

# STELLA



**JUMP  
TO IT!**

Brilliant buys to make  
your summer shine



# Will you join the cult of clean?

If you check the ingredients of face creams or purposely shop paraben-free, you're well on your way. *Imelda Burke* explains why, when it comes to beauty, we're all clean freaks now



Until a few years ago, if you gave a hoot about what was in your skin cream you would probably have also been regularly whipping up kale and chia seed salads and wearing organic bamboo clothing. But that was before hundreds of beauty brands cottoned on to the natural movement started by healthy-living, *Goop*-reading LA dwellers; a movement that, er, organically swept across the globe. Suddenly, the masses were aware of what was in their bathroom cabinet, and the beauty brands realised they needed to clean up their act.

If you have read any beauty blog or opened a magazine in the past year, it is

hard to ignore the cult of 'clean'. This buzzword has taken over the beauty world – no longer just a niche, large retailers have added clean beauty brands to their existing offerings, such as Mio and Pür at Marks & Spencer, or de Mamiel and Tata Harper at Net-a-Porter. Meanwhile, stars such as Gwyneth Paltrow and Jessica Alba have launched their own clean ranges.

It's a friendly word – it speaks of wellbeing without the worthiness of 'organic', and it gives a higher sense of beauty potency than the sometimes ambiguous 'natural'. It fits into our lives easily – from the shower we take in the morning to double-cleansing at night – we are all striving for 'clean'. It makes us feel



## Clean' makes us feel fresh and pure, and conjures up a life lived in a minimalist white house

fresh and pure, and conjures a world where your beauty products slot into a life lived in a cool, minimalist white house. Unfussy and functional, these products will last in your bathroom for far longer than a handmade organic skin cream with circa six weeks' use before it goes off.

When applied to skincare or make-up, 'clean' refers to brands that have effective but uncluttered ingredient lists, free from key synthetic ingredients that can be irritants for the skin – such as parabens, petrochemicals, PEGs (petroleum-based compounds), silicones, sodium laureth or lauryl sulphate, phthalates, propylene glycol and man-made fragrances. But where clean beauty differs from the other natural categories is that the products are still developed with science in mind, and don't necessarily have to be produced from organically grown plant ingredients. They can be preserved, are lovely to use and can give real anti-ageing results.

Sixteen years ago when I moved to the UK, the first brand I used offered all these benefits. Ren (meaning 'clean' in Swedish) was my first foray into this sector and meant I was able to avoid the harsh ingredients its creators, and I, deemed to be unnecessary to put on my skin. These products were available in 'proper' beauty stores, meaning I didn't have to make a special trip to a health-food shop. They also had chic, minimalist packaging; formulas that excluded long lists of synthetics, and they weren't too bogged down with being totally natural to be preachy. It was smart, sophisticated and effective skincare.

As clean beauty has grown, so has our obsession with what is added to and – more importantly – what is left out of our skin cream. The British skincare brand Aurelia, which has a 'free-from' policy for all its products, found that 85 per cent of people who took its online digital skin consultation said that they had chosen its skincare based on how clean the ingredients lists are. However, only 41 per cent said that they actively checked labels – instead they were trusting brands to be transparent.

It's a trend that has led Birchbox US to create a new concept box, The Ingredient-Conscious Skincare Kit (which will hopefully arrive in the UK later this year). Aiming to spare customers the ingredient-list combing, it combines luxe and everyday products that don't contain a wide range of synthetics. The kit includes three UK brands known



From left Clean queens Gwyneth Paltrow and Jessica Alba

for their clean credentials: Ren, Organic Pharmacy and Balance Me.

I'll be the first to admit that ingredients can get confusing. What I've found is when faced with a trend like clean beauty, many companies will react with minimum effort: they'll add a few token natural ingredients to a synthetic formula and focus all marketing on that one ingredient. Thankfully, the internet has a way of levelling

## STARS OF THE CLEAN SCENE



**Origins** Since its inception in the late 1980s, Origins has had a minimalist approach to beauty – excluding key synthetics in favour of plant-based, high performance skincare. *Original Skin Renewal Serum, £32 (houseoffraser.com)*



**Korres** Inspired by the plants and herbs of Greece, Korres does a good line in avoiding many synthetics and adding some interesting natural ingredients. *Wild Rose Face Oil, £24 (bathandunwind.com)*



**Nuori** This Scandinavian brand has freshness at the heart of the whole range. It excludes many synthetics while marrying function with clinical results. *Vital Hand Cream, £35 (beingcontent.com)*



**Mio Skincare** With a 'no nasties' policy, Mio Skincare eliminates all the commonly excluded synthetics and focuses on creating clean, effective products. *Liquid Yoga Restorative Bath Soak, £26 (marksandspencer.com)*



**Oskia** Avoids a range of synthetics while still utilising the anti-ageing benefits of clinically tested ingredients. The minimalist packaging sings of clean. *Renissance Brightlight, £85 (cultbeauty.com)*



**Aurelia** A British brand that focuses on results and research while having 'free-from' at its heart. Its pink packaging is pretty enough to rival any big brand. *Firm & Revitalise Dry Body Oil, £18 (liberty.co.uk)*

the playing field. With the rise of social media and the beauty blogger, any ingredients list can now be dissected and debated before you hand over the cash, making the world of beauty more democratic.

Using clean beauty can be an easy first step into the world of naturals – or it could be your only step, as it fulfils all your requirements for exclusion of synthetics, effectiveness and price. For the organic skincare purist, clean may not be clean enough – but growing skincare ingredients from scratch is a labour- and land-intensive process, and natural skincare can be just as confusing. Clean skincare seems the more accessible option, and the one that's here to stay. ☐