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# Direct From Europe: High-Tech Holistic Skincare



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These days, plant-based beauty products are de rigueur Stateside. But the roots of many natural skin care solutions can be traced to Europe, where alternative medicine practitioners have been bottling botanical tinctures and homeopathic remedies for centuries. Take, for example, Rudolf Steiner — the Austrian scientist and philosopher launched his Weleda skin care range in the 1920s using flowers, herbs and other extracts cultivated on biodynamic farms. Or the Vienna-born chemist Rudolf Hauschka, who took inspiration from the rhythms of nature when co-creating his Dr. Hauschka line of essential-oil-spiked elixirs in 1967 — long before self-care Sundays were a thing.

Now, a new guard of European scientists and skin experts is combining an old-world respect for nature with the latest advancements in chemistry to perfect the skin. Newly arriving in the U.S. this month: The Cream and The Cream Rich (\$265 each) from [Augustinus Bader](#), a German university professor who has spent the last three decades working as a specialist in the field of regenerative medicine. In 2007, Bader developed a breakthrough hydrogel that eliminates the need for skin grafts in some burn patients (just one of the 200-plus patents he holds). Tapping into similar self-healing technology, his creams contain a complex of amino acids, vitamins and compounds that mimic those naturally found in the skin and help minimize everything from fine lines to redness to dark spots. “It takes skin care to the next level; it’s about achieving skin health through physiologic and innate ways,” Bader says. The collection is also boosted with evening primrose, avocado and argan oils — and it gives back. Part of the proceeds from the range will fund the Augustinus Bader Foundation, which provides free hydrogel treatments to clinics that treat burn victims.

German orthopedic surgeon [Barbara Sturm](#), M.D., meanwhile, spent the early years of her medical training on the slopes, analyzing how professional skiers recover from injury and trauma. She discovered that quelling inflammation is the key to physical longevity, a theory that applies to the entire body — especially the skin. Inspired by this finding, she opened her first aesthetic clinic in Düsseldorf in 2004. Among her more experimental offerings is MC1, a bespoke anti-aging cream infused with patients’ own plasma (and for this, there is a lengthy waitlist). Next came a [ready-made range](#) of cleansers, creams and masks that aim to enhance youthfulness via fresh doses of purslane. The plant, says Dr. Sturm, has “potent anti-inflammatory, wound-healing and nutritive properties,” and also “extends cell life.” It’s pumped into all of her products, along with lab-derived actives like the hydrating long- and short-chain hyaluronic acids in her popular plumping serum [Ampoules](#) (\$215), and the nontoxic UV filters in her [Sun Drops](#) (\$145, currently sold out until spring). Her newest innovation: Anti-Pollution Drops, made with “an interesting new compound produced by marine microbes,” Dr. Sturm says. “It’s able to directly combat the effects of environmental pollution on the skin surface.”

Other complexion concerns — from stubborn acne to dullness — require looking beneath the surface, says [Nigma Talib](#), a London-based naturopathic doctor. After suffering from eczema and digestive issues as a child, Dr. Talib eventually tried botanical supplements to balance her system rather than steroid creams and antacids. “In three to six months, I was 100 percent better,” she says. “I decided this was the type of doctor I wanted to be — one that looks at the root cause of illness.” Now, she’s leveraging her 18 years of experience to create holistic products that improve skin from the inside out: her [Healthy Flora](#) (\$65) supplement contains probiotics and grapeseed oil to fight oxidative damage while her [Hydrating and Plumping Serum No. 1](#) (\$205) uses plant stem cells and light-water technology. “Most creams and serums are mainly made up of water,” Dr. Talib explains. “But we remove the heavy isotopes from the water molecule.” It’s a process that allows the ingredients to deeply penetrate the skin for more effective results, she says.

For most Europeans, the goal of skincare is natural-looking results, says Munich-based dermatologist Timm Golueke, M.D., who created his [Royal Fern](#) line to nurture skin by noninvasive means. Its star ingredient — Scottish fern — might be able to protect cellular DNA from the harmful effects of UV exposure, a detail Dr. Golueke uncovered in his reading of medical literature. He adds other botanicals to his products — including wild rose blossoms and sea buckthorn — to form an encapsulated complex that promises to deliver hydration, fight hyperpigmentation and soften fine lines gradually over time. In a nod to German efficiency, all of the formulas are multitasking: the [Phytoactive Anti-Aging Serum](#) (\$295) and [Phytoactive Anti-Aging Cream](#) (\$250), for example, are designed to firm, brighten and nourish. Such no-fuss solutions mesh well with the broader European perspective on aging, which hasn’t changed much over time. In Europe, says Dr. Golueke, aging “is really a term that implies taking care of oneself, eating well and exercising often.”