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## Skincare takes its cue from wine

By Alix Strauss



The Caudalie spa set in vineyards in the Bordeaux region

Red wine, it is often claimed, is good for you, even though experience suggests that quaffing it is more likely to result in an ashen-faced hangover than in radical rejuvenation. Yet a growing number of skincare companies are using ingredients you'd usually find in a glass of wine to improve the complexion.

Some use most of the grape, others extract resveratrol, the grape's potent antioxidant. They say it slows the ageing process, apparently promoting tissue elasticity, firmness and – its users hope – providing a more youthful appearance.

Where once it was the norm to see one or two products made with resveratrol included in a company's skincare portfolio, brands are increasing the number of such items or putting them centre stage.

The forerunners of the "vino movement" in skincare are Mathilde and Bertrand Thomas, whose family-owned a vineyard in Bordeaux. In 1995 the couple started Caudalie, a grape-based skincare line, and four years later they launched Caudalie Vinotherapie Spas. In February, Caudalie released Premier Cru La Crème Riche (£92.50/\$155), which contains three of the grape's most important components: polyphenol, resveratrol and viniferine. Last month it added a new Polyphenol C15 range, which includes Anti-Wrinkle Defense Serum (£35), Anti-Wrinkle Eye and Lip Cream (£26) and Broad Spectrum SPF20 Anti-Wrinkle Protect fluid (£29).

"Resveratrol has proven to be extremely powerful," says Dr Paul Frank, a cosmetic dermatologist and founder of the 5th Avenue Dermatology Surgery and Laser Center in Manhattan. "It's not irritating like retinol, which doesn't have a good shelf life. And people like that it comes from wine. It's a sexy story to them."

Arcona, a Los Angeles-based company, has a Wine Hydrating Mask (£25.20/\$40) with grape seed and wine extracts, which, it says, stimulates cellular renewal and reduces wrinkles, while Greek brand Apivita offers a Wine Elixir Anti-Wrinkle & Firming Rich Face Cream (£39.85/€42.90).

Canada-based Bite infuses resveratrol into each tube of its lipstick, claiming that this delivers the antioxidant equivalent of five glasses of wine (without the raging headache).

Susie Wang is founder of 100% Pure, a cosmetics brand that offers 10 red wine-infused products and has grown by more than 1,000 per cent since 2011. Pure will this year release 50 more products. Followers such as Madonna, Jessica Alba and Kate Hudson have helped raise awareness of the brand, which has sold more than 500,000 Red Wine Resveratrol Creams in the past two years. “A lot of companies say they contain resveratrol but it can be as little as 1 per cent,” says Wang. “You need a minimum of 5 per cent with a maximum of 25 per cent to really be beneficial.”

Wine can be expensive but some skincare creators are making even vintage bottles seem like bargains. Vine Vera, another booming brand, offers more than 35 facial products but they don't come cheap. One fluid ounce of Resveratrol Chianti Revival Serum is \$346 and the company suggests following up with Resveratrol Chianti Morning Recovery (\$346).

But not everyone is convinced. Ron Robinson, a Manhattan chemist and founder of BeautyStat.com, a site that reviews new products, says: “Resveratrol is said to be able to activate the gene called Sirt1, which controls the ability of cells to protect and repair themselves, and thus may provide anti-ageing benefits. I get why people are gravitating towards it but I'm not sure it actually works. I'd like to see more clinical testing or data to prove it.”

For those who are intrigued but inclined to save their money for a decent Pinot Noir, try something DIY. Cornelia Zicu, global chief creative officer for Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa, says: “I tell my clients to take any clay mask, add a teaspoon of red wine and mix them together until it turns into foam. Then leave on your face for 15 minutes. Red wine has fewer sulphites than white.”

While waiting for your mask to dry, Zicu suggests drinking a glass as well.

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vinevera.com

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apivita.com

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