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SEPTEMBER 2014
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that causes brown spots.

“Our obsession with roses is just growing,” says Lev Glazman, who cofounded Fresh with Alina Roytberg in 1991. Thirteen years after the launch of its cult Rose Face Mask—a cooling cucumber-laced skin quencher that contains actual petals for extra sensorial pizzazz—the brand is introducing a Rose Hydrating Eye Gel Cream, which pairs the essential oil with antioxidant golden root for maximum moisturization. “The skin around the eyes is thin, so it loses water very easily,” Glazman says. “Rose is ideal to use in that area, because it’s very effective but also very gentle.”

In 2012, Lancôme introduced its ultraluxe Absolu L’Extrait, an anti-aging cream based on stem cells derived from its namesake rose; this month, the company ups the ante with the boldly named Rejuvenating and Renewing Ultimate Elixir-Concentrate and Ultimate Beautifying Lotion, two next-gen products in which the botanical cells have been subjected to high pressure until they break apart, making the good stuff inside—the molecules said to promote firmness and luminosity—more easily absorbed and utilized by skin. Similarly, Terry de Gunzburg, who has been using rose in her By Terry products for 15 years, infuses stem cells from the plant into her Cellularose range—combining them in the new Baume D’Eau moisturizer with a biotech peptide that reduces the harmful effects of pollution on skin.

De Gunzburg maintains that extracts from roses of various colors have different properties—the By Terry Cellularose Brightening Serum is powered by pigmentation-battling molecules from a white rose, and, she says, the black and red roses used in her Huile de Rose Nutri-Regenerating Firming-Lift Oil “are very rich in antioxidants.” Research by Sisley,

which debuts its decadently silky Black Rose Precious Face Oil this month, supports this idea. “We use the Black Bacchara rose, which was created in 2000 by a famous French rose producer,” Sisley’s scientific director, José Ginestar, says. “The aim was to produce a very dark rose by increasing the coloring pigments, which are known for their good antioxidant properties, in the petals. The extract is rich in carotenoids, which are very good free-radical traps, and fatty acids that bring nutrition, emolliency, and softness to the skin.” (The bloom, incidentally, isn’t actually black: “It’s a velvety deep red with glints that give the impression of black depending on the lighting,” Ginestar says.)

Of course, a rose wouldn’t be a rose without its heady fragrance, which facialists such as Palm Beach-based Tammy Fender prize for its relaxing qualities. “Rose helps to relieve anxiety,” Fender says. “When you’re utilizing these oils in their purest form, they work on an emotional, psychological, and spiritual level, so they help a person as a whole.” Remarkably, the aroma of rose actually has a direct impact on our appearance: A 2011 study conducted in Japan found that inhalation of the scent of rose essential oil decreased the effects of chronic stress on skin, inhibiting transepidermal

Above: The author “harvesting” roses in Turkey. FRESH Rose Hydrating Eye Gel Cream contains rose oil sourced from the same fields.



water loss and the disruption of skin barrier function.

This near magical effect may also explain some of the flower’s other purported but so far scientifically unproven powers, such as its ability to reduce skin’s redness and give it a healthy glow. “When nerves are overreactive, that’s going to cause a whole cascade of events,” says P&G senior scientist Laura Goodman, who worked on the development of SK-II’s LXP range, which contains *Rosa centifolia* extract harvested from the same fields in Grasse, France, that supply roses for Chanel No. 5. “And when you aren’t stressed, that allows your skin cells to do what they need to do, like produce helpful enzymes and proteins.”

“Roses transform the mood, and they transform the skin,” Glazman says. “They’re beautiful, they’re intoxicating, they’re seductive, and they have the most incredible benefits.” For those of us who always stop to smell them, that’s very good news. ●

Still lifes: Jeffrey Westbrook/Studio D (Lancôme); Jon Paterson/Studio D (remaining)



From left: BY TERRY Cellularose balm revitalizes lackluster complexions; the new LANCÔME L’Absolu Rouge lipsticks match the hues of iconic roses (from left: Rouge Carrusel, Rouge Amour, Rose Lancôme, and Rose Comtesse); PETER THOMAS ROTH Rose Stem Cell mask contains a blend of rose extracts to boost cell turnover; SISLEY Black Rose Precious Face Oil nourishes dry skin; TAMMY FENDER Bulgarian Rose Water tones and refreshes; MV ORGANIC SKINCARE Rose Plus Skin Booster soothes damage from sun, peels, or lasers.