



NEW ZEALAND NAIL COMPETITION – 2026

SALON TRENDS – RULES AND GUIDELINES

See a pattern emerging in salon? notice you have a go to design style? Then this category is for you. Aiming for creativity without extreme designs or intricate portraits –those are better reserved for our Flat Art categories. Create your dream “Mani of the month” Something that screams you and that you could easily reproduce on demand without thinking much about it. Your canvas consists of 10 nail tips, each mimicking real nails in various sizes. There is no theme so go ahead and unleash your self-expression. The nail can be any shape you feel best suits the vision but must not exceed 2 inches in length. If desired, provide a brief description of the techniques or more detail on the meaning behind your work.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- This is a submitted art category.
- The New Zealand Nail Competition welcomes qualified, certified, and currently training Nail Technicians.
- The design is to be created over 10 full cover fingernail tips, varying in size to reflect an actual set of nails.
- The chosen design should reflect a well-executed set of “salon art” styled nails that can be reproduced easily. –portrait styled or extreme/micro-detailed art is better suited to our Flat Art categories.
- The nails can be any shape but be no longer than 2inches
- Nails are to be securely attached onto a black board or foam/card no larger than 15cm x 20cm.
- A minimum of 3 nail art mediums must be used in your design.
- All nail art products are allowed, including but not limited to, gel polish, gel paint, acrylic (L&P), foils, glitter, studs, crystals, bullion beads, pigments, chromes, pearls, charms, chains etc.
- No stamping art allowed. Try our Stamped Art Category.
- Any raised or 3D elements of the design must not extend more than 10mm in any direction from the surface of the nail.
- Anonymous presentation: No names, logos, or identifying marks on the entry or display.
- Optional (roughly 150-word) description + step-by-step
- All general and submitted art rules/guidelines apply.



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SUBMITTED ART – RULES AND GUIDELINES.

SUBMITTED ART RULES & GUIDELINES

- Copyright is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted characters, logos, or recognisable intellectual property (e.g. Disney, Warner Bros, movie or TV characters, brand logos). Any copyright or trademark breach will result in immediate disqualification.
- All submitted artwork must be original, exclusive, and created specifically for the New Zealand Nail Competition. Entries must not have been entered into any other competition worldwide.
- All submitted artwork must be fully completed prior to submission.
- Competitors must submit their own work only. The Head Judge reserves the right to request a verbal explanation or ask a competitor to recreate a portion of the work to verify authenticity.
- Nail tips may be commercially purchased or custom made. Handmade tips must reflect commercial proportions and a natural C-curve.
- Mystery images will be emailed by April 6th 2026
- It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure artwork is submitted on time.
 - **Postal submission cutoff:** We recommend you send by Sunday 26 April 2026
 - **Arrival cutoff date for Sub Art:** Thursday 30th April – Artwork will be taken to Hamilton for scoring. Winners will be announced May 3rd via our social media channel. Entries will be on display at the Nail Central Nail Expo.
 - **Arrival cutoff date for Poster:** Sunday 26th April via email. nznailcomp@gmail.com. where work will be uploaded for online Judging, winners announced May 3rd
 - **Poster –Peoples choice:** All poster entries are open to public voting on Sunday the 3rd May winner announced May 4th. This includes all divisions and all 3 poster categories.
- Artwork descriptions may be included. These must be short, legible, contain no brand names, and are not judged.
- Artwork must be displayed within the size requirements for the category. Exceeding size limits will result in a 5-point deduction and may result in non-display.
 - Do not name or label your work. Or any attached description.

COMPETITOR CONDUCT

- Entries cannot be shared online before the awards ceremony.
- Work must be completed solely by the competitor.
- Competitors are responsible for return shipping, packing, and any insurance.
- Competitors and models must act professionally and respectfully toward judges, staff, sponsors, and other competitors at all times.
- Conduct that brings the New Zealand Nail Competition into disrepute, including online behaviour, may result in penalties, disqualification, or refusal of future entry.
- Observing these rules ensures fairness and protects the integrity of the competition.

PACKAGING & SHIPPING:

- The 2026 New Zealand Nail Competition is a submitted art only event.
- Competitors must send entries to: NZ Nail Competition at 301 Riverslea Road North, Parkvale, Hastings, 4120, New Zealand.
- Entries must be emailed to the nznailcomp@gmail.com by Sunday 26th of April 2026
- When required competitors are responsible for any insurance.
- When required competitors are responsible for supplying a pre-paid self-addressed postage bag for the safe return of their artwork.
- The NZ Nail Competition takes no responsibility for loss or damage before or after the entry/entries are in our care.



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SALON TRENDS – JUDGING CRITERIA & SCORING

JUDGING CRITERIA & SCORING

Judging Criteria – Competitors will be assessed on 7 criteria, scored 0–10 for each, a total of 70 points:

SCORE DESCRIPTION

- 0 – Not achieved
- 1 – Beginner, requires considerable improvement.
- 2 – Novice, skill in development
- 3 – Advanced Novice, fair demonstration of skill
- 4 to 5 – Competent, showing good skill level
- 6 to 7 – Accomplished, great level of skill and control
- 8 – Proficient, exceptionally good, approaching excellence
- 9 – Expert, nearly flawless, demonstrating superb skill
- 10 – Mastery, flawless in all aspects, epitome of mastery.

