



NATURAL BEAUTY

The global trend towards organic, chemical-free skincare has caught on in Paris. **Jennifer Ladonne** finds notable new beauty lines – and time-proven cult brands – emphasising natural products with a bespoke French touch...



“IN THIS AGE OF EVER MORE COMPLICATED REGIMENS, AMALTHEA'S DAILY THREE-STEP FACE CARE ROUTINE IS REFRESHINGLY STRAIGHTFORWARD”

As beauty aficionados will affirm, it takes time and diligence – and often a major investment – to achieve those seemingly effortless good looks and a natural glow. It also takes help. More and more Parisians are abandoning chemical-laden brands in favour of natural products customised to skin type and lifestyle. So which organic beauty lines are setting their hearts aflutter and complexions aglow?

AMALTHEA

With her enviably radiant complexion, Maryll Beaux, the founder of Amalthea, a year-old Paris-based skincare line, is her own best endorsement. But, as the self-professed beauty junkie will tell you, it wasn't always that way. From her early teens, Beaux found herself trying dozens of French products and still battling the usual skin problems. Inspired to create her own skincare line, Beaux did her due diligence and found that the effects of chemicals, even in the most touted luxury products, ranged from skin irritation to organ toxicity and worse.

Though the European Union standards for cosmetics are strict when it comes to harmful chemicals (the United States is notoriously lax, allowing proven cancer-causing dyes, preservatives and

active ingredients), Beaux advises everyone to double-check what's listed on labels with the Environmental Working Group's website, Skin Deep. Amalthea's credo – simple, safe, organic – is taken so seriously that some products contain only a single ingredient. “The fewer products you put on your skin, the better your skin condition will be,” says Beaux. “We have only good ingredients – when I say good, that means no perfumes, no silicones, no sulphites, and no harmful preservatives.”

In this age of ever more complicated regimens, Amalthea's daily three-step face care routine (and body lotion), all targeted to your skin type, is refreshingly straightforward: an evening purification with either the divine-smelling cleansing oil or a cleansing water (containing lemon verbena flower water); a nourishing, hydrating oil for nighttime, when the skin does most of its replenishing; and a hydrating cream when you wake up. Beaux does not recommend cleansing in the morning.

With only 0.45 per cent preservatives, all Amalthea's ingredients are as fresh and pure as possible, 99 per cent organic, and sold in reusable glass bottles that feature either a pump or a dropper, so there's no risk of contamination. When the product is ready, you either pop into the sleek Marais >>



Clockwise from above: Maryll Beaux founded Amalthea in 2018; the company's credo is “simple, safe, organic”; the boutique is located on rue des Gravilliers, in the Marais



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Clockwise from above: The Laboté boutique is on rue Madame in Saint-Germain-des-Prés; detailed information on all Laboté's ingredients is available online; Cha Ling is brought to you by LVMH

boutique and have your bottle cleaned and refilled on the spot, or you send it to Amalthea by mail – their handy travel-size kit is the perfect stand-in while you're waiting for your refills. Overseas customers are already taking advantage of the no-waste policy.

Compared with their luxury counterparts, the products are reasonably priced, and they are conceived for all skin colours and types. A skin analysis is conducted at the boutique, or online, along with a video demonstrating the proper application and a detailed description of each product – ingredients, origin, and certification (all the products are certified by the most rigorous European organisations). I was delighted at a noticeable increase in softness in my usually dry skin after a week of use, but Beaux says to allow a month to really see results.

● www.amalthea.bio

LABOTÉ

Part laboratory, part boutique, Laboté's immaculate Saint-Germain-des-Prés HQ opened its doors two years ago and is already a benchmark in made-to-measure skincare. Founder Lucile Battail, who dates her passion for concocting beauty potions back to childhood, earned a doctorate in pharmacology and set out to develop her own patented plant-based product line. The result is a pared-down regimen of four daily steps and a weekly mask tailored to your skin type.

First your skin type is evaluated via a detailed questionnaire given during a 15-minute consultation (in English) with the in-house pharmacist. Once this has been determined, you can choose from four fragrances, then watch while two lab technicians measure, weigh and blend your unique formula in the on-site laboratory. Ten minutes later, you're presented

"LEGENDARY PARIS PERFUMER GUERLAIN HAS ELBOWED IN ON THE NATURALS MARKET WITH ITS CHA LING LINE"

with personalised pots marked with your name and number for easy reordering in store or online. If you can't make it to the boutique, you can complete the questionnaire online, and even send photos of your skin, which the pharmacist will analyse and send back with her recommendations, to be purchased online.

The four-step routine involves a floral-infused purifying oil, a luscious day cream, a hydrating botanical serum and a night cream. It is bolstered by a range of essential oils to combat redness, acne or enlarged pores, a floral mist that acts as a toner, and a weekly mask, topped off with three deliciously scented body oils based on the "psychoactive properties" of essential oils that correspond to your personality to bring you energy, serenity and balance.

Detailed information on all Laboté's essential oils and ingredients is available online, as are instructional videos (in French) of the proper application techniques – which makes a trip to Paris unnecessary for those living in the UK. Laboté does not currently ship to the US, but plans are in the works for a global presence.

