

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Not all skin care is created equal. Cosmetic chemist Terri Vinson is changing the cosmeceuticals game with her cruelty-free, Australian-made range, Synergie Skin. She explains why natural ingredients are not always the safest choice and how best to protect your skin through summer.

Realising there was a growing global desire for highly active skin care, free from ethically dubious ingredients, cosmetic chemist and founder of Synergie Skin, Terri Vinson, decided to take matters into her own hands. "Formulating products enables me to merge creativity, my love of education, and the chemistry and biology of creating cosmeceuticals," she says. "Nothing makes me happier than to see the stages of development from initial concept formula to the finished product. If I can make people feel truly confident through improving the health of their skin, I've done my job."

While the industry is often thought of as only focusing on creating surface changes, Vinson says there's more to it. "I have sought to empower my clients with information so they can decide what's best for the long-term health of their skin. Positive changes in their skin ultimately improve inner confidence, and my aim is for my clients to radiate from within."

What is the Synergie Skin philosophy?

The heart of Synergie Skin is my Clean Science® philosophy. This means taking the very best of laboratory synthesised ingredients with the best naturally-derived ingredients and combining the two to create effective, ethical skin care without potentially harmful ingredients. I ensure my products generate a visible, positive change in the skin; penetrate at a cellular level for optimal delivery; and are safe, user-friendly and elegant. As a clean science formulator, often what I don't include is just as important as what I do. I look at two factors:

- The safety profile of the ingredient. Both natural – for example, arsenic – and synthetic – for example, parabens, PEG and artificial colour – ingredients can be questionable or even toxic.
- The benefit and effectiveness of the ingredient. If it's a laboratory-made synthetic – for example, peptides to minimise the appearance of wrinkles – and doesn't present as questionable or potentially toxic, then it is, in my opinion, a perfectly valid addition.

What is your stance on the 'natural is best' way of thinking?

Natural is not always best. There are many 'natural' products that may feel gentle and nurturing to the touch, yet make little cosmeceutical impact on your skin. Even natural ingredients can be harmful if used incorrectly. Arsenic, for example, is 100 per cent natural but less than one-eighth of a teaspoon can be fatal. I harness the most effective ingredients from science and nature by using sound discipline and clinical data. I've made sure to combine complementary elements while excluding potentially toxic ingredients. We shouldn't preach 'natural'. We need to think safe skin care.

What are the skincare needs in Australia?

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Over 1000 Aussies are treated for skin cancer every day, and

67 per cent will be diagnosed by the age of 70. There is so much misinformation and lack of information regarding sun protection.

What are your skin tips for summer?

Always wear sunscreen – it's an insurance policy against ageing. Use a broad-spectrum sun protection moisturiser or mineral make-up. Choose a product with a minimum of 20 per cent zinc oxide to give optimal UV protection during the day.

Include your ABC daily skin vitamins in your skincare regimen: vitamin A serum (retinol), vitamin B3 serum (niacinamide) and vitamin C (L-ascorbic acid).

Consider the health of your skin holistically. Adopt a healthy lifestyle: eat well and exercise daily. Eat mostly whole, unprocessed foods, avoiding added fructose and sugars, and drink plenty of water.

What steps ensure long-term skin health?

For perceivable change, cosmeceutical 'active' ingredients must be included in a skincare regimen. They can penetrate the deeper layers of the skin to act on a biological level. My top four ingredients are retinol (vitamin A), niacinamide (vitamin B3), L-ascorbic acid (vitamin C) and zinc oxide.

"Positive changes in the skin ultimately improve inner confidence."

– Terri Vinson