SCORING, PLACING & DECISIONS

- All category divisions require a minimum of three competitors to award first place.
 - If fewer than three competitors enter a category, competitors may move to the next eligible division or receive a credit or refund.
 - In cases where this is not possible a Highly commented medal will be awarded to symbolise first place and the competitor will not move onto the next division.
- If a category has only three competitors, only first and second place will be awarded.
- Marking for our Poster Categories are done online, typically with international artists.
- In the event of a tie or scoring dispute, the Head Judge will make the final determination.
- The Head Judge's decision is final.
- Score sheets will be made available to competitors following the event.

POINT DEDUCTIONS, PENALTIES & DISQUALIFICATION

- 5-point deductions may apply for minor rule breaches (e.g. display size violations).
- 10-point deductions may apply for moderate breaches that affect compliance but not judging integrity.
- Immediate disqualification will occur for serious breaches, including:
 - Use of copyrighted material
 - Submitting work not completed by the competitor
 - Intentional division misrepresentation
 - Sharing work prior to prize-giving
 - Attempts to influence judging
- Unprofessional or disrespectful behavior may result in deductions, disqualification, or temporary to permanent bans.
- All penalties are signed off at the discretion of the Head Judge.



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SALON TRENDS – 7 JUDGING CRITERIA

• EXPERTISE AND TECHICNAL SKILL

Demonstrates the competitor's ability to apply techniques with precision, control, and confidence. Judges will consider how well the chosen techniques have been executed and whether the result reflects a high level of craftsmanship appropriate to the competitor's division. The overall design should represent the artist's current skill level at its best.

• COLOUR THEORY

Colour choices should enhance the overall impact of the design. Judges will consider how the colour palette works in harmony to support the theme or emotion of the piece for example, through contrast, balance, or visual emphasis on focal elements. Effective use of colour should guide the viewer's eye and evoke feeling.

• PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

Competitors must demonstrate understanding of a variety of professional nail mediums and how they interact. At least three (3) distinct nail products or mediums must be incorporated and used intentionally to enhance the design. Judges will assess how effectively these mediums have been chosen, combined, and controlled to create a cohesive and artistic result.

• VISUAL DESIGN

Judges will look for balance, proportion, and flow throughout the set. The artwork should carry a sense of rhythm across all ten nails while each tip remains visually appealing on its own. Consider overall composition – is the design cohesive, evenly balanced, and free from overcrowding or empty space?

• PRODUCT CONTROL AND WORKMANSHIP

This category assesses how well the competitor maneuver nail products and maintains cleanliness of finish. Examples include smooth and even gel application, controlled placement of embellishments, and flawless finishes free from streaks, bubbles, dust, or excess adhesive. Finishing details should reflect care, precision, and professional presentation.

• UNIQUENESS

Judges will consider the originality and creative interpretation of the design. This may be shown through colour use, concept, or execution of familiar techniques in a fresh way. Competitors are encouraged to think beyond trends and express their personal artistic identity.

• OVERALL IMPRESSION

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RULES, GUIDELINES & ENTRY CONDITIONS

ELIGIBILITY & ENTRY

- The New Zealand Nail Competition welcomes qualified, certified, and currently training Nail Technicians.
- The New Zealand Nail Competition reserves the right to accept or deny any entry at its discretion.
- Competitors must enter the highest division they qualify for. It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure correct division entry. Incorrect entry may result in disqualification without refund.
- Competitors and models must be 16 years of age or older.
- Competitors who do not understand English must arrange their own translator.

ENTRY FEES, REFUNDS, TRANSFERS & CREDITS

Entry Fees

Entry fees contribute directly to the planning and delivery of the event with significant upfront and non-recoverable costs. For this reason, all entry fees are non-refundable. Credit for future NZNC events may be given on a case-to-case basis.

Transfers & Changes

- Name changes and competitor transfers are permitted.
- Category changes are permitted, provided space allows and placement eligibility is not affected (minimum three competitors required to award first place).
- After the registration cut-off date (1 April 2025), Transfers, name changes, or category changes will be accepted but incur an admin fee of \$20ndz

Credits

- Credits may be issued in limited circumstances at the discretion of the organisers.
- Credits are valid for the next New Zealand Nail Competition only, and have no cash value.

Cancellation or Postponement

- If the event is cancelled, a full refund will be issued.
- If the event is postponed, competitors may transfer their entry to the new date or receive a refund minus third-party processing fees (including Wix and Stripe), administration costs, and non-recoverable expenses.

No Refund Circumstances

Refunds or credits will not be issued due to change of mind, illness, injury, travel issues, scheduling conflicts, failure to attend, or failure to read or understand the rules.

MEDIA, LIABILITY & FINAL AUTHORITY

- Photo and video content may be captured for promotional use. Entry constitutes consent unless opted out in writing prior to the event. nznailcomp@gmail.com
- Competitors participate at their own risk. The New Zealand Nail Competition is not responsible for injury, loss, or damage to personal property.
- Any situation not explicitly covered in these rules will be ruled on by the Head Judge and event organisers.
- The New Zealand Nail Competition reserves the right to amend these rules at any time.