if clients are breaking out with itchy, red skin after or during a treatment. Hard waxes will become brittle and snap off which can lead to hair breakage and bruising of the skin if they are made from inferior grade resins.

In saying this, there are pine resin waxes that have been somewhat refined to help avoid causing the contraindications listed above. These waxes are generally mid-price range and, although not the pinnacle, will do the job well enough without causing harm to the client. Top of the range synthetic resins are much safer, more consistent in production batch to batch and easier for the therapist to work with. Synthetic resins are usually declared as hydrocarbon resin or polycyclopentadiene. As with tree resins, synthetic resins can be purchased in lower grades with similar issues. High quality synthetic resins are easy to colour and fragrance and often appear fresh and clean. Pure white waxes can only be made from the best synthetic resins available. They provide the manufacturer with better quality control over the product and in turn give the therapist confidence in the treatment being performed.

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Lilliane Caron is Owner & Director of Waxxxpress.

If you'd like to ask Lilliane Caron for some advice on your own salon, email info@waxxxpress.com

