

HELEN BROWN
VANITY CASE

LIVE AID

If you favour natural cosmetics and are well versed in organic unguents, you may want to try biodynamic beautifiers for that extra-special something. Dr Alkaitis skincare, the latest cosmetics brand to cross the Atlantic, certainly goes one step further. Using ingredients harvested in tune with the cycles of the moon (apparently, it maximises their healing properties), the range has created a buzz among beauty insiders, not least because we're intrigued by any supermodel's skin secret (Karolina Kurkova and Angela Lindvall are fans). And not only are his ingredients biodynamic and organic, they're also kept in their "living" state during the formulating. "I approach skin as a complete living organism," says Alkaitis, a scientist who specialises in the healing properties of plants. "If you feed an organism healthy, living food, it is going to function better and look more attractive." Hence, there are no synthetic ingredients, only extracts of plants, flowers, fruit and vegetables. These are then formulated to replicate the balance in which they are found in nature. "Nature is all about relationships," says Alkaitis. "Everything interacts like a complete piece of music. If you take out a single note, it will be out of context."

So, do they work? I was seduced by the natural formulas, but they take some getting used to. It's easy to forget that the reason some serums slide onto the skin like a silk stocking is that they are brimming with chemicals that make them pleasant to the touch. Dr Alkaitis's products certainly have light textures that could never be accused of clogging pores, but they aren't as sensuous as most of us are used to. The Replenishing Serum, for example, is so light, it almost seems to evaporate on contact, but once you get used to it, you appreciate how it gently moisturises and tones. The Universal Mask has a ripe broccoli aroma, but when it is mixed to a thin paste with water, its nourishing vitamins and minerals make skin feel instantly perkier.

However, as the products are adaptogens (plant ingredients that normalise the body's systems), things may get worse before they get better. After an initial spate of outbreaks, my skin is plumper and better able to retain moisture, even with just a smidgen of cream.

£36-£65; 020 7229 7076

Lust of the week

While most of us rely on vibrant nail varnish to prettify unsightly feet, the pedi king Bastien Gonzalez is famed for his naturally gorgeous, polish-free technique. His secret weapons — a nail-buffing shammy and polishing paste — work toenails to a glassy shine. And when the lustre fades, he'll replace the shammy, no charge. *Révérence de Bastien Horn Buffer with Buffing Cream*, £100, from *Lost in Beauty*; 020 7586 4411

TRY

3

HAIR/BODY OILS

If your skin and hair are starting to dry out in the sun or the air-con, a multipurpose oil could be your best summer investment.



Superb nourishment for skin and hair (leave overnight for deep conditioning) — and the amber colour of this oil sets off a tan. *L'Occitane do Brasil Summer Oil*, £13; 020 7907 0301



A light argan-oil formula that gives a sheen to legs and takes away the frizz when applied to dry hair. *Kiehl's Superbly Restorative Dry Oil*, \$24; 020 7240 2411



This serum is brimming with feelgood essential oils that keep skin silky and soften brittle hair. *Pafyka Face & Body Serum*, £26; www.puresha.com

FOLIOID PHOTOFF

HOT TIP

TAKE THE HARD WORK OUT OF SEARCHING FOR A GOOD MASSEUR, MANICURIST OR PERSONAL TRAINER BY LOGGING ON TO WWW.RETURNTOGLORY.CO.UK, WHERE YOU CAN FIND AND BOOK IN WITH A FULLY QUALIFIED THERAPIST IN YOUR AREA