



BRAND REPORT

# After Raising \$4M In Seed Funding, Aging Hair DTC Brand Arey Arrives At Credo

RACHEL BROWN  
JUNE 1, 2023

[f](#) [t](#) [in](#)

When consumers the world over know how to pronounce Arey (it sounds like “array” and comes from the French word “arrê,” meaning “to stop”), co-founder and CEO Allison Conrad believes the brand specializing in slowing gray hair will have truly arrived. Until then, it’s taking steps to achieve that goal.

The latest major step is entering Credo, where digitally native Arey is making its retail debut with six of its current eight products: daily supplement Not Today, Grey; scalp serum To The Root; shampoo Wash; conditioner Smooth; dry shampoo Wait A Sec; and leave-in conditioner Live In Mist. The products are priced from \$32 to \$55. Arey’s \$44 scalp exfoliant Scrub and an impending deep conditioner will hit Credo in the fall. The clean beauty retailer has a six-month exclusive on the brand.

“In our marketing, we always talk about the science and efficacy, and we don’t always lead with the products being clean, so this was a great opportunity to signal that to people,” says Conrad. “From the beginning, we formulated with EU standards and clean in mind, and that is why Credo is such a great partner to launch with, and it’s a manageable size of retailer to work with. We are still a small team, and this is a great way to test out the waters in retail.” Los Angeles-based Arey has six people on its team.



Launched in 2021 as a direct-to-consumer brand, Arey is making its retail debut at Credo with six products priced from \$32 to \$55: daily supplement Not Today, Grey; scalp serum To The Root; shampoo Wash; conditioner Smooth; dry shampoo Wait A Sec; and leave-in conditioner Live In Mist.

For emerging clean beauty brands in the early stages of their maturation, pairing availability at Credo with a presence at a significant specialty beauty retailer such as Sephora or Ulta Beauty and perhaps a department store or two in the mix has become a prime retail distribution tactic. Brands like Ceremonia, Tower 28, Nécessaire and Henry Rose are adhering to that retail recipe. Arey will throw a party at Credo hosted by influencer Amy Chang on June 8 and educate sales staff at stores to spread the word about its launch at the retailer.

Arey hasn’t sealed a deal with a second retail partner yet, and Conrad, former president of brick-and-mortar makeup concept Blushing and advisor to indie beauty brands, admits it isn’t quite ready for a massive retail stage. “People need to understand what we are doing,” she says. “The worst thing we could do is go into a big chain and somebody is like, ‘I don’t understand this. Is this hair dye?’ It’s our job for the next year to continue to raise awareness of this category and what we are doing. We are excited that Credo can be a megaphone for that.”

**“It’s our job for the next year to continue to raise awareness of this category and what we are doing. We are excited that Credo can be a megaphone for that.”**

TWEET THIS

For Credo, Arey bolsters its haircare position by giving it a buzzy brand aimed at customers in their 30s to 50s, a demographic sweet spot of the retailer’s, in a differentiated category. “Credo has always been a place of discovery, and we want to continue to be the go-to retailer to introduce the most innovative, exciting and cleanest brands first. We are especially thrilled to welcome Arey to the Credo family,” says Meg Lim, senior merchant at Credo. “Arey’s scientific approach to gray-slowing hair products has been such a unique and innovative take and will address an organic demand from our customers and offer a category they may have not known existed.”

Although brands like Vegamour, Heyhair and Mane have released products to counter graying, Arey has been driving the gray-fighting forces—and it’s finding customers, often through Pinterest and Instagram, where images showing its results grab attention. In the last year, Arey’s sales multiplied 12X and its subscription business jumped 975%. The brand has attracted over 7,000 subscribers, and they’re responsible for 70%-plus of its sales so far. Its most popular item on subscription is a duo of To The Root and Not Today, Grey. Subscribers get 25% discounts on products. Conrad reports Arey is profitable and has “higher than average retention numbers” for beauty.



Arey co-founders Jay Small and Allison Conrad

“People are sticking with it, which is great. You do have to stick with this. This is a commitment,” says Conrad. Describing Arey as “the wrinkle cream of haircare,” she elaborates, “Wrinkle cream doesn’t necessarily get rid of your wrinkles for your entire life, but it makes you feel better and more confident. You are doing something and taking control over how you look. We never use the word ‘anti-gray.’ That’s not our intention or who we are.”

