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GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT

In the first part of our series on homegrown skincare brands that are changing the beauty game, Tanvi Dagli Modi speaks with Colette Austin of The Skin Pantry



LIME AND COCONUT WHIP, lemon cheesecake, and crème brûlée. These aren't items from the dessert menu of your favourite café. Rather, they are the sinful, organic concoctions that Mumbai-based Colette Austin is whipping up in her kitchen for your skin.

Under her aptly named label The Skin Pantry, Austin has created a range of delicious products using USDA- and Ecocert-certified organic ingredients like shea and cocoa butter sourced from Ghana, vanilla extracts from Madagascar and Tahiti, mango butter from Burma, lavender from Bulgaria, and blue tansy from Morocco to name a few. The result: A range of 23 handmade moisturisers, body butters, face washes, scrubs, and masks.

“Don't put on your skin what you wouldn't put in your mouth,” says Austin, a brand and communications designer. “The skin is the largest organ and eventually it all goes into your system.” Austin's creations are all preservatives-, parabens-, and synthetic stabilisers-free, and, as a result, have a short shelf-life of only three to four months. Every product is carefully and painstakingly made at home single-handedly, and packaged in dainty glass jars (50ml and 100ml) with wooden spatulas.

Each promises to not only delight, but to deliver happy, healthy, and glowing skin.

Austin's journey with skin products began a little over a year ago, when she turned to the Paleo diet in an effort to resolve hormonal problems that she was facing. During the course of her search for natural foods, she noticed a serious dearth of chemical-free skincare. It was then that she decided to create products herself, and to that effect took an online course in organic cosmetics. She also studied the

effects of weather on different skin types, like the impact of extremely dry climates on the nomadic tribes in North Africa. Travelling to such arid regions she learnt about oils like Marula, Baobab, and Yango. Soon after, The Skin Pantry was born following glowing reviews from friends, family, and other willing testers.

Born and raised in Mumbai, but inspired by her multi-ethnic background (she is French, Italian, Austrian, British, Scottish, and Khasi), Austin says her range is influenced by Western-sensibilities by way of ingredients, but is tailor-made for Indian skin. “I didn't want to use neem, sandalwood, saffron etc, not because they don't work or because I don't like them, but there's enough of that around. I have a different sensibility. I wanted to make 'skin food' that sounded delicious and eat-worthy.”

So what's next for The Skin Pantry? A regenerative line of products that aims to heal, rejuvenate, and moisturise ageing skin. n

TOP PICKS

1. Skin Smoothies—no-soap face wash
2. Vanilla Bean Drench face moisturiser
3. Lemon Body Butter



(This page) **The Skin Pantry** Rose Vanilla Body Butter, ` 1,450/100ml; Vanilla Bean Drench face moisturiser, ` 1,250/50ml; Peaches and Cream hand and body moisturiser, ` 1,200/50ml; Lemon Body Butter, ` 1,450/100ml. (Opposite page) **The Skin Pantry** Skin Smoothie Green and Skin Smoothie Buff. Both ` 1,000/200ml.

To order, email theskinpantry@gmail.com. Also available on Scootsy and propshop24.in