

power WOMEN

These four amazing leaders have made a real mark in the Australian skincare and cosmetics industry.

In a crowded market, it's tough to cut through and connect with your clients. These four women have created brands that do it the old-fashioned way: with hard work, innovation, skill and passion.

The chemist magician

Terri Vinson

Synergie Skin;

visit www.synergieskin.com.

As the owner of a Melbourne skin clinic, with a bachelor of science degree and two postgraduate diplomas in education and formulating chemistry, Terri Vinson was in great demand. But it wasn't just her treatments that her clients were clamouring for, but also the skincare products she created in her own lab.

When she found all her spare time was spent making up and bottling products to meet the demand, she realised it was time to sell the clinic and go into product development and formulation full-time. And so Synergie Skin was born.

There are now nearly 100 products in the Synergie range, which consists of a skincare line, mineral make-up and Synergie Practitioner, a skincare line available only in medically affiliated practices.

Synergie Skin is so successful that it's now gone global, with stockists in the UK, New Zealand, the USA, Malaysia, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Vinson sources her ingredients all over the world, but all the products are made in her own high-tech lab in Melbourne.

As the creator of the "clean science" philosophy, Vinson believes very strongly in combining the best of science and nature. That is, adding laboratory-made ingredients to naturally derived substances to create products that safely deliver visible results.

And that's not her only passion: she also recognises the importance

of supporting others through her work. In 2016 she wrote a book, *The Essential Skincare Guide*, and donates proceeds from its sales to the Luke Batty Foundation.

There's more to come, she says: "I've just scratched the surface with my skincare and make-up. I'm very excited about the future of skincare and what it can offer people."

The wellbeing queen

Melanie Gleeson

Endota Spa;

visit www.endotaspa.com.au.

Melanie Gleeson was just 26 years old when she quit her job and teamed up with a friend to open a wellbeing-focused spa on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. Endota Spa's fusion of wellness and beauty was a revolutionary idea in the year 2000, but the world has since embraced Gleeson's vision. She is now the CEO of Endota Spa, which has more than 100 outlets.

Last year was an exceptionally busy one for Gleeson. Not only did she relaunch her original Organics product line, she also unveiled two new lines: New Age, which contains potent anti-ageing ingredients; and Colour, a make-up line. Later this year she will be adding another range, which, thanks to her careful dedication to her brand, has taken three years to develop.

Gleeson searches the world for the best organic ingredients and manufacturers, working with skincare specialists in Italy, for example, to develop the New Age range. Her products are certified organic by the Australian government-approved body Australian Certified Organic.

"My skincare and make-up ranges are extensions of the offerings available in the spas," she explains, "so the true experience can be extended to the home as well." For the time being, her products are

only available online and in the spas, but given the interest from international distributors, that may soon change.

The skincare specialist

Michelle Doherty

Alpha-H; visit www.alpha-h.com.

If it hadn't been for a painful 14-year battle with cystic acne, Michelle Doherty might never have led her acclaimed skincare brand Alpha-H to such global success. From the ages of 14 to 28, Doherty tried everything from expensive skincare to antibiotics to heal her skin – and restore her confidence.

One day she discovered Alpha-H, which at the time offered just two products: the Balancing Cleanser and the Balancing Moisturiser, both containing glycolic acid. Within days her skin radically improved.

Doherty had a background in pharmacy and the cosmetic industry, and soon realised the tiny brand's potential to change lives – hers and others'. So she bought it.

Twenty-two years later, there are more than 60 Alpha-H products, which are made in Australia to the highest standards and include the multi-award-winning Liquid Gold, the brand's banner product that acts as all-in-one exfoliator, toner, serum and moisturiser. Alpha-H is sold in more than 25 countries and is soon to launch in US department store Bloomingdale's, a significant moment in its history.

Recognition has been both global and local; Doherty was proud to win the Gold Coast Woman in Business of the Year Award in 2014. And even closer to home, her husband and three daughters all work for the company.

At the heart of Doherty's business is the same ethos as when she started out 22 years ago: to help women to improve both their skin and their confidence.