



REFLECTING MIRRORS
The range of Opticote's colored mirrors

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

RATHER THAN DOING MIRROR COATINGS IN-HOUSE, SOME LABS ARE OPTING TO OUTSOURCE THEM.

BY CAROL GILHAWLEY

"Mirrors are not new but we're in one of those cycles where they're popular," says Mike Tamerius, co-owner of Precision Optical Group (P.O.G.). "ECs are asking for 30 to 40 different colors of mirrors and it's difficult for labs to be competitive. It's more important to have a partnership with an independent coating lab that has a range of colors instead of trying to fill that niche."

These coatings can be applied to virtually any lens style or material including polarized and Transitions® lenses. To make the coating process economical, labs need to fill up their AR chambers. If they have large AR

machines they either can coat a popular color or wait for a large number of orders to come in. Labs with smaller AR coating machines might be more willing to do specialty colors.

FASTER TURNAROUND

Turnaround time and depth of colorations are the two reasons a lab might decide to outsource

Mirror coatings are growing and comprise about 8% to 10% of iCoat's Rx eyewear.

mirrors to a specialized coating company like Opticote or iCoat Co., LLC. "Opticote has six mirror colorations for which we offer same-day service," offers MI-

chael Bellomo, Opticote's director of sales and marketing. "We can do gradients and double-gradient mirrors in two days. More complex colors that require several coatings can take three to four days." Because coatings

are not their core business, labs often cannot match this level of service, according to Bellomo. As a result, Opticote works with over 150 labs within the U.S. Bellomo

sees increased activity with single gradients while double gradients are favored by the active sportsperson.

COOL COLORS

US Optical, LLC, produces Carl Zeiss Vision, Inc.'s flash mirrors in cool silver, cool blue, and cool gold in its Zeiss AR room. "Mirror coatings are very popular with blue, green, and silver being the most fashionable solid colors, and solid silver flash the most widely used," states Kathy Martin, customer service representative in charge of mirror coatings. "Gradient silver has also gained status by achieving diverse looks when placed on ei-

ther solid or gradient tinted lenses," she adds. The popularity for mirror coatings continues year-round with many winter sports using them too.

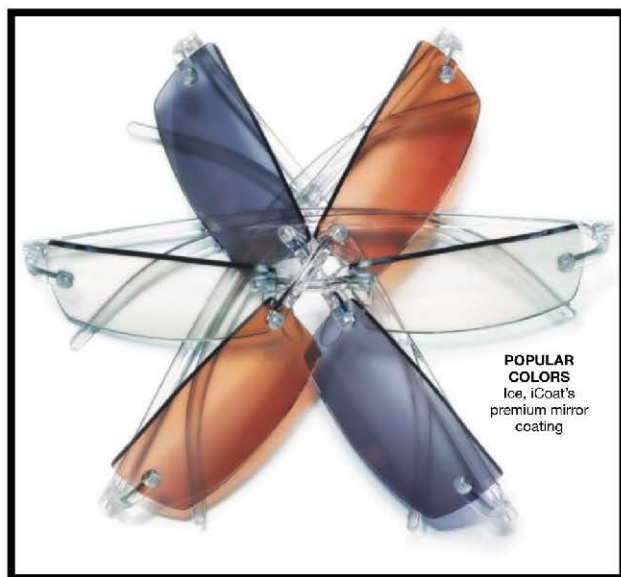
TRANSITIONS' ATTRACTION

John Ligas, director of research and development at Transitions Optical, Inc., says mirror coatings are making a comeback based on what he sees others wearing and what he wears himself. "Like gradient lenses, which also seem to be more popular now, it's a fashion trend that is circling back. Personally, I like the look. The couple of pairs I have are a Transitions®

XTRActive™ lens with a flash mirror coating." Photochromics can work well with flash mirror coatings. "This is especially true with our Transitions XTRActive lens because of how dark it gets," he adds. "In their unactivated state you will only see a slight flash of color, when the lens darkens it will become a full mirror, which is a really nice look. The only caveat is when the lens is activated you will see more of the flash mirror color. So, if you have a blue flash mirror coating, you will see more of the complementary yellow color when you look at white objects."

POPULAR PRESCRIPTIONS

Mirror coatings are growing and



comprise about 8% to 10% of iCoat's Rx eyewear asserts Imtiaz Hasan, marketing manager. Started as a coating company, iCoat now operates a 24,000-sq.-ft. full service lab for surfacing, finishing, and coating in Los Angeles, CA. Hasan says mirror coating is a trend that people

to either uncut or edged lenses that already have a lab-applied or factory hardcoat. Both products come standard with a premium backside AR coating. iCoat's mirrors come in nine colors—silver, blue, and gold are the most popular for sun and sports eyewear—and in two different densities.

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are realizing can be beneficial to their eye health. For example, mirrors can add additional protection from UV rays to polarized lenses.

iCoat offers two mirror products: Ice™, its premium coating that is scratch resistant by having a double-sided, thermally cured dip hardcoat and is applied only to lenses in uncut form; and Fusion Ice™ which can be applied

Flash mirrors have a hint of color with reflectance ranging from 10% to 15%, whereas solid mirrors appear opaque with reflectance around 30%.

Going forward, Hasan expects to see "a growing popularity for prescription sports eyewear utilizing premium mirror coatings."

Carol Gilhawley is Senior Editor of VCPN.

WHERE TO FIND IT: Carl Zeiss Vision, Inc. 800-358-8258 • zeiss.com/lenses // iCoat Co., LLC 800-832-2628 • iccoatcompany.com // Opticote, Inc. 800-248-6784 • opticote.com // Precision Optical Group, Inc. (P.O.G.) 800-497-9239 • precisionopticalgroup.com // Transitions Optical, Inc. 800-848-1506 • essilortransitions.com // US Optical, LLC 800-445-2773 • usoptical.com