

# SpaBeauty

Writer Christina Ko

## Beauty Below the Bikini Line

Products for issues 'down there' used to be shelved in the drugstore, and strictly in the health aisle, but new procedures and products prove that the beauty world's new cash-cow category is giving women exciting options intended more for pampering than problem-solving

### Browse any beauty counter

and you'll see countless solutions for your face—is your skin oily, dry or combination? Do you need anti-ageing or antioxidants or anti-pollution? Skincare for more visible parts of your body has been split into infinite categories, and yet for the area 'down there'—observed, depending on your personal preference and promiscuity—selection has been precious little.

At least, until now.

The beauty world is turning its gaze upon the woman's nether regions, and the variety of potions to spruce up the intimate area is growing day by day. Options

range from topical treatments to internal procedures. As sex becomes less taboo so too do topics such as grooming practices, aesthetic attributes and even ageing—because indeed, your parts do age along with the rest of you.

If the only cosmetic product for that area you can think of is Summer's Eve, then it's time to brush up on your knowledge. While Asia certainly lags behind in terms of mainstream intimate beauty products, large department stores and retailers have begun jumping on the bandwagon.

MD Hair, available at Joyce Beauty and Lane Crawford, is a line founded by

gynaecologist Susan F. Lin with intimate products (among others) geared towards women over 30, noting that ageing, medication, childbirth, stress and "over usage" can cause changes in sensation. Its MD Intimate Restore is a cream that enhances sexual wellness and revitalises skin. The Intimate Fresh Serum, meanwhile, maintains pH balance and freshness for a 'clean' feeling that lasts all day.

For those with more severe sensation issues—or concerns relating to appearance and even bladder control—vaginal rejuvenation is a relatively recent innovation that can alleviate a variety of issues, though

it comes with a heftier price tag. The treatment is available at Hong Kong's Nude Beautique, which uses the Ultra Femme 360, meaning that the procedure can be done in sessions as short as eight minutes and with no pain or downtime—essentially, a tube is inserted into the vagina, sending out radiofrequency and high frequency ultrasound energy that stimulates collagen production. What's notable, too, is that this is done in a beauty clinic known best for waxing, and not a doctor's office.

"The treatment can significantly improve appearance by plumping up the labia and tightening the area, which makes it look

that [colour] is also a concern for women, and more so for Asian women, as our pigmentation [down there] can tend to be darker for a number of factors. We have a lightening gel which is a home-use retail product and is safe and all-natural," says Lai, who is also looking into tech-based solutions for the issue.

But perhaps the greatest sea change that proves intimate beauty is on the rise as a category is the fact that non-solution-based products are starting to come into the market. Preventing ingrown hairs or freshening are not new issues, but the products associated with them are gaining a larger marketing budget, better packaging and mainstream acceptance. No longer do they sit in the health-products aisle, they're taking up prime counter space.

The Perfect V, which is also available at Joyce Beauty, isn't about solving problems at all, but dedicating a little TLC to the "V", as founder Avonda Nelson Urben calls it, referring not simply to the functional parts between the legs, but also the V-shaped area above it.

"We call it the V, the area where hair grows. It is straightforward and matter of fact — not medical-sounding, cutesy or embarrassing," she says. "It's important that the delicate skin of the V looks as good as the rest of a woman's body. We offer women luxurious and efficacious formulations that address skincare concerns and give women that much needed confidence.

"Women are beginning to realise that the current product offering is inferior and not in keeping with progress made with [products for] other body parts. Our whole concept is unique because we are approaching this as a beauty regimen — much like a woman's facial skincare regimen. Cleanse, exfoliate and moisturise,

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~ Avonda Nelson Urben

youthful," explains owner Tara Lai. "The effects can last from a few weeks to months depending on the individual, hence we recommend at least three to four sessions for lasting results, which can be from about two years onwards."

While Lai says the treatment—which costs upwards of HK\$10,000 depending on the number of sessions you choose to have—is considered highly effective for those who suffer from post-childbirth or menopause-related incontinence, Nude's clientele is often younger, 20-somethings looking for sensation or cosmetic improvements, such as swollen lips. "We have noticed

then extra moisturising and refreshing of the skin. Our line is [also] fragrance-free and that is different than many other products in the traditional feminine care space," she says. In its eight-product line-up, The Perfect V gives you on-the-go beauty sheets, a mist, exfoliator, and even a serum, cream and luminiser.

And then there are the beauty brands whose primary business isn't anything to do with the intimate area, but who are also getting in on the game. Bioxidea, a results-oriented mask brand from Paris, offers Mirage 24 sheet masks that plumps and lifts 'the intimate area' in the same way their other products do for your face, neck, hands, feet and breasts. It isn't a stretch to imagine that soon your favourite beauty brand will cater to your nether regions with the same number of options that you see for the face. 🌿



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