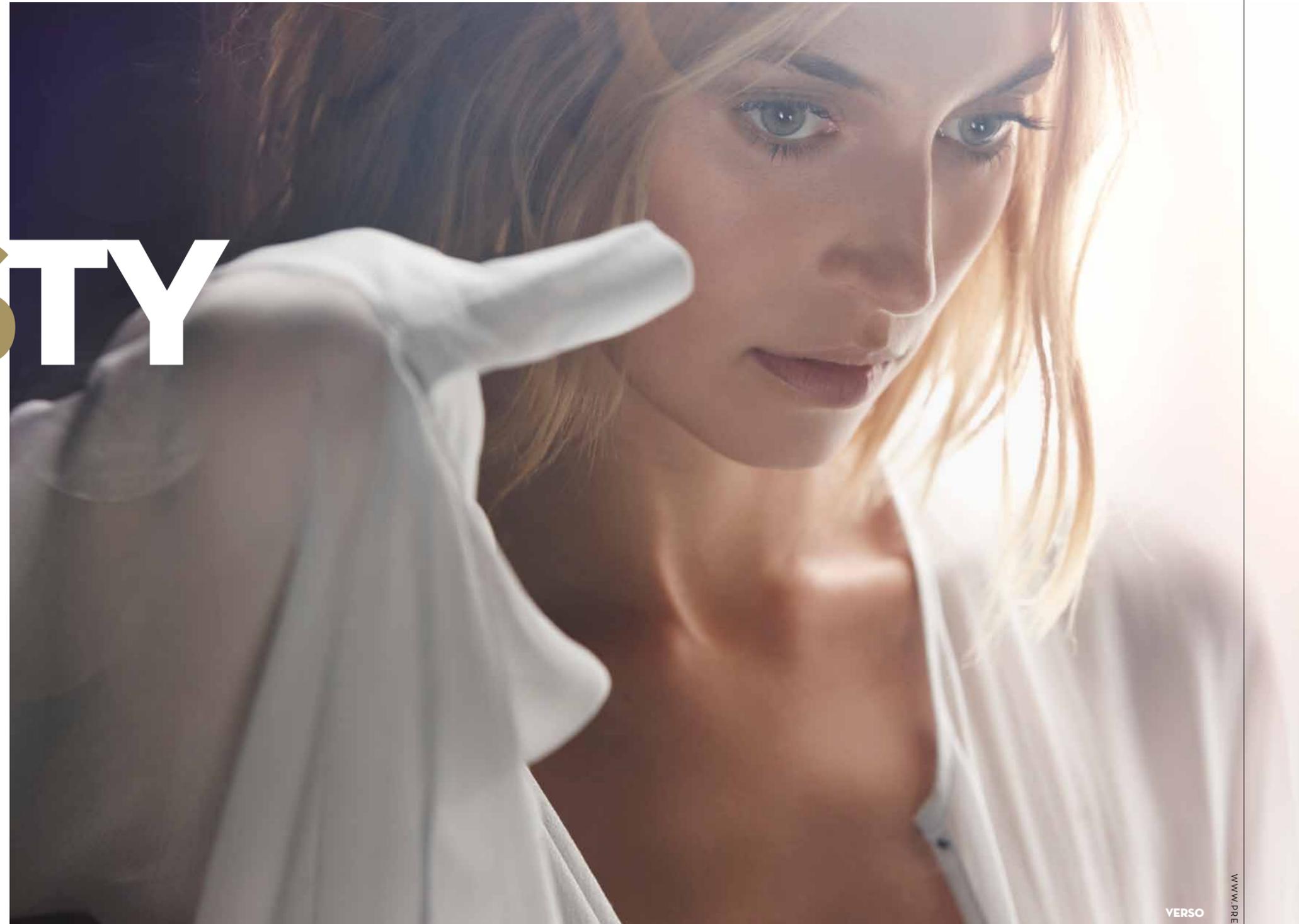


BEAUTY AND HONESTY



PRESTIGE LOOKS AT THE NEW RANGE OF SKINCARE PRODUCTS AVAILABLE, WHERE TRANSPARENCY TAKES CENTRE STAGE

With the latest buzzword in almost every single industry being transparency (or honesty for that matter) it was only a matter of time before the beauty industry got dragged into the fray. With products like the Naturalis toolkit, a home micro-factory, launching to bridge a gap between the cosmetics industry and DIY, this is just one more way that the beauty industry is responding to the call of consumers demanding a clearer view on what's really happening behind the scenes. This toolkit in particular

enables consumers to agitate ingredients at high speeds to create cleansers, moisturisers and lotions. This way, it assists consumers to become experts.

