

The latest trends

Face value

A showcase of the latest trends to emerge in the skincare category
by Alissa Demorest



Oil is in

To cater to the consumer's desire for simpler products, brands are coming out with more facial oils or products that use oils as their star ingredient. According to figures from market-research company Mintel, the number of facial oil launches grew by 24% in 2012. In prestige skincare in the US, sales of facial oils saw double-digit growth last year compared to 2011, and the category's sales have more than doubled since 2008, says NPD.

Examples of the use of oils include Japanese-inspired skincare brand Tatcha's One-Step Camellia Cleansing Oil, which is said to combine camellia and rice bran oils to "melt away" even waterproof make-up. US-based brand Fresh markets Moisturizing Face Oil, which contains sea buckthorn oil, said to be a powerful antioxidant replete with moisturizing omegas 7 and 9, as well as cranberry seed, camellia seed, grapeseed, and sweet almond oils. L'Oréal-owned Shu Uemura, a pioneer in the facial oil segment, launched a range of make-up removing oils called Unmask (pictured) in January. The five-sku line includes oils with whitening, brightening and radiating properties, according to the brand.

Beyond mud: the new masks

A more targeted approach to facial skincare has seen an increase in masks. Mintel reports that there was a 38% increase in facial mask launches last year, a trend that is attributed to the influence of Asian products. Masks are coming out in a variety of materials, including paper, cloth, silicone and cellulose. "Consumers are seeing that masks are both an effective way to apply a topical treatment and deliver formula in a more treatment-oriented way. They also are attracted to this delivery system," explains California-based Hatch Beauty managing partner Ben Bennett.

He adds that more brands are developing masks for targeted areas, such as the eye-contour area or the neck. UK-based brand Sarah Chapman markets a Chin and Jaw Mask (pictured), which it describes as an elastic fiber sling to be placed on the lower jaw and hooked over each ear. The mask is infused with a "cocktail of high-performance lifting actives" (such as algae, plant collagen, protein skin tighteners, vitamin C, hyaluronic acid, rose and chamomile flower water) that are said to tighten and sculpt the jaw line to mimic the feeling of a "lower facelift".

Consumers are also seeking out masks and patches that are "drenched" with product. SK-II's Brightening Derm Revival Mask is said to contain the same amount of formula as one bottle of its Whitening Source Derm Definition product, while Suqqu's Face Stretch Mask contains 33ml of serum. Bennett adds that the concept of "treatment" now used more in brands' marketing speak for these kinds of skincare items.



Patching it up

More targeted than masks are new types of patches focusing on specific parts of the face. US brand University Medical has taken the concept of patches one step further by combining the patch with microcurrent technology to target loss of collagen in the eye-contour area. The brand's wrinkleMD Eye System is comprised of microcurrent-enabled patches that are said to deliver hyaluronic acid and peptides deeper into the skin than traditional topical creams or serums. The brand says that the user will feel a "gentle, euphoric tingle" that reveals younger-looking skin.

Serious Skincare, a brand sold on home-shopping channel HSN, markets C Zone Hydrogel Patches For The Forehead, a four-week program comprised of four patches infused with vitamin C and "zone-specific elixirs" that claim to reduce frown lines, wrinkles and creases on the forehead.



Doing it all

Nearly every skincare product on the market now makes more than one claim, but the two-in-one item is now being replaced by five, 10 and sometimes 20-in-1 claims. "A brand today has to appeal to 10 different kinds of consumers—one that's looking for natural, organic, technological, immediate results, for example, and the brand has to put a little piece of every one of those things into every product," US-based supplier Genealogy partner Brian Fox-Krawczyk tells *BW Confidential*.

Fox-Krawczyk adds that more demands from brands for multi-functional products mean that suppliers are "loading in" actives for multiple usage and benefits. "We've seen multifunctional products targeting lines and wrinkles, or firming and toning, but now we are synergizing actives and this blend is amped up. Brands would rather buy one expensive ingredient than several medium-to-expensive ones." Brands packing in active ingredients include Perricone MD's Cold Plasma moisturizer, which claims to "correct" 10 visible signs of aging.

US-based brand January Labs' Glow and Go Power Peel Exfoliant (pictured) claims to use a cinnamon-based complex to increase circulation, reduce pore size, treat uneven skin tone and diminish fine lines and hyper-pigmentation.

There is also strong demand for products that transcend the face; for example, consumers want to use their night-time balm not just on their face, but also on their elbows and knees.



Pore away

Another Asian trend that is moving to Western markets is products promising to refine or reduce pore size. According to Mintel, the number of facial skincare launches with pore-reducing claims was up by 53% in 2012 and continued growth is forecast for the category this year. Estée Lauder-owned Clinique's Pore Refining Solutions range now offers four skus: Instant Perfecting Makeup, Stay Matte Hydrator, Instant Perfector and Correcting Serum. The brand's ad campaign for the range promotes the "Power Couple"—a combination of the Make-up and Correction Serum.

Doctor brand Perricone MD launched its Enlarged Pores Kit (pictured) earlier this year, which includes the Intensive Pore Minimizer and Intensive Pore Kit. The brand says that the formula is rich in alpha lipoic acid, which is said to reduce pore size and refine skin texture, DMAE to firm up the pore's walls, glycolic acid to exfoliate, and a salicylic acid derivative to control sebum production.



Free-from

Rather than touting what their skincare product contains, more brands are marketing the ingredients that they leave out. Indeed, "free-from" claims are becoming more prevalent in skincare. Water is one ingredient that more skincare brands are shying away from. US-based brand Pur Attitude, for example, claims to replace water with Hyaluronic, a natural ingredient that it says has a similar composition to the hydration substance naturally found in the body. Its tagline is "No Water, just 100% Pure Ingredients."

Gluten (or wheat)-free products are also gaining ground. LVMH-owned brand NUDE's (pictured) entire range is said to be gluten-free and its bottles feature Nude's "Beautiful Without" seal. ■

