

## Beauty

# The Search for the Next Skin Care Trend

Garance Doré, one of the original fashion bloggers, is launching a brand that embraces simple, French-inspired beauty routines, in a market where multi-stage regimens are the norm.



Garance Doré, one of the original fashion bloggers, is launching a skin care brand. (Doré)

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When I started chronicling the goings-on of fashion bloggers back in 2010, Garance Doré was part of that elite first wave of content creators who sat front row at fashion shows (much to the dismay of the print editors seated beside them). Her personal style helped define the street style era, and as a writer, photographer and illustrator, she featured others' looks on her website. Over the course of her career, she's partnered with the likes of Dior and Prada, among other luxury labels, and her 2015 book, "Love Style Life," was a *New York Times* bestseller.

Last week, Doré closed the blog she started 16 years ago. Her e-commerce site now operates in its place. And today, Garance will join the dozens (although it can feel like hundreds) of influencers and content creators who have launched their own beauty brands with Doré, her new "French pharmacy-inspired" skin care line.

But can Doré, the beauty brand, stand out in the way that Doré, the blogger, did a decade ago?

Every founder will tell you that they've created something different ("There's nothing in the market like it," they will say), but mostly, it's a lot of the same. Doré is "clean," for example, a niche that's since gone mainstream that brands like Glow Recipe, Farmacy and Youth to The People have used to great effect. But

It's Doré's positioning as "French pharmacy-inspired" that sets it apart from other new entrants in skin care.

What is French pharmacy skin care?

"It's French. It's no fuss," said a friend of mine, who is French. "But effective."

Brands like La Roche Posay, Avène, Bioderma, Embriolysse, Vichy, Biafine, Boiron and Biotherm make products that are effective and simple, with many formulas and collections designed for sensitive skin, skin irritation and multi-use purposes. There are typically little to no active ingredients — acids, retinol, etc. — or scent. Prices are higher than a Cerave or Cetaphil but lower than many high-end skin care sold at Sephora or Ulta. Most of these lines are lesser known in the US, although items like Bioderma's micellar water or Embriolysse's Lait-Crème have become go-to items among beauty insiders.

Doré is capitalising on people's fascination with Frenchness: She is French and the products are all made in France, something you might expect to see in a Paris pharmacy beside any of the above labels. On a Zoom call last week, she told me the products are meant to be no-fuss and low maintenance — just like the beauty routines of French women. There's no harsh actives in her formulas — or promises of instant, visible results. Eventually, Garance hopes to sell her skin care in French pharmacies.

The line is launching with "super effective" essentials like a milky face wash, \$25, a cream moisturiser, \$36, and a multi-purpose balm, \$12, to start. Everything costs under \$40 and bottles and tubes are green (less Kelly and more like algae). Doré said packaging is influenced by old-school Nivea tins — royal blue with a prominent white, sans serif logo. The products are nice, but not revolutionary. Who doesn't love a multi-use salve?

"I adored that concept, the idea of a crème that you can put anywhere," she said.

At 47, she's making skin care for people like herself, Gen-Xers and older Millennials. It's refreshing to see an influencer in their Forties doing skin care (because who over the age of 35 wants to buy skin care from a 21-year-old TikTok star?). Gwyneth Paltrow, 49, has Goop, but the line is pricier and includes products like a resurfacing toner or a Microderm Instant Glow Exfoliator mask, which uses glycolic acid to give an immediate "glow." An instant result has its place, but not everyone wants to resurface or exfoliate so often.

Will the concept resonate? Fashion and beauty people love anything French — French style, French designers, the way French women eat and the effortless, very French approach to beauty that's the antithesis of the million-step skin care routines of many Americans. A friend of mine calls them Parissexuals.

"You're going to get the most effective formulas for the best prices," Garance said of French pharmacy skin care. "You're not selling glamour."

Garance actually told me that in 2019, after a week-long silent retreat near the Bay Area with business partner Emily Yeston, she realised she no longer wanted to run a blog or media property. The two got to work in the summer of 2020, built a small team and developed six products, three of which went on sale today at

Garance will continue to pen her newsletter, but mostly, she wants to take a step back from influencing (although she will appear in marketing and branding imagery). She'll focus on the brand, create things that she herself would use and never bombard customers with too many products (it's not very French). She and Yeston will use their content creating know-how to reinforce hero products as they carefully build out the line to address specific skin concerns.

“We have a leg up,” said Yeston, who came to work for Garance as an editorial assistant 11 years ago. “We’re not afraid of having to tell a story about a product for years and years.”

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