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Why Italian skincare brands lead the way

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SUSTAINABLE ITALY SPECIAL

Bellezza Gentile

As demand grows for skincare products that are genuinely ethical, natural and sustainable, a clutch of independent Italian brands is leading the charge, writes **Jenny Oldaker**

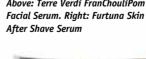
















Honieh

DE OX



FURTUNA SKIN

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he mainstream beauty ndustry has long been associated with some dubious eco-credentials, from the use of cosmetic chemicals to the production of around 120 billion units of packaging each year. However, the chemical-rich, packaging-heavy products of big multinational companies are being increasingly challenged by the growth of more ethical skincare and cosmetics brands and entrepreneurs who are placing their emphasis on natural, organic ingredients and planet-friendly packaging.

And where better for these entrepreneurs to find inspiration than Italy? The land is home to a dizzving array of beneficial natural ingredients and medicinal plants, perfect for developing potent products to nourish and soothe, while respecting the environment.

Here we meet the people behind some of Italy's beautiful green skincare brands to find out more...



Alessandra De Gregorio is the Founder of Terre Verdi, an eco-luxe skincare range inspired by her upbringing in the Sicilian countryside.

How did Terre Verdi begin?

Terre Verdi launched in 2013, but my passion for the environment started much earlier. I grew up in Sicily, where I learned to appreciate the natural world on my father's and grandmother's organic farms. Later on, I studied finance in New York City and worked in London, but the constant rush eventually led me to switch gears. I wanted to get back to a more connected way of living. I retrained in holistic skincare and aromatherapy, and began creating eco-friendly formulas. Terre Verdi was a return to my love of all things organic.

What makes your products special?

The green beauty industry is extremely competitive, so it's important to us that our skincare products really stand out. Yes, they are cruelty-free, vegan and natural, but we make an extra effort to exceed customer expectations. Every aspect of the range has sustainability at its heart, from the fully recyclable packaging to



the botanical ingredients. Our brand is built on connections: a love of family, nature, and the beauty of the Mediterranean region. Our ethos is 'embracing the planet as much as we embrace ourselves', and our official credentials, which include COSMOS organic certification by the Soil Association and Cruelty Free International, help validate this stance.

Which are your most popular products?

I love FranChouliPom Nourishing Facial Serum at night and I cannot start the day without some NeroliPom Moisturiser. These antioxidant-rich and hydrating blends are perfect for dry, sensitive and mature skin types, and they also help lift your mood thanks to essential oils such as neroli

Choosing ethically made products that are limited in their impact is a step towards living in harmony with our world



Why is it important that people choose ethical beauty products?

The planet's resources are finite, and choosing ethically made products that are limited in their impact is a step towards living in harmony with our world. Sadly, greenwashing is becoming more and more of a problem. Look for trusted certifications like Soil Association and Cruelty Free International, read up on the brand's story, and don't be afraid to ask questions.

What's your top beauty tip?

Always cleanse thoroughly before bed! Don't leave make-up, pollution or daily grime coating your skin overnight, as this can lead to issues like acne, dull complexion and irritation. Cleansing with a product like our GoodOils Cleansing Oil will remove build-up, as well as adding moisture - essential for maintaining healthy, glowing skin.

www.terreverdi.com

Honieh

Erika Boldrin, Founder of Honieh, believes in natural beauty and products that can make a difference to your wellbeing and support your health.



What motivated you to start Honieh?

I've been vegan for many years and I have always placed a lot of importance both on what I eat and the products I use on my body. I was travelling a lot for work and I always found myself buying natural products in the US because I was struggling to find them in Italy, so I decided to create my own natural products, with a young and trendy look. And so Honieh was born towards the end of 2019.

What is it that makes your products special?

Some brands say their products are natural when actually only a small part of them is natural. That's why I decided that I wanted my products to be AIAB (Associazione Italiana per l'Agricoltura Biologica) eco-bio certified. We've been committed since the beginning to being as sustainable as possible, including





removing plastic where possible and minimising our shipping packaging. We're always searching for new ways to be as eco-friendly as possible.

What have been your biggest challenges so far?

Starting a couple of months before Covid began wasn't easy, especially in terms of product development. Even now many things are still really slow. Another big challenge is that sometimes we can't do everything we want to because of very high minimum order quantities of some custom products.

Which are the most popular products in your range?

The most popular one is Soft Cloud, which is our cleanser – it is loved by everyone. Our Deep Detox and Rise & Shine masks and our Any Weekday cream are my own favourites.

Why is it important that buyers choose ethical beauty products?

I think because a change in terms of sustainability must begin from us as buyers in general. The more demand there is, the more companies are obliged to pay attention and therefore lead to a real change towards sustainability.

What's your top beauty tip?

My best beauty advice would be a whole set of things that comprise the daily skincare routine: stay hydrated, eat right, take your vitamins and sleep the right number of hours.



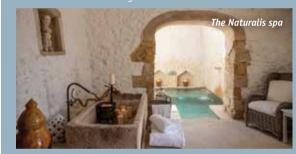
NATURAL AND ORGANIC SPAS

Feel good inside and out on your next trip to Italy, with an organic spa hotel experience.



➤ NATURALIS BIO RESORT

a guided tour in the aloe plantations to learn about the narvesting of aloe leaves and the extraction of the plant's gel, and find out ho cosmetics are made from organic and natural extracts.



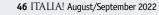


➤ THEINER'S GARTEN

➤ BORGO SAN PIETRO

haven on health experiences you can start with a tea infusio freshly picked from the hotel garden, while therapies incorpo the hotel's own natural skincare line, Seed to Skin, which ha been developed using ingredients from the Borgo's farm.

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Buy online or find more places around Italy for indulgent ethical skincare on your next trip to the peninsula.

Beauty', with a special space dedicated to

➤ AURORA ETHICAL BEAUTY

at Aurora you can find only brands th have been carefully selected on the b officacy, and certifications that ensure their ethical credentials. Well worth a sto for a wide range of excellent products the

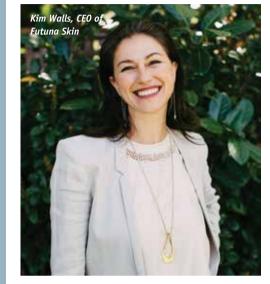
➤ BEATRICE AMBRA

either via Zoom or in person, show particinants how to look after their Skin recipe using natural ingredie Courses can be booked via airbnb.

➤ ECCO VERDE

Furtuna Skin

clean beauty company Furtuna Skin, and is natural products.



How did Furtuna Skin come about?

Furtuna Skin's co-founder and Chief Creative Officer. Agatha Relota Luczo, and I wanted to create a socially responsible skincare brand that combined nature with modern science to drive unprecedented performance in skincare. Four years in the making, including testing, formulating, and reformulating, we launched our Made In Italy brand in 2019.

What makes your products special?

Our ingredients are grown and wild-foraged at La Furtuna Estate, an 800-plus-acre organically certified farm in Sicily populated by over 600 species of wild plants, nearly 100 of them with long histories as medicinal powerhouses. Our land has not been subjected to fertilisers and regular watering schedules, so the plants that grow here are stronger and more resilient than cultivated plants. This,



Kim Walls is co-founder and CEO of Sicily-based passionate about the company's high-performance combined with the wild-foraged method by which we gather our ingredients, and the Soundbath™ method

Tell us more about your eco-credentials

by which we extract their actives, leads to the

highest potency of bioactives.

Furtuna Skin goes beyond organic certifications, labels, or awards, by adopting regenerative business practices, ensuring that the land and plant life on La Furtuna Estate will thrive for generations to come. Our sustainable methods include solar energy, crop diversity and a natural fertilisation system based on bacteria, not chemicals. In addition, a lot of work on the farm is done by hand, which strengthens the plants and the local workforce.

We have a zero-waste policy and utilise every part of our plants so that no active part goes to waste. We create seed banks and revive nearly extinct species of flora. All our botanicals are USDA organic certified. We also use glass bottles that can be recycled endlessly, and every order is packed using sustainable honeycomb paper padding instead of tissue paper or bubble wrap.

Which are your most popular products?

These include our Replenishing Balm, which you laver over moisturiser as the last step in your morning or evening routine to help repair surface damage to illuminate dull, fatigued skin. Also, our BiPhase Moisturizing Oil - a two-part system designed to deliver a double dose of hydration to plump, protect against collagen breakdown and replenish the skin's moisture barrier.

Why do you think should people buy ethical beauty products?

Every choice we make as a consumer always affects someone, and people with purchasing power have an opportunity to use their power to affect someone for the better. One small step taken by many people can elevate more responsible consumer consumption and help tackle some of the more significant problems we're experiencing, like climate change. I think that's a choice worth making.

www.furtunaskin.com



Casa Mencarelli

Lucia Mencarelli founded Casa Mencarelli in 2018, a brand rooted in organic, natural ingredients sourced from Italy and the Mediterranean.



How did Casa Mencarelli come about?

I grew up in the Umbrian countryside. My love for nature and natural skincare started early -I made my first 'potion' when I was a teenager! A few years later I developed an allergy to synthetic ingredients and fragrances; I had to find a healthier alternative to mainstream skincare and moved to a 100 per cent organic lifestyle, and my health improved dramatically. I started studying professional organic skincare formulation, made my first products, and people started asking me if they could them, so I created my own brand.

What inspired your brand?

I'm Italian, so I wanted to create amazing products starting from my roots. I use traditional Italian and Mediterranean ingredients in my products, like mineral-rich green clay from Sicily, lemon peel powder, grape seed oil, extra-virgin olive oil, beeswax and honey from the Italian Apennine hills, tomato seed oil and

rice bran oils sourced from Italy and the Mediterranean area. The packaging is inspired by my region, Umbria, using Mediterranean colours like turquoise, blue and orange - representing the Italian sun and the sea. And the font for the logo was taken from ancient writing in my region.

Tell us about Casa Mencarelli's eco-credentials

We are COSMOS Organic / Soil Association certified. This is the strictest organic standard in organic skincare worldwide, so customers can be reassured of the quality of ingredients and the process, as well as the sustainability of the supply chain and distribution. And I'm very strict with the choice of ingredients, due to my own sensitivity.

Which are your most popular products?

My best sellers are the Honey & Orange Toner and the Nourishing Tomato Cream & Cleanser, which are very soothing on skin and smell lovely. The product I use most is the Sea Buckthorn Serum because it's anti-ageing and absorbs guickly, it can be used in the eye area, it's perfect under make-up and before SPF protection on sunny days. It's always in my handbag.

What's your top beauty tip?

Waterless products, for example a balm or an oil serum, can do wonders for your skin if they are massaged in for at least five minutes every day. That time dedicated to yourself makes all the difference to the way you feel and look during the day!

www.casamencarelli.co.uk



Allegro Natura

Cristina Gerbino is Marketing Manager at Allegro Natura. which offers natural and organic skincare products from selected Italian organic farms.



How did Allegro Natura come about?

We were born in 2008 as an

Italian artisan company and production laboratory of organic cosmetics and detergents. Today we manufacture sustainable cosmetic products, respecting people and Earth. We only choose raw materials that are 100 per cent organic, which are then through our specialist knowledge in the subject - transformed into active ingredients.

Tell us about Allegro Natura's eco-credentials

Our products are AIAB, LAV and VEGAN certified. Our entire production chain, from the selection of raw materials to production and distribution, is always attentive to sustainability and our organic ingredients come from highly selected Italian farms.

What have been the biggest challenges and proudest moments for the business so far?

The biggest challenge has been becoming a key player in the market in just a few years. Today we are one of the most important organic cosmetics brands in Italy.

We are proud to have recently launched our project 'Allegro Natura Phygital', an interactive programme for personalised skincare, at Green Pea in Turin



(the world's first Green retail park, see p48). There it is possible to create tailor-made cosmetics personalised to your individual skin needs.

What are your most popular products?

Our solid line is very popular shampoo, conditioner, bath foam and body lotion to apply directly on wet skin. I personally love our Eyelash & Eyebrow Oil.

What's your top beauty tip?

To undertake a deep skincare routine twice a day, every day, choosing organic products according to the needs of your particular skin type.

www.allegronatura.it

