

FOOD CHEF'S CHOICES FASHION GET THE LONDON LOOK TRAVEL BEAUTY IN NEWFOUNDLAND DESIGN THE MEMPHISTOUCH

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BEAUTY SKINCARE

From daggy to celebrity darlings

Organic products have shed their plain Jane image and are being courted by the big players, writes **Helen Hawkes**.

Once a bit daggy, "green" skincare and cosmetics are now the showoffs that jostle for your attention on the beauty shelves.

Functional but uninspiring packaging has been superseded by recyclable, biodegradable, graphically superior alternatives while product promises – anti-ageing, rejuvenating, revitalising – have been souped up to compete with multinational cosmetic giants.

Spectacular returns have followed. In 2013, the global natural personal care market reached \$US29.5 billion (\$32.8 billion), according to a recent study by research firm Kline & Company.

For solely organic personal care products, a report by Transparency Market Research puts the demand at \$7.6 billion in 2012 and forecasts \$13.2 billion in sales by 2018. In Australia, the annual growth in organic cosmetics and toiletries is about 18 per cent, with revenue now at \$236 million, according to IBIS World.

Group product manager at The Body Shop Australia Valentina Zuban says, "The eco movement has gained momentum since consumers became more educated and sceptical about modern farming and manufacturing processes."

She says social media has been used to ask questions and spread the word about favourite products, and this has driven the awareness of the efficacy of organic

personal care products.

"Simultaneously, mainstream multinational brands began to take notice of the organic trend and make products to fill that void, increasing accessibility to the mass market and broadening awareness."

The massive push into organic skincare correlates closely with the increasing demand for organic food, says Tamara Eacott. She is director of Green Living Cosmetics, distributor of the Hungarian brand Eminence Organic Skin Care established more than 50 years ago but now gaining kudos from fans like Madonna and Jessica Biel.

Healthy demand and profits have been accompanied by more intensive research and development so that it is no longer necessary to choose between bunny-friendly and low-chemical, or something that does what it says, she adds.

"Formulations are quite different from 15 years ago. Chemists and dermatologists are used. People expect and are happier to pay for an organic brand that works."

Beyond efficacy, consumers' choices are still multi-layered and potentially confusing, even more so as the market becomes more crowded. Do you want 100 per cent pure, certified organic ingredients, products that have zero impact on global warming, that give back



to the third world, or that are completely chemical-free? Should the packaging be recyclable or biodegradable, or the creams and potions handmade, containing ingredients that are picked according to lunar cycles, or cultivated via biodynamic principles? Even "certified organic" claims can vary, according to certifying body Australian Certified Organic.

Besides an understanding of international certification standards, social media – where the pros and cons of product ranges are debated – may be your best ally.

The Body Shop, founded in 1976, was the first green mainstream global beauty brand to use ingredients carefully selected for their high levels of purity and consumer safety, according to Zuban.

"Our reputation is further enhanced by a commitment to using natural ingredients sourced ethically from Community Fair Trade suppliers worldwide. We were one of the first cosmetic brands to sign onto ethical trading initiatives. Today, 80 per cent of our products contain at least one or more Community Fair Trade natural ingredient."

Aveda, founded by Horst Rechelbacher in 1978, can also boast some impressive tree-hugging firsts. It was the first beauty company to launch a 100 per cent certified organic beauty product, All-Sensitive Body Formula in 1996, to use 100 per cent post-consumer recycled PET, to manufacture with 100 per cent wind power at its primary manufacturing facility in 2007 and to market a hairspray with zero impact on the earth's climate (by funding renewable energy to offset the CO₂ associated with the manufacturing, transportation and use of Aveda aerosol hair sprays) in 2010.

It also assists third-world workers with partnerships such as its sourcing of turmeric and amla through Indian firm Nisarga.

"Aveda became a lifestyle and global movement that changed the industry for good," says Dave Rapaport, Aveda vice-president of earth and community care.

Britain's first certified organic health and beauty brand, Neal's Yard Remedies, which has recently made a foray into the Australian market, can also claim some impressive achievements.

It was the first beauty company in the world to produce Soil Association certified organic skincare products and to launch skincare enriched with Fairtrade certified ingredients, as well as the first high street retailer in the United Kingdom to be awarded the carbon neutral status.

Yet while mainly larger brands have forged a path into the green beauty market, it is the boutique and bespoke brands that are the darlings of the eco-hipster market.

French brand Absolution, with its stylish black and white containers, thrills freshness freaks by preparing and shipping product in 48 hours. Its organic certified skincare is "customisable to the different skin's moods".

The secret of Australia's Lily Loves Pearl's appeal is limited amounts of product, prepared more often to enhance efficacy, and built around the cycle of the seasons. Founder Samantha

Molineux was working in Myer and studying to be a naturopath when she created the brand, since postponing her degree and exporting the organic, chemical-free products to Singapore, the UK and Taiwan.

Bondi's The Beauty Chef, established in 2009 by beauty editor, stylist and author Carla Oates, is another small but growing brand building a cult-like following with its fermented inner beauty powder – the first produced by a beauty company globally – and a clean, green, organic skincare range.

Other sought-after brands segmenting the green beauty market: KORA organic skin and bodycare, the brainchild of supermodel and eco poster girl Miranda Kerr; Couleur Caramel, the Paris-based brand that was one of the first to offer organic certified make-up; OmVeda, the pioneer of organic Ayurvedic beauty products in Australia; La Mav, a brand started by an entrepreneur who was looking for chemical-free products to treat pigmentation; and Dr Hauschka, once an

Multinational brands began to take notice of the organic trend and make products to fill that void.

Valentina Zuban
The Body Shop

in-the-know label, now widely sought out for its organic, chemical-free skincare, haircare and cosmetics with medicinal herbs and ingredients "picked in fine conditions whenever possible".

Increased competition will, ultimately, mean even more desirable products from small or large players. Rapaport predicts: "We'll see new developments in using the natural power of plants to achieve high impact results, while sourcing the ingredients sustainably and in ways that benefit the communities around the world where they are grown." Profits may also come from improving shelf life of organic products without using parabens and other preservatives, the "holy grail" of the organic beauty industry, Zuban says. **AFR**



Main: The Beauty Chef Carla Oates.
Above from top: Dave Rapaport; Tamara Eacott; Valentina Zuban.

Celebrity spriukers

Miranda Kerr
Her successful KORA range is stocked by Net-A-Porter

Therese Kerr
Divine by Therese Kerr includes organic tooth mousse

Elle Macpherson
Sings the praises of WellieCo's SuperElixir

