



FROM LEFT: CAUDALIE CRUSHED CABERNET SCRUB, ÉMINENCE TOKAY ICE WINE MASQUE, DAVI COASTAL VINE AFTER SHAVE, SILVI '59 MOISTURIZING BODY LOTION, LE VIN FACE CREAM, DAVI CRUSHED GRAPE SEED EXFOLIATING CLEANSER, DIOR L'OR DE VIE L'EXTRAIT, LE VIN EYE SERUM, ÉMINENCE MIMOSA CHAMPAGNE TONIQUE, CAUDALIE ANTI-AGING SERUM, L'OCCITANE GRAPE BEAUTY MILK, DAVI LE GRAND CRU FACE CREAM.

FROM THE VINE

Vinotherapy skin care.

by Alyssa Schottland-Bauman / photography by Clinton Hussey

Could it be that some of the most sinful pleasures we love and crave, things like dark chocolate and wine, have been shown to improve our well-being? Yes, consuming these gastronomical delights has been linked to lowering cholesterol, reducing the risk of cardiovascular and degenerative diseases, and even warding off some cancers.

The medical marvels that have caused such excitement are a group of antioxidants known as polyphenols. One type of polyphenol is resveratrol, which is found in abundant supply in red wine. It is produced naturally in the skin of red grapes, and is one of the things that gives red wine its glorious burgundy hues. More importantly, resveratrol keeps the grapes healthy: its main job is to kill off fungus that could rot the vine.

In most respects, just like fine wine, we get better with age—although regrettably, this isn't the case with our complexion. But hope remains: vinotherapy skin-care products, made from the extracts of grapes and their vines, have been shown to provide overall protection from free radicals. Damage occurs naturally with age, but environmental factors like UV rays, smoke and pollution lead to the majority of free-radical damage, which expedites aging. A study at the University of California, Davis, has confirmed that as an antioxidant, resveratrol is 50 times more powerful than vitamin C and 20 times more powerful than vitamin E. This suggests that resveratrol is one of the most potent known anti-aging agents. It has been shown to increase the production of collagen, sirtuin and elastin, making skin look denser, firmer and visibly younger.

Fascinated with resveratrol's possibilities, Dr. Neil Sadick, global medical adviser for Christian Dior Beauty and clinical professor of dermatology at the Weill Cornell Medical College, scoured the world, and made a significant find at one of the most historic vineyards. "The roots and vines from Château d'Yquem in Bordeaux are just so robust, vibrant and hearty that its sap must be oozing with super-antioxidants," he recalls thinking at the time. After years of research, it turns out he was right, and Dior's L'Or de Vie line was created. It includes three products: L'Extrait (a pure extract that works like a serum), La Crème (a face cream and moisturizer) and La Crème Yeux (an eye cream and moisturizer).

Dr. Sadick insists that the key to using the products is having a protect-and-repair regime; slathering a cream containing resveratrol on the face isn't enough. "Using a daily broad-spectrum sunscreen and a high-potency antioxidant serum—one with resveratrol—during the day, and a nourishing repair serum and cream during the night is essential for the product to be most beneficial," he says. And it is never too early to start using them: "The damage done to your skin one or two decades ago will begin to show on your face now."

Wine has been used for its health benefits in Europe for centuries, although it's only been in the past couple of years that vinotherapy has caught on in North America. Carlo Mondavi, grandson of Robert, recently launched DAVI, men's and women's skin-care products that combine extracts of grapes and wine from his family's vineyards. The Hungarian line Éminence Organic Skin Care recently introduced a new collection of grape-based products that includes Mimosa Champagne Sugar Scrub and Tokay Ice Wine Masque. Caudalie, one of the first complete wine-based skin-care lines from Europe, just launched its first North American vinotherapy spa at the Plaza Hotel in Manhattan. The treatments are what they call an "overall wine cure", mining every healing property of the grape and incorporating a high concentration of grape and vine polyphenols. Signature treatments include the Red Wine Barrel Bath (a complete body soak and hydro-massage in refined vine extracts) and the Crushed Cabernet Scrub (an energetic body scrub using brown sugar to exfoliate, honey to moisturize and grape-seed extract to regenerate). Afterward, you can slip into the spa's wine lounge and top off treatments with samplings from the wine cellar. Being able to pamper your body, mind and skin while catching a buzz gives new meaning to the concept of taking care of yourself. ●