### **How Ayurvedic Treatments Can Change** Your Life — With Surya Founder Martha Soffer

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Ayurvedic medicine started in India thousands of years ago, and herbal skincare treatments for the face and body are an integral part of these rituals. These ancient traditions continue today in Ayurvedic spas and with dosha-specific massages, facials and products. At the forefront is Surva — a luxurious skincare brand with a range of products from bath soaks to face creams and an Ayurvedic spa in Santa Monica, California, created by Ayurvedic expert Martha Soffer.

We chatted with Soffer about the genesis of the brand, her love of Ayurveda and what a visit to her exclusive spa is really like. In one word, her answer is: love.

#### What inspired you to create Surya?

My love for Ayurveda. That passion came from when I first experienced Ayurveda, and what I know happened with my body. When I was young, I used to have headaches — terrible headaches for no reason. So I did what I thought you were supposed to do. I went to the doctor. I got injected with painkillers and chemicals, all these things to help — but they didn't. It made me sicker. But when I heard about Ayurveda and had my first Panchakarma, that was it. No more headaches. Seeing the change in my body was just amazing. I knew I needed this to be part of my life. And I wanted to help other people have the same experience.

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## What's the best way to introduce someone to Ayurveda for the first time?

We take people through the stages, we make it easy, because it is easy. In Ayurveda, we have doshas (fire, wind, earth/water) that make up our whole body, our mind. We call them pitta, vata, and kapha. Each of us has a perfect and unique balance of all three. But at different times we can get imbalanced. Too much heat, too much motion/commotion, too much heaviness. So that's the question that we ask everyone at Surya and we want everyone to ask themselves: do I need to cool down, do I need to calm down or do I need to energize. Our treatments focus on those rebalancing concepts, and so do many of our products: cooling, calming or energizing. I also try to help people understand how the seasons affect us — how nature affects us. In summer, it's natural that's when we might get more overheated, not just physically, but emotionally, too! When we feel like that, that's when we don't need to eat spicy food, or do hot yoga, or get in fights with people — that just makes it worse. That's when we need to cool down, get back in balance. Because if we don't get back into a good balance (either cooling, calming or energizing), then we feel uncomfortable, and uneasy, and that leads to disease. That's really Ayurveda in a nutshell: how we work with nature, and our own nature.

# Tell us about your favorite product and what makes it special.

I have two: our face oil and our collagen cream. I use them every day. I have them in the car, in my backpack, in the bathroom. I make my husband use them, especially the collagen cream at night. I travel with them, and if I don't have them — argh! So frustrating. These

are products that I created for myself, too. For what was happening in my life. When you're young, you always hear that you shouldn't put oil on your face, but that's wrong. Your body needs oil, wants oil. The right kind of oil — good oil and good herbalized oil — does so much. The collagen cream was born from my grandmother. My aunts used to remind me, "There was this cream that your grandmother made," and yes, I remember her making that for my whole family. But I never needed it because I was young, but the older you get, you discover that your skin is thirsty, and you need more — and that's what started the collagen cream, which became like a vessel for all the Ayurvedic goodness I had come to know. The face oil and the collagen cream help my skin so much.

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