

BEAUTY

BLOC BUSTERS

Beauty comes from within - within Eastern Europe, that is. Cosmetics firms and model agencies are dominated by names such as Lom, Lauder and Rubinstein. Why, ask Carmel Allen and Shannon Leeman. Photographed by Davide Tama

Look at the models opposite. Valeria, the blonde, is from Moscow, and Ivona, the brunette, is from the Slovak Republic. Waifs they are not. The words 'strong' and 'sexy' spring to mind. When their chilled blue-eyed gaze catches yours, you know what a bunny in a viewfinder feels like. Faced with their smooth, even, freckle-free complexions and killer cheekbones, the make-up artist surrendered her brushes and settled for a little moisturiser, a touch of mascara and a dab of lip balm. It's the kind of beauty money can't buy. Their Communist childhood may well have denied them MTV and the usual western teenage fodder of Big Macs, Mars bars and Coca-Cola, but it did give them clear skin and gold-medal bodies.

'They are much more disciplined than their western counterparts,' says Versae Vanni, a model agent who goes on scouting trips to Eastern Europe every six weeks. 'They take responsibility for themselves from quite a

young age. When they come over, they know how to eat well and look after their skin. I know it sounds elementary, but a lot of girls in London simply don't know how to cook a meal or take care of themselves.'

No surprise, then, to discover Eastern European women have a culture of health and beauty that puts the West to shame or, more accurately, puts the West to rights. The salons of London and New York are dominated by imported talon-tenders and face-fixers. Of the three major cosmetics companies to reign over the past 50 years, two of them were founded and driven by women from Eastern Europe. Estée Lauder and Helena Rubinstein built empires from their kitchen stoves and have influenced and improved the lives of women across the world. Newer companies, such as Fresh and Repêchage, continue the tradition.

Over the page, *Tatler* profiles the careers and reveals the beauty secrets of the Eastern European experts in London and the US. ▷

Valeria wears white crêpe Lycra bandeau two-piece, £160; Ivona wears white crêpe Lycra two-piece, £160, both by Liza Bruce. For details, see Stockists. Hair by John Chapman





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Estée Lauder's company commands about 38 per cent of the world market



◁ Lydia Sarfati, Repêchage

Polish-born Lydia is founder of the Repêchage line of skincare products and spa treatments. The company was founded in 1980, and its seaweed-based products can now be found in 250 spas and are sold in over 25,000 salons. Her famous Four-Layer facial is a prerequisite for pre- and post-cosmetic surgery. Sarfati teaches four master-classes a year in facial-massage techniques and is driven by her goal in life – 'to create the perfect facial'.

CULT CREAM Honey and almond scrub, £15.50.

CULT TREATMENT Four-Layer facial, from £40, both at Repêchage salons. Ring 0845 7317546 for details.

Fresh

Lev Gazman and Alina Roytberg are the husband-and-wife team behind Fresh, the bath and body-care line. Lev is originally from Leningrad and, in 1990, he met Alina, who was originally from the Ukraine but came over to study at the Parsons School of Design. She had a successful career in fashion, but gave it up to open Nuts About Beauty, a beauty shop the duo founded in Boston and which stