

# allure

THE BEAUTY EXPERT

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## Underground Beauty

They're under the radar—and some were whipped up on a stove. But these products inspire real devotion among beauty mavens. By Stephanie T. Jacob

**B**efore a bottle of Benefit Benetint was sold every minute, before Nicole Kidman and Sarah Jessica Parker were fans, before every woman looking for a natural flush had heard of the red liquid, it was a local favorite in San Francisco. A favorite, that is, among exotic dancers—who wanted pinker nipples.

When twin sisters Jean and Jane Ford stayed up late one night in 1977, steaming rose petals to create a waterproof stain for a stripper who was looking to enhance her act, they had no idea how that one bottle of cherry-colored syrup would take off. But Benefit Benetint moved on up both literally (making its way from chests to cheeks) and figuratively (from one small shop in San Francisco to more than 1,500 stores around the world).

Besides the stripper part, this story isn't unique—plenty of other beauty products are quietly building cult status in cities around the country. *Allure* uncovered local favorites that are poised to become the next big things.

### Rodin Olio Lusso Luxury Face Oil

Most women wouldn't think of smearing oil all over their face—unless, of course, it had caught the attention of some of New York City's most beautiful people, as this pricey blend of 11 essential oils (it costs a whopping \$135 an ounce) has. Linda Rodin, a fashion stylist, created the elixir in her Chelsea apartment more than two years ago,

mixing oils she'd learned about during her trips around the world (argan from Morocco, calendula from South Africa, arnica and sunflower oils from Italy).

But it wasn't until she started selling it in 2007 that Rodin realized exactly what she'd created. "It sells faster than Linda can make it. We are now back-ordered," says David Colbert, a New York City dermatologist (Rodin is his patient). "I have one patient who started ordering bottles by the dozen because she claims it calms her rosacea, and several celebrities buy up to six at a time." Makeup artist Brigitte Reiss-Andersen uses it "to take makeup off, to moisturize, as a massage oil. I'll even add a couple drops to my clients' foundation if I want a dewy finish. It's marvelous how fast it sinks in." And Robin Coe-Hutshing, founder and creative director of Studio at Fred Segal in Santa Monica, sums it up simply: "It takes the place of everything."

**Where to find it:** nydg.us; oliolusso.com  
**Price:** \$135

### McBride Beauty Soy & Coconut Cleansing Bar

When former fashion executive Wini Burkeman wanted to honor her ailing mother, she didn't send her an arrangement from 1-800-FLOWERS. She blended her a line of beauty products. "My mother had the most amazing skin," Burkeman says. "She grew up on a farm in Ireland and was a big believer in natural remedies and no-fuss products." She also happened to swear by simple bar soap, so Burkeman included one in her skin-care line. "So many

soaps either have scents or ingredients that are too strong and can sting, but health-food-store soaps are too granola for me," she says. Her own delicately sweet soap, on the other hand, has the lathering abilities of coconut oil and the moisturizing properties of soy.

"My mother was awestruck when she saw the products," says Burkeman, who still hand-delivers shipments of the soap to beauty boutiques, toting 30-pound bags on the subway from Brooklyn to Manhattan. At Clyde's on Madison, many customers buy more than ten bars at a time, and according to Rick Friedland, the store's general manager, it's pretty easy to explain why: "Not all natural soaps lather. This one creates an extraordinary amount of foam—and it smells like milk and honey."

**Where to find it:** clydesonline.com; mcbridebeauty.com  
**Price:** \$12

### Hair Rules Curly Whip

Hair stylist Anthony Dickey was always a whiz at cutting curly hair; the trouble started once he began applying the styling products. Dismayed by how sticky and flat they left his clients' curls, he concocted Curly Whip, a protein-rich leave-in conditioner that could both smooth coarse curls and keep fine ones buoyant.

"Curly girls are flooded with hard-drying gels, and Curly Whip is the opposite—it leaves curls touchable and defined, but not feeling stiff or crunchy," says Keneesha Hudson, owner of Urbanbella, a beauty boutique and salon

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