A case in point is the brand Rapanui, a young company that revolutionised the garment industry with their 'traceability map' where shoppers can interactively see

the story behind their clothes. The garment is tracked and customers can follow the wake of that item on a map – from seed to store. Soon the beauty industry will respond by doing something similar and the use of a Quick Response Code (QR code) with information about the product and its ingredients could be one of the primary

clues to a new transparency model.

BEAUTY DOWN UNDER

One candidate for more of such transparency is Aesop, the Australian beauty brand that holds honesty as one of their core values. When it comes to beauty products, the question asked everywhere,

from department store counters to specialist beauty stores, is whether the product is completely natural or truly organic. And this is where Aesop has taken the tricky high road by answering, "not completely". These days, consumers are wise about fads, lies and videotapes. So their veracity is what makes Aesop so unique.

AESOP'S APPROACH TO BUSINESS IS REFRESHING. THE BRAND USES WORD OF MOUTH INSTEAD OF ADVERTISING



Beauty entrepreneur Dennis Paphitis, a veteran in the skincare industry, started the luxury beauty brand in Melbourne in 1987. She has emphasised transparency throughout the brand's development. When one walks into any Aesop store (and these are now dotted across the world, although sadly not in SA), the policy is for staff members to enlighten potential consumers on the brand's technical and scientific relevancy, and then tell them about the latest developments in skincare and beauty.

Aesop uses Vitamin C, an active ingredient that holds a variety of skin-perfecting functions like creating healthy collagen and repulsing harmful free radicals. As an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, Vitamin C must not oxidise in order to be effective. Vitamin C cannot hold its value in a natural state, as it is unstable. So instead one needs a 'non-natural' water-soluble topical scientifically generated derivative version of Vitamin C, like Magnesium Ascorbyl Phosphate. This stable ingredient is used in place of natural Vitamin C, as it's not only efficacious, but also measurable and controllable. Aesop includes this substance in products like their 'B Triple C Face Balancing Gel' that, according to the brand, is "a decadent, vitamin-rich meal for the skin".

Aesop's approach to business is refreshing. The brand uses word of mouth instead of advertising. "We advocate the use of our products as part of a balanced life that includes a healthy diet, sensible exercise, a moderate intake of red wine, and a regular dose of stimulating literature," says the Aesop brand PR. The brand not

only creates skin products. There are also whimsical items like "post-poo drops", pet products and lavish products like "Parsley Seed Anti-Oxidant Facial Treatment" – **Daniel Scheffler**

Visit Aesop in Manhattan at West Broadway, Madison Ave or University Place. Aesop is currently available in South Africa at selected outlets like Loading Bay or online at www.aesop.com

SCANDINAVIAN SKINCARE

At the other side of the world, in Scandinavia, a similar concept has been used to create Verso Skincare, which uses a substance the brand has developed, called Retinol 8.

For a while now, Retinol has been included in anti-aging skincare products. However, the substance can irritate the skin and if one uses a Retinol-based product, one has to include an effective sunscreen, as Retinol is sensitive to sunlight. Retinol 8 contains a Vitamin A derivative that is eight times more potent than traditional Retinol, and is also stable and gentle to the skin.

This revolutionary substance has been included in a new skincare range developed by Stockholm-based Lars Frederiksson, who is already renowned for a series of effective skincare brands he's created. The Verso

products can be used in effective doses daily and even in sunlight. "Retinol 8 has a proven rejuvenating effect on the skin and it works by making the skin cells mimic how younger cells behave," he explains. "The substance stimulates the production of collagen and increases the flow of nourishment to the skin, which leads to improved skin elasticity, a more even skin tone and a reduction of fine lines and wrinkles."

Verso, which was launched in South Africa at the beginning of June at the same time as it was launched worldwide, is ideal for those who have sensitive skin. It's also one of the new breed of beauty products with no colourants, parabens or other harmful substances. And it also increases the production of collagen, which fills out the skin. Best of all, the active ingredient is so potent that only a small concentration is needed to achieve visible results.

