



A new extract prevents skin damage better than other ingredients (and less obtrusively than a parasol). Silk crepe dress by Stella McCartney. Leather pumps by Chloé. Sunglasses by Oliver Peoples. Leather bag by Louis Vuitton. On him: Suit by Burberry London. Shirt by Calvin Klein. Shoes by Banana Republic. Hair, Ruby Weiser; makeup, Lisa Storey; manicure, April Foreman. Prop stylist: Edward Murphy. Fashion editor: Siobhan Bonnouvrier. Details, see Credits page.

# Skin Powerhouse

A new face-cream ingredient measurably improves wrinkles in weeks—and scientists say it's one of the best anti-aging discoveries in ages. By Joan Kron

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MATT JONES

Every morning, millions of women reach for two things during their first waking hours: a cup of coffee and a container of face cream. Soon these will join forces in a new skin-care line that contains an extract derived from the fruit of the coffee plant—which scientists believe may prove to be the most powerful natural antioxidant yet discovered.

In development for the past five years, CoffeeBerry extract has been **one of the best-kept secrets in the cosmetics industry**. It will be officially unveiled next month in a face cream tentatively called Revalé Skin at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology. In contrast to so many other new beauty treatments, there is a stack of scientific evidence to back up the claims.

Antioxidants help protect skin cells against damage from the sun, air pollution, and aging. Scientists have learned in the past few years that brewed coffee made from roasted beans is high in antioxidants, which seems to explain why drinking one or two cups of coffee a day has been linked with health benefits such as strengthened immune response, improved glucose levels in diabetics, and reduced risk of gallstones, liver damage, Parkinson's Disease, and certain cancers. Coffee beans are actually seeds, or pits, from a fruit known as a coffee cherry, but for years, this antioxidant-rich fruit has mostly been ignored.

Folklore holds that monks used to eat coffee cherries for energy, rulers in certain African tribes were the only ones allowed to have them, and **workers who harvested the beans had unusually smooth hands**. Still, the coffee cherry had a tragic flaw. "Once harvested, it spoils and rapidly develops unhealthy toxins," says John Hunter, an executive at VanDrunen Farms, a supplier of food and nutritional ingredients. As a result, once the beans were extracted, the fruit itself was discarded, burned, or used for fertilizer.

Then, five years ago, chemists at VanDrunen Farms decided to tackle the issue. They discovered that the best time to pick the cherries was when they were not yet ripe—as antioxidant levels peaked. Next they devised a method to

process the fruit and beans immediately and standardize their potency. The extract contains high levels of antioxidants called polyphenols that are believed to **prevent cellular damage in the skin** when applied externally and to boost the immune system when ingested.

Polyphenols are also present in pomegranate—which Jeffrey Dover, a dermatologist in Boston, calls "the flavor of the year" in skin care—as well as green tea; both have been added to numerous anti-aging creams, eye gels, sunscreens, even toothpaste. But according to an analysis by Brunswick Laboratories in Norton, Massachusetts, **CoffeeBerry's antioxidant content is five times higher** than the most powerful pomegranate's and three times greater than that of the highest-quality green

dishes, the true test is on real women. At an independent lab, Cyberderm, in Media, Pennsylvania, scientists recruited ten women, ages 35 to 60, with wrinkles, dry skin, and discoloration. Each was given a basic moisturizer for one side of the face and the same cream with 1 percent CoffeeBerry for the other. Neither the supervisors nor the subjects knew what they were testing. After the women applied the creams twice a day for three weeks, evaluators assessed the results visually and with measuring tools. They found texture and tone on the CoffeeBerry side of the face to be superior in every case, with **46 percent improvement in fine lines and wrinkles**, 64 percent in overall skin smoothness, and 79 percent in skin hydration. McDaniel, who has seen the study subjects' photo-

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tea. (Green tea's and pomegranate's antioxidant concentrations vary from batch to batch and brand to brand.) Compared with a potent green tea, CoffeeBerry extract was twice as capable of protecting the skin from UVA damage. It was also better at inhibiting UV-induced inflammation and enzymes associated with melanoma.

**"This is one of the most promising new antioxidants to come along in years,"** says David McDaniel, assistant professor of clinical dermatology and plastic surgery at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, Virginia, who has no financial interest in CoffeeBerry beyond the testing fee his team received for assessing the ingredient's sun protection. "CoffeeBerry is safe and natural, with the potential to be another superpotent antioxidant like C+E+Ferulic Acid or the synthetic idebenone," he says.

No matter how well a new face-cream ingredient performs on skin cells in petri

graphs and found them "impressive," also believes that CoffeeBerry may soothe damaged and easily irritated skin.

The product line (produced by Stiefel Labs) will include a cleanser, day cream, and night cream, which will be sold starting in February for \$40 to \$100 at dermatologists' and plastic surgeons' offices. (For more information go to [wakeupyourskin.com](http://wakeupyourskin.com).) The products smell like grapefruit, not Starbucks; though they contain a trace amount of caffeine, it's so inactive, it's not even included in the official list of ingredients. The extract is also being added as an antioxidant boost to products such as energy drinks, gum, and nutritional supplements.

"I don't easily get excited about new antioxidants, but **I am excited about CoffeeBerry**," says McDaniel, who has evaluated skin-care ingredients for more than 20 years. "This is the real deal." It remains to be seen whether women will make it a daily habit. ♦