

Therapeutic Sulfur Masque, E27
Peter Thomas Roth

ALL CLEAR

Banish blemishes with the *Bazaar* guide to flawless skin

By SOPHIE BLOOMFIELD

Call it 'Parisian skin': plump, soft and glowing, as if fresh from a facial (having clearly been doused in luxurious French skincare for years). If you need pointers on what a gorgeous complexion in your late thirties and beyond looks like, take a stroll down Rue Saint-Honoré. These women don't appear heavily Botoxed or filled, just wonderfully cared for, proving that some age-appropriate lines don't inhibit looking beautiful, if your skin is soignée.

The same cannot be said of open pores, blackheads and (gasp) spots. Although I do not agree with the LA dermatologist Dr Lancer's opinion that 'a single blemish detracts from all other beauty', blemishes, unlike wrinkles, are rather impossible to find appeal in.

Yet the two concerns are increasingly seen together. 'Blemishes come second only to lines in terms of UK women's skin concerns,' says Dr Nadine Pernodet, vice-president of basic science research at Estée Lauder. 'It's not just those with big pores and oily skin who

are affected by blemishes now,' says Dr Sam Bunting, a dermatologist who sees an ever-increasing number of women in their thirties and forties wishing to treat blemishes alongside ageing.

The trigger? Increasingly stressful lifestyles. Genetics (predetermined pore size and oiliness), ageing (loss of collagen inevitably causes slacker pores) and hormonal imbalances all have a part to play, but when you add stress and inflammation triggers into the mix, 'every woman can be tipped over her blemish threshold', says Bunting.

The list of skin-stressors that the experts reel off seems depressingly comprehensive (anything from flying to lack of sleep, processed food, sugar, caffeine, alcohol, sun exposure, pollution, anxiety, wearing heavy make-up, over-exfoliating or improper cleansing could be at fault), but the good news is that there are a host of new treatments – all of which, thankfully, are aimed at those of us who want our skin to be as cosseted as it is clear.

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DEEP CLEAN

'I see so many people whose skin is sub-optimal simply because they are not cleansing as thoroughly as they could,' says the facialist Sarah Chapman. Using a Clarisonic changed the clarity of my skin, eradicating the small bumps and blemishes around my jawline within 10 days (when I forgot to take it on holiday last year, they returned). Clarisonic has been proven to clean the skin six times more effectively than manual cleansing. For blemish-prone skin, try the new Clarisonic Deep Pore Detoxifying Solution Kit.

DE-STRESS

'Stress releases cortisol, which affects hormonal systems including testosterone and insulin levels,' says Shabir Daya of Victoria Health. 'This causes inflammation and excess oil production, blocking sebaceous glands.' Lancer advises avoiding caffeine, sugar and carbohydrates to buffer your cortisol levels. Also take an anti-inflammatory omega-3, such as Cleanmarine Krill Oil, £22 at Planet Organic.

Sébium Pore Refiner, E14.80
Bioderma
at the Garden Pharmacy

THE KEY INGREDIENT

'AHAs can smooth and brighten the surface of the skin, but are water-based, so cannot penetrate the oily pore in the way that fat-soluble salicylic acid can,' says Bunting. La Roche-Posay Effaclar Duo[+] and Clinique Anti Blemish Clearing Gel, £14, reduce blackheads; and Dr Dennis Gross Skincare Alpha Beta Daily Face Peel, £59 at Cultbeauty.co.uk, combines AHAs and salicylic acid.

EXFOLIATE WITH CARE

'Exfoliators give a lovely glow, but if you use them too often, the skin malfunctions,' says Chapman. This causes clogged pores, dull skin and blemishes. Try Colbert MD Intensify Facial Discs, Lancer The Method: Polish Sensitive Skin, and Ginvera Exfoliating Marvel Gel With Green Tea, £22 at Cultbeauty.co.uk.

SECRETS FOR SPOTLESS SKIN

APPLY MASKS

Kaolin-based masks clear congestion and blackheads, but unless your skin is oily, apply them to the T-zone only (and treat drier areas to a deeply hydrating mask). My favourites are Peter Thomas Roth Therapeutic Sulfur Masque; GlamGlow Supermud Clearing Treatment; and Eve Lom Rescue Mask, from £35.

The quick fixes
To clear skin in a hurry, try Sampar Prodigal Pen; Estée Lauder Clear Difference Spot Treatment; Payot Pâte Grise; or Dr Sebagh Breakout Spot-On.

Pâte Grise, E17
Payot

E18
Sampar

USE RETINOL

'Slightly dry, yet blemish-prone mid-thirties skin is something I see a lot,' says Bunting, who favours retinoid products for their ability to tackle signs of both ageing and acne.

The Environ Ionzyme C-Quence line is excellent; and iS Clinical Pro-Heal Serum Advance + combines retinol with anti-inflammatories that work. □

REFINE YOUR PORES

As collagen degrades with age, pores become less elastic and prone to enlargement. Cosmetic primers blur visible pores, but their silicone-based formulas can exacerbate the issue, so do not rely on these daily. For a longer-term and more elegant alternative, try Dior Hydra Life Close Up, £54; Bioderma Sébium Pore Refiner; Sisley Pore Minimiser; or Clinique Pore Refining Solutions Correcting Serum.

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iS Clinical



Deep Pore Detoxifying Solution Kit (includes a mask), E135
Clarisonic



Intensify Facial Discs, E52
Colbert MD



E54
Dior



E60
Lancer



E54
Sisley



E14
Clinique



E15.50
La Roche-Posay



Supermud Clearing Treatment, E44.99
GlamGlow

Pore Refining Solutions Correcting Serum, E39
Clinique



E25
Estée Lauder