Verso is a Latin word that translates to 'reverse', as in the back of a painting or the back view of a dress. In a metaphorical sense, it means being different, and in this skin care range, Verso also means the ability to reverse time. The range comprises only five products, each with a unique concentration of the magical Retinol 8 substance that is combined with other specific ingredients to target different needs. Using the 'reverse'



as a concept in its branding, the number of each product is reversed on the elegant packaging.

There's a soothing, gentle Foaming Cleanser for daily use, a protective, moisturising Day Cream and a calming and repairing Night Cream. In addition, there's a super Facial Serum with a high dose of Retinol 8 complex for maximum effect as well as the Super Eye Serum that firms and smoothes. *For information on local stockists, contact Jacqui on 072-006681 or email Jacqui@lignum-vitae.co.za Visit www.versoskincare.com*

ITALIAN STYLE

Trust the Italians to go one step further when it comes to innovation. Davide Bollati, heir to the Davines Research Laboratories, has applied what he calls a "new renaissance model" to research and development. He uses the expertise

of a committee of professionals to gather different perspectives and help him understand aging and how to combat it using a multi-disciplinary approach. From this information, the innovative Skin Care Regimen by Comfort Zone range of products was created. According to the committee of experts, inflammation is the primary cause of aging, along with oxidation, free radicals, and something called compromised methylation, which is the vital replication of DNA to ensure that one's skin regenerates properly. As a result, one needs to do much more than just use an effective skincare range; one needs to have spa facials regularly, exercise regularly, eat nutritious foods and take dietary supplements. And let's not forget stress management, which has a terrifying effect on the skin.

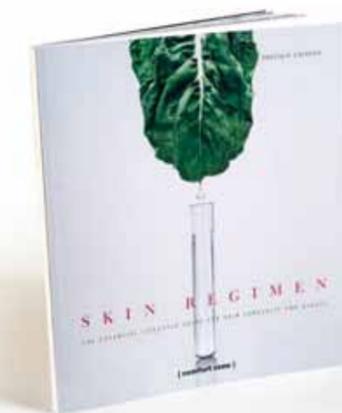
So, when you purchase your Skin Care Regimen range, one of the products is a

supplement to take daily, called Omega3+ The Supplement. Omega 3 helps produce essential fatty acids and reduce inflammation.

The range is compact, and has been designed for use year-round. And it's not only for mature skin; Skin Regimen has also been created for younger skin with the first signs of aging. The products include a cleanser and toner in one, intensive corrective and protective serums, anti-aging redensifying moisturisers and Night Renewer, an intensive peeling mask that maximises the effects of the other products.

A series of two, four or six 30-minute Longevity Spa Facials are recommended depending on biological age, which is tested at the first facial. These revolutionary facials include the use of the Kabat technique, a neuromuscular rehabilitation method that reinforces elasticity of skin tissue and muscles. *(Ed's note: see box on my experience of this facial).*

Skin Regimen is available at Carlton Hair Salons countrywide as well as selected beauticians. For more information, visit www.skinregimen.com



FACE OFF

At the media launch, I was given a voucher to enjoy a Skin Regimen facial, and chose my closest and most favourite location, Carlton Hair, Hyde Park.

After another frazzled day, I was hoping for some downtime. And I got it. Beautician Mbali loves her product, loves her job, loves people – loves life. With that sort of enthusiasm one can only lie back and enjoy it as she pampers your skin. I've had different types of facials all over the world, with many different brands, and a few have

been revolutionary. But this facial was more than that. It's the first time my skin has been transformed.

Mbali started by using the unique Kabat technique, developed in the 1950s. It's a series of simple physical movements using light resistance to 'wake up and stretch' the muscles. Then, after cleansing the skin, Mbali used Roullage, a form of massage that is used to reactivate the skin and give energy and oxygen to the tissues. It felt like she was stimulating my muscles into moving back into place. Tired looking skin on my neck was

revived and looked fresh and young, and even the area around my eyes perked up'.

To be honest, I'm not crazy about facials. But this time, the 30 minutes sped by, and the results were glorious. My skin was glowing and I looked, and felt, rejuvenated. I will be going back for another Longevity Facial with Mbali. Not just for the facial, mind. To enjoy her glorious sunshine personality – and those magical hands. – **Sharon Preston**
For a facial with Mbali, call 011-325 4995