

A close-up, high-resolution portrait of a woman's face. She has light skin, bright blue eyes, and full, glossy red lips. Her expression is neutral, looking directly at the camera. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the texture of her skin and the intensity of her eyes. The text "AT FACE" is superimposed over the center of her face, partially obscuring her nose and eyes.

AT FACE

Fashion designers have stepped into the skincare arena, helping consumers put their best faces forward.



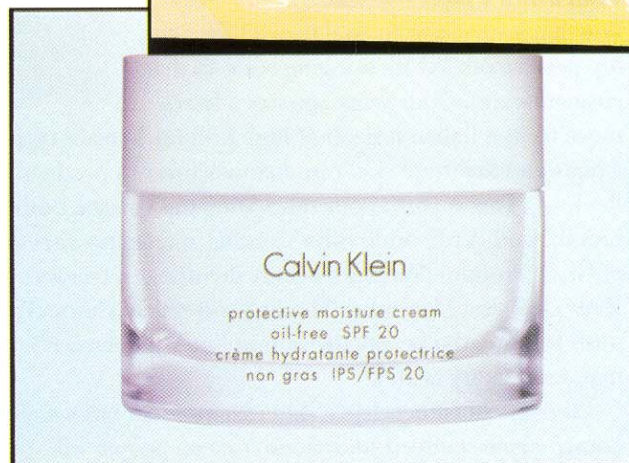
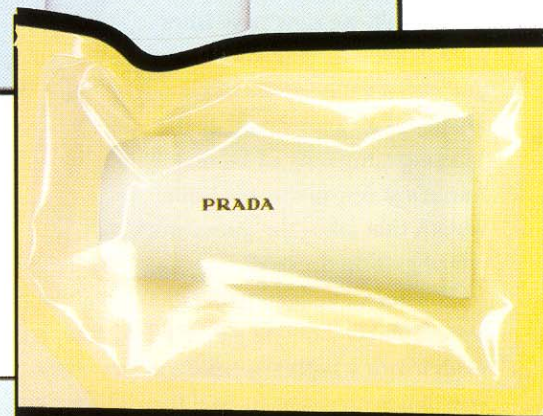
VALUE

By Judy DiEdwardo

The ultimate designer fashion accessory isn't something expensive you throw off your feet as you fall into bed after a party. Nor is it something stylish you sling over your shoulder as you head to work. Instead, it's what you wear day and night, year after year. It never goes out of style – your face.

While designers have always helped you put your best foot forward with the perfect outfits and accessories, now they're working on helping you put your best face forward, too. Designer skin care has become THE fashion accessory, as anyone who has dipped into a vial of Prada's ultra rich Reviving Face Concentrate will tell you. They're extending their brands from your closet to something even closer – your skin.

Last year, Italian fashion diva Miuccia Prada stepped off the catwalk and on to beauty counters with a state-of-the-art treatment line that is as intelligently innovative as her shoes and handbags. But unlike some of her fashion colleagues, who typically follow a more traditional route through cosmetics and fragrance, she headed straight for skin care and tapped a small arsenal of laboratories from Japan to Texas to execute her vision by developing her exclusive micro emulsions.



"Miuccia believes that skin is a fundamental fabric, so where better to extend the Prada name than skin care?" says Jill Scalamandre, general manager of Prada Beauty. "The vision for our skin care collection was one that would raise the level of performance in the serious skin care category. We saw room for innovation and the opportunity was there."

Reflective of Prada's penchant for practicality, each item is served in single-dose vials and airtight packets made from durable Tyvek® packaging – a DuPont material used for Federal Express packaging – to preserve the ingredients' integrity. "Like our fur-lined sleeping bags and handbags made from parachute nylon, the Prada philosophy is to develop intelligent luxury by innovating the ordinary," says Scalamandre.

While designers' diversification into other markets isn't unique, crossing the threshold into skin care has become the hot new direction. It presents a huge win-win for designers and consumers alike. Designers cash in on the loyalties they've earned as they extend their individual fashion aesthetic to their product lines, and consumers benefit by having a wider range of top quality products to choose from. As a result, we now have ultra hi-tech creams, gels and serums that deliver the same classic quality of a Chanel suit, or the exacting simplicity of Donna Karan's seven-piece wardrobe system that takes the guess-work out of getting dressed.

For instance, fashion diva Donatella Versace will join the fold this winter with a highly-specialized treatment line that is expected to rival the industry's top performers. While bringing color to the cosmetics arena four years ago was a lateral move for the Italian lexicon of high fashion, Versace tapped a high-end Japanese skin care manufacturer to produce the line. "This is part of our renovating the Versace beauty brand," said Ferdinando Silva Coronel, managing director of Giver Profumi (Versace's beauty division), to *Women's Wear Daily* last December. The line will reflect Coronel's push to bring the beauty division in line with Versace's high-end luxury fashion.

Of course, just because a skin care product has a well-known name stamped on it doesn't mean people will

automatically buy it. Today's savvy woman isn't impressed with brand name status where erasing the ravages of time and gravity from her face is concerned. Competition for our dollars at the skin care counter is fierce, and loyalty is being won only by those with the goods that go the distance. However, top fashion houses have the money to hire the best research minds in the industry to cash in on the technology, which has resulted in the creation of high performance products that rival designers' command of Seventh Avenue.

Another big name competing in this arena is Calvin Klein. His line of vitamin- and botanical-enriched products is as sleek as his signature initials. The man who parlayed denim jeans into a status symbol brought his idea of modern simplicity to a pared-down skin care line last year on the heels of a highly successful run in the fragrance arena that began with Obsession in 1985. "Women are looking to simplify their skin care regimens, so we developed products that are precise, simplified and multi-functional."

