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5 Minutes with Tina Craig

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As one of the OG fashion influencers, Tina Craig has amassed a loyal following credited to her style, lifestyle recommendations and beauty tips as co-founder of the blog, Bag Snob, which she founded in 2015. She followed up that venture with the blog Beauty Snob the following year. In late 2019, Tina added beauty brand founder to her resume with the launch of U Beauty. The brand debuted in November with U Beauty Resurfacing Compound (\$138 for a 30-ml bottle), a multipurpose product that aims to improve skin's appearance while replacing up to six products in a typical skin care routine. Up until its release, items were shared with select editors and influencers as whispers emerged touting "Tina Craig's Skin in a Bottle".

"I never intended to launch a skin care line. I went to fashion week a couple of years ago and people were asking me what I was using on my face since my skin was glowing," said Tina. "Soon after, friends started bringing Ziplock bags so I could put a couple of pumps of the cream in the bag for them."

The secret to her glowing skin was a formula introduced to her by her business partner who had been working on a new skin care technology at a medical grade lab in Italy.

"I was at a point where I wanted simplification. I understood the cleansing and the moisturizing part, but the in-between skin care was unclear and I didn't understand why these things couldn't be combined," she explained. "When I was originally invited to the lab, I thought they were inviting me to make a bespoke product for myself."

As buzz of her personal skin care regimen grew, Tina quickly realized there was white space for multifunctional products that not only simplified a routine, but were results driven. "I was making something that 13 other products said they could do but never did," she said.

On September 17 at 1 p.m. EST, Tina will be speaking at CEW's virtual event "Are Influencers Still Influential?" discussing how beauty marketers are adapting their influencer relationships to increase relevancy and conversion. Tina will be joined by Bernadette Fitzpatrick,



Senior Vice President, Marketing and Ecommerce, Benefit Cosmetics; Sarah Henry, Chief Marketing Officer, TATCHA; Danya Klein, Partner and Head of Global Partnerships, Preen.Me; and Sophie Lilley, VP, Marketing, Kiehl's Since 1851. To register for the event, please [click here](#).

Here, CEW Beauty News spoke to Tina about her influencer strategy, how her brand has been impacted by COVID and advice for female entrepreneurs.

CEW Beauty News: What kind of sampling and consumer testing did you perform before launching into market?

Tina Craig: We tested on hundreds of people including beauty editors, fashion designers, influencers, celebrities and socialites, with ages ranging from 20 to 73. We had people who represented every single skin type and shade, including Caucasian, Middle Eastern, African American, Asian and Indian. Additionally, 40 percent of the testers were men, who now make up 20 percent of our customer base because they love the simplicity.

BN: How were you impacted by COVID?

TC: It worked in our favor. We launched in November and then in March, people started recognizing us more because they didn't want to spend money on multiple products. Also, they started looking more into the skin care products they were using as they spent more time at home, worried about their health. We shifted our retail focus back to DTC, because our exclusive partner, Net-a-Porter, had to close for a few months, and that brought business directly to ourselves. In terms of sales, while I can't share specific numbers, I can say that April was our biggest month to-date. We did great in May and had a phenomenal June.

BN: How do you raise brand awareness?

TC: We are very social media driven. I'm a digital native. I'm very fortunate that I have my own platform and a community that's been with me for over 15 years. I use my own platform, as well as my peers of influencers and celebrities. A lot of it has been organic. When we launched we made 50,000 sample packets to not just gift influencers, but consumers as well. If someone has five followers, that's five friends they can convert – that's how I see my community. Everyone is an influencer.

BN: What does your self-care routine look like?

TC: I believe in the 'four Cs' of skin care: cleanse, the compound, the cream (U Beauty launched its Super Smart Hydrator cream in August) and then during the day is cover, which is SPF. I'm very tool heavy. I do rolling after I wash my face, and I scrape my skin with a porcelain spoon in place of an expensive wash off tool. I do have one very high-maintenance self-care tool, TriPollar Stop X, a professional-grade

radio frequency anti-aging device. I also do a lot of DIY skin care. For example, when my cryofacial place closed at the onset of the pandemic, I started making ice cubes out of almond, oat, coconut milks, as well as different teas, and applied it on my face wrapped in cloth. Honestly, my skin right now is the best it's been in a decade.

BN: What's your number-one beauty tip?

TC: Invest in a faucet filter. Tap water is filled with minerals, calcium and chlorine, which is going on your face. What's the point of eating organic and healthy and then putting toxins on your skin?

BN: What advice do you have for female entrepreneurs?

TC: I have several. First, don't fear failure. Cancel all the noise and keep going. Second, networking is so important, but give back and be the support you would like to receive for other female founders. Third, build your own community starting from the people closest to you and work outwards because those people are generally your first customers. My first customers were my peers, friends and other influencers. Fourth, set tangible goals that are small, instead of worrying about five or 10-year goal planning. As a startup you don't know if you're going to be in business from day to day, so achieving small goals can help build confidence. Fifth, always ask lots of questions. My favorite word is 'why'. Finally, stand for something and really mean it. Gone are the days of staying silent and politically correct. People will invest in brands with strong values that align with their own.