● www.labote.com



CHA LING, GUERLAIN

Legendary Paris perfumer Guerlain, part of luxury giant LVMH, has elbowed in on the naturals market with its pu'er tea-infused line Cha Ling. Tea connoisseurs will recognise pu'er as a choice aged black tea from China's Yunnan province. Cha Ling's pu'er is harvested by the Bulang people, a Buddhist minority who have been caretakers of the ancient tea plantations in the rain forests of Yunnan for 1,800 years.

According to the LVMH labs, this all-organic pu'er tea's molecular richness has anti-aging and antioxidant properties that make it ideal for detoxifying and regenerating the skin, whether consumed or applied directly via the concoctions. The Cha Ling line features about 40 products, including everything for the tea ceremony, scented candles, steam tablets, rechargeable porcelain containers for the cleansers and creams, and an exquisite perfume which also scents the entire skincare line. In Paris, you can buy the line at the Peninsula Spa or the Bon Marché department store. It's not yet available in the US or the UK.

● www.cha-ling.com

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BIOLOGIQUE RECHERCHE

Mention P50 to any beauty buff and you'll get a reaction that ranges from a knowing smile to a rapturous fit (its popular nickname is 'Jesus in a Bottle'). This legendary elixir – which smells like a bar room floor – is a standout in the infinite world of skincare for its wide range of purported effects: exfoliation, purification, moisturising, pH rebalancing and combating acne – all in one bottle.

The 40-something brand Biologique Recherche was a trailblazer in the use of botanical, marine and biological extracts in its formulas, with unusually high concentrations of active ingredients. Though some of the components used in the products are bio-engineered in their Paris-area laboratories, all are perfume-free and contain no parabens, silicones, animal extracts, lanoline, mineral oils or artificial colourings – and minimal additives – and are produced in small batches.

The product line of face, hair and body care contains a mind-boggling array of options. For the face alone there are multiple cleansers, make-up removers, lotions and exfoliators, countless serums, sun protection and targeted creams and masks, and the silky La Grande Crème, their gold standard (€590). That's why heading to a certified



Biologique Recherche spa is a good idea. Not only will you get the most comprehensive skin analysis available, your treatment will include a detailed daily regimen that evolves as your skin improves. The brand's gorgeous Ambassade de la Beauté, set in an elegant building in a courtyard off the Champs-Élysées, is your best bet.

Available in modules, the facials are fairly priced – as Paris spas go. I had the one-hour Soin Restructurant et Lissant (€125) along with the Booster Remodelling Face module (€45), and both my 13-year-old daughter and my husband noticed a marked difference. Miracle enough for me.

● www.biologique-recherche.com

JOËLLE CIOCCO

Parisian beauty obsessives who are not devotees of Biologique Recherche are most likely in the Joëlle Ciocco camp. Ciocco has been perfecting her patented skincare line, Epidermologie, for more than 30 years and attracts fashion designers, movie stars, models and beauty editors who swear that her formulas and treatments get quick and lasting results. Ciocco's aim is to restore the "cutaneous flora balance" through the proper cleansing and application techniques, and to protect skin from our worst modern-day afflictions: pollution and stress.

At the pristine Joëlle Ciocco clinic, discreetly tucked away in a courtyard near place de la Madeleine, you can receive a range of signature treatments, including her famous Buccal Massage, an inner mouth manipulation that stretches the muscles of the face, and the two-hour Le Grand Soin, given by Ciocco herself (€1,350) or one of her certified Epidermologists (€695). Ciocco, a certified cosmetologist, spends >>

Clockwise from above: Biologique Recherche was a trailblazer for natural skin care products 40 years ago; Joëlle Ciocco has herself been in this line of business for 30 years now; Biologique Recherche's La Grande Crème





Clockwise from above: Joëlle Ciocco offers a range of signature treatments; Oh My Cream is a newcomer to the Paris scene; the swimming pool at Villa Thalgo; Joëlle Ciocco's Précieux Cérat

much of her week with her team of technicians perfecting her formulas, which can be bought on site, online or at a number of high-end beauty boutiques in Paris, the US and the UK.

● www.joelle-ciocco.com



OH MY CREAM

Paris's newest and best boutique devoted to clean beauty products and cosmetics for the face, body and hair has scoured the globe for the best chemical-free, natural and environmentally friendly products available – many made in France or Europe and hard to find in the US or the UK.

Brands to look for: Les Huilettes, Hervé Herau, Patyka, Merme, Nuori, Grown Alchemist, Tata Harper, Ren, Joëlle Ciocco, among many others. Oh My Cream's own line includes a fabulously gentle foaming cleanser and rich moisturising oil that's a cult favourite. Best of all, every product in the store is available in free samples, and customers are invited to test and try before taking the plunge.

“EVERY PRODUCT IN THE STORE IS AVAILABLE IN FREE SAMPLES, AND CUSTOMERS ARE INVITED TO TEST AND TRY BEFORE TAKING THE PLUNGE”

Oh My Cream also offers face and body treatments, make-up application and epilation, as well as coaching on the products, at their Saint-Germain and Marais stores. There are six boutiques in Paris.

● www.ohmycream.com

VILLA THALGO CLUB & SPA

A hop from the Arc de Triomphe, Villa Thalgo day spa's marine-based face and body treatments are wildly popular among Paris professionals, who flock here for the pool, sauna, hammam and fitness rooms, and swear by the mineral-rich product line and face and body-sculpting rituals. One of their newest treatments, the two-hour Joyaux Atlantique (€210), combines a body soak and water massage followed by a deeply relaxing face and body massage with energising crystals.

● www.villathalgo.com FT



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