



The show featured a wall covered in flowers for photo-ops.



August 29, 2016

EDITOR'S PICKS: INDIE BEAUTY EXPO

Upon entering the Metropolitan Pavilion in Manhattan last week, guests experienced a quiet room inviting them to post their wishes onto an oversized heart made from green foliage. Just a few short steps away, a bustling space filled with the reverberating bass of upbeat music and hanging flowers yielded the excited chatter and delighted squeals from attendees receiving free beauty goodies from vendors.

This was Indie Beauty Expo.

"I'm here because I'm looking to discover a rare find, or the next cool thing in beauty," explained a guest before hurrying off to snap a selfie in front of a flower covered wall of varying shades of violet. Heads were adorned with blossoms courtesy of Crowns by Christy, which hosted a DIY flower crown booth, adding to the free-spirited, Bohemian feel of what it means to be an indie brand.

Launched just a year ago by Jillian Wright and Nader Naeymi-Rad to provide a platform for emerging brands, the show has grown tremendously, resulting in an expanded format that included a full day dedicated to consumers to shop and explore, followed by a day dedicated to industry professionals.

"It's hard for a small brand to make an impact. The buyers here are specifically looking for niche brands, so it's very important for the growth of our business to exhibit here," said CC Verallo Rowell, Operations Manager of VMV Hypoallergenics, a beauty line that developed a grading system to rate a product's safety based on how many allergens it doesn't include in its formulas.

"The show offers a great opportunity to be in front of press, consumers and industry professionals to share BeautyRX and The Peel Bar and expand the brand," echoed Stuart Schultz, President, BeautyRX by Dr. Schultz. The company provided free on-site professional mini-peels (normally \$50) to raise awareness of the accessibility of its quick service and product line.

Overall, the expo was a beauty lover's dream, filled with a sea of 140 exhibitors who lured (and even hungered) guests with eye-catching booth displays that featured everything from peeled avocados to Brazilian nuts in order to assert their organic authenticity. Here, some of the companies that stood out:

MotherDirt: This brand challenges the way people think about bacteria by using bacteria as the star ingredient. Hero product AO+ Mist contains live Ammonia-Oxidizing Bacteria (AOB) that cleanses while replenishing the good bacteria that

gets lost with living a modern lifestyle. Once good bacteria gets back onto skin, users are said to reduce their dependence on soap, shampoo and deodorants as skin is restored to the balanced state it once had.

FATCO: You might not be inclined to rub beef fat all over your face, but apparently it's packed with necessary skin health ingredients (vitamins A, D, E and K), making it the base for many of FATCO's products, which includes cleansing oils, deodorants, toners and creams. Tallow is rendered from the fat of grass-fed cows, mutton and bison, and the company uses strict, ethical practices when sourcing. The line offers a few vegan products for those who may not want to use animal-based items.

OY-L: When Andrea Pierce-Naymon's daughter became ill, she began researching everything that went into the young teen's body and was surprised to learn that many of the products she was using were toxic. She was then inspired to develop natural solutions her daughter could use, resulting in a line of skin care products featuring naturally-healing plants, minerals and essential oils. The brand's Exfoliating Manuka Mask is a unique crimson mixture of manuka honey, essential oils, florals, colloidal oatmeal and blueberry and cranberry seeds. Fifteen percent of sales of the line's bath salts and body scrub go towards Dysautonomia International, a nonprofit dedicated to finding a cure for dysautonomia illnesses, including Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS), which Andrea's daughter is afflicted with.

CocoKind: Organic virgin coconut oil and plant-based superfoods are the main ingredients in this chemical-free, preservative-free and even water-free skin care line. Each product is made with a maximum of five ingredients and features serums, exfoliators, oil cleansers, toners and more. Its USDA Organic Sea Moss Exfoliator comes as a powder; users have to add water in order to create a gel-like texture that lathers when applied to skin.

Pinch of Colour: Growing up, Linda Treska, Founder and CEO of Pinch of Colour, did not have adequate access to water, inspiring her to create a waterless color cosmetics line of pigmented lipsticks that range from neutrals to deep reds. In addition to lipstick, there's Honey Glow Waterless Balm, a highlighter made with naturally-healing honey extract, which illuminates skin with a dewy radiance.

Hum Nutrition: Looking to bridge the gap between nutrition and skin care, Co-Founders Walter Faulstroh and Christopher Coleridge created a line of vitamins and supplements made with clinically-researched nutrients that support skin, hair and body health. Products feature colorful, vibrant packaging with cheeky names such as "Killer Nails" (for stronger nails and hair), "Turn Back Time" (age-defying) and "Flawless + Fearless" (to achieve clearer skin).

Ling Skincare: Merging state-of-the art ingredients with Asian beauty secrets, this luxury skin care brand was founded by celebrity facialist Ling Chan. At the show, the brand debuted its new Instant Lift Bar, which provides 30-minute express facials using a proprietary Far Infrared Ray Energy technology, confirmed by NASA scientists as a natural healing energy from the sun. The Instant Lift Bar offers several treatments, including oxygen infusions, peels and customized blends. The service will be available at its NYC spas.

Shen Beauty: One of New York's best-kept secrets, this indie retailer specially curates niche brands in its small boutique located in the Cobble Hill section of Brooklyn. The store receives lots of exclusivity, which has led to a cult following, said the brand's representative, noting that they are the only store in the U.S. that carries skin-care legend Amanda Lacey's products.

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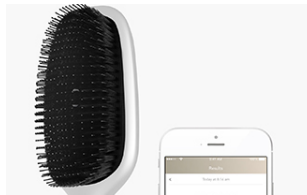
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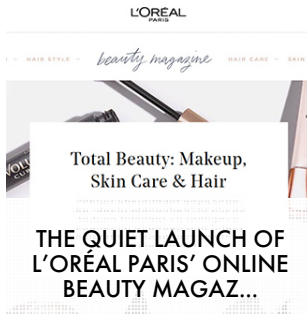
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