Conrad dreamed up Arey with Jay Small, her hairstylist of nine years, after the 42-year-old initially spotted a gray hair amongst her brown strands about five years ago. “I went to him and was like, ‘What do I do about it? I’m looking into Botox, I’m exercising, I’m using sunscreen all over my body, but what can I do for gray hair?’” she recalls. “There are so many things for hair loss, but I was experiencing gray hair, not hair loss. Jay, to his credit, discouraged me from coloring my hair. I don’t have much discretionary income, and I’m busy. It’s a lifestyle habit you have to adopt, and it becomes a chore.”

**“A big part of why our customers are loyal to us is we are not just trying to sell them another thing, we are trying to optimize what we are selling them.”**

TWEET THIS

Small discouraged Conrad from jumping on the hair color hamster wheel because he worries about health concerns linked to hair dye and the burden, not to mention hair damage, of recommending persistent hair coloring to his clients. “In five years, this person is going to be frustrated by what you signed them up for,” he says. “It starts at eight weeks for a couple of grays, then it’s six weeks and then four or, in some cases, every three weeks,” he says. “It just seems like this is not what our daughters are going to choose when they see their first gray 10 to 15 years from now.”

To provide people with a choice, Small and Conrad tapped Conrad’s father Ken, a pharmacologist and founder of pharmaceutical consultants Inc., a company conducting clinical trials for the pharmaceutical, chemical and mother JoAnne, a dietician and researcher, along with Valerie George, a cosmetic chemist, former EVP of research and development at John Paul Mitchell Systems and president of formulation house Simply Formulas, to assist with the creation of Arey’s products. The brand incorporates a pigment-preserving peptide in its formulas.



Arey has raised \$4 million in seed funding. In the last year, the profitable brand’s sales multiplied 12X and its subscription business jumped 975%.

Arey isn’t afraid to update its formulas. It’s updated To The Root with citrus reticulata extract, a mandarin-derived ingredient that clears hair follicles of free radicals and stimulates melanin synthesis. Last year, Arey secured \$4 million in seed funding to pour into R&D to improve its formulas as well as perfect future ones. Its seed investors include Female Founders Fund and Greycroft. At the outset of Arey, Conrad committed \$20,000 from her personal savings to develop the brand, and it received \$400,000 from friends and family backers.

Small outlines that the brand’s current range will cap out at 10 or 11 products, and it will venture into products that protect the hair from the consequences of styling with heat and the stress of constant coloring. He says Arey’s objective is to “keep identifying ingredients to make the formulas better and to continue to solve issues to prevent gray hair and help with hair health. A big part of why our customers are loyal to us is we are not just trying to sell them another thing, we are trying to optimize what we are selling them.”

Espitimized by its careful at-all-costs expansion as it builds its business, Conrad is mindful of its investors. Arey isn’t interested in a growth-at-all-costs mentality as it builds its business. “We are very mindful of how we spend our money and very thoughtful about how we are growing,” she says. “We want this to be a legacy brand that lives for a very long time. You have to make the right decisions in order to do that and not just be a flash in the pan.”

SHARE THIS ARTICLE [f](#) [t](#) [in](#)

0 Comments [Login](#)

Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Name

Share [Best](#) [Newest](#) [Oldest](#)

Be the first to comment.

Subscribe Privacy Do Not Sell My Data [DISQUS](#)

RELATED ARTICLES

BRAND REPORT  
Herbal Skincare Brand Botnia Undergoes A “Cathartic” Rebrand And Strengthens Its Ties To...

BRAND REPORT  
After Tik Tok Virality Led Wrinkles Worth Of Patches, The Brand Is...

SPONSORED CONTENT  
Custom Essence’s Matt Soto On Growing Fragrance Trends And The Fragrance House’s Support Of...

BRAND REPORT  
Mango People Is On A Mission To “Genuinely Add Value To Our Community” With Flattering...

Subscribe to our e-blast today to stay up to date with everything indie.

ENTER YOUR EMAIL