Donna Karan, who proved good fashion isn't complicated, launched her Cashmere Mist Bath and Body collection in 1994 after having marketed everything from fragrance to select luxury housewares. Her no-nonsense approach to decadent, yet affordable, luxury spawned a generation of DK devotees.

"Donna's skin care line embodies the same marriage of form and function like her fashion," says Catherine Walsh, vice president of marketing and product development for Donna Karan Cosmetics.

Having something feel good against the skin is her criteria for fashion as well skin care, said Walsh of the line that was named for Karan's hallmark fabric – cashmere. Like her

colleagues at Calvin Klein, Karan collaborated with dermatologist Dr. Patricia Wexler and chemist Mark Potter to develop state-of-the-art products that reaped immediate results. "And let's face it," says Walsh, "beyond all the hype and the science, products that perform are the bottom line. And today's technology is amazing. Manufacturing techniques enable us to create better performing products that can actually change a woman's skin at the cellular level – not just mask the effects of aging."

Older standards like Chanel, which has been a name in



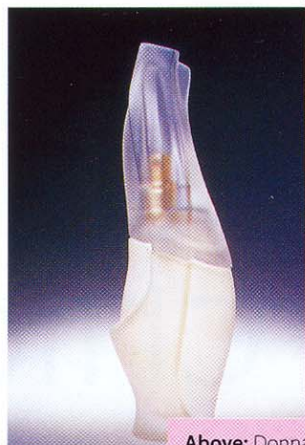
Classic French designer Hubert De Givenchy launched his popular anti-aging Swisscare line of products in 1989. One of the line's best sellers is Hydra-Tricella Cream.

skin care since the 1930s after Coco Chanel reinvented the quintessential lady-like suit a decade earlier, are also benefiting from the new technology. "Skin care is one of your highest loyalty categories because there are so many variables, unlike in finding a great lipstick," says Karen Flinn, Chanel's vice president of marketing and director of training. "Just as Coco Chanel freed women by putting them in trousers and treating them as an individual, our approach to skin care has been to focus on individual needs and not a one-size-fits-all mentality.

"There was a huge trend in multi-benefit products several years ago, but the latest evolution in technology and research has allowed developers to be highly targeted and specialized," says Flinn. "One of the biggest changes to benefit the consumer is the legitimacy of the active ingredients of today's skin care products." Alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) was one of the first major ingredients women learned about and they understood how it exfoliated the skin's surface layers to create an instant tangible result of better looking skin.

"It changed the industry by raising awareness and provoking interest in learning more about these products," says Flinn. "As a result, we became obliged to do more research and to give more information. The average woman has a greater understanding of the aging process and the effects of sun exposure, so there's great merit in understanding the science behind a product.

"Aging baby boomers are quite different from their mothers, who didn't have the products or the information that is available today," she says. "We've all become mini chemists." Chemists with a penchant for the best that money can buy, that is ...



Above: Donna Karan fuses form and function – taking cue from previously successful clothing lines.



The Yves Saint Laurent skin care line features 33 products which promise to restore and revitalize the skin. One of the line's most popular items is the Haute Légèreté care for tired legs.

Face value best-sellers and must-haves

Calvin Klein: CK's basic regimen of two cleansers, three moisturizers, a non-abrasive micro exfoliator and makeup remover represent his basic approach to skin care. Prices range from \$16 to \$30.

Chanel: The new Précision line of 26 products covers a spectrum of skin types. Best-sellers include Age Delay Rejuvenation Serum (\$60, 1.7 ounces), Source Extrême moisturizer (\$65, 1.7 ounces) and Lift Sérum Extrême anti-wrinkle gel (\$70, 1 ounce).

Christian Dior: The man who brought tiny waistlines and longer skirt lengths to the runway brings innovation and style to his vitamin infused skincare products. Best-sellers include Refreshing Cleansing Water for face and eyes (\$22.50), Vitalmine (\$45), Deep Radiance Exfoliating Creme (\$25) and Clarifying Cleansing Mask (\$25).

Donna Karan: Cashmere Mist features 11 body cleansers, lotions, creams and polishes infused with a hybrid mix of natural oils. Prices range from \$18 to \$45.

Hubert De Givenchy: In 1989, this classic French designer launched a patented, anti-aging Swisscare line of 20 products that use the skin refining benefits of wheat germ and green tea extracts instead of fruit acids, which can irritate sensitive skin. Best-sellers include Firm Profile Eye (\$45, .5 ounce), Firm Profile face (\$55, 1.7 ounces) and the Hydra-Tricellia Cream (\$48, 4.2 ounces).

Prada: 26 products address a trio of skin types with vitamin C-pumped moisturizers, high-tech alpha hydroxy exfoliants and soy- and collagen-infused masks and tonics. \$55 to \$130 for a one-month supply.

Ralph Lauren: The man who brought timeless classicism to fashion recently launched his men's skin care regimen with the face of hunky Polo Sport super model Tyson Beckford, whose clean good looks epitomize the Ralph Lauren aesthetic. Best-sellers include Face Fitness, an alpha hydroxy acid-enhanced moisturizer, (\$16.50, 2.5 ounces) and Eye Fitness eye therapy cream (\$16.50, .5 ounce).

Versace: The 12-unit collection is expected to feature basic products produced by a high-end Japanese skin care manufacturer.

Yves Saint Laurent: The Yves Saint Laurent skin care line was launched in 1993 and currently features 33 products which promise to restore and revitalize the skin. YSL must-haves include Temps Majeur intensive skin supplement (\$265, 1.6 ounces), Ligne Pure body slimming crème (\$54, 6.7 ounces) and Haute Légèreté care for tired legs (\$52.50, 4.4 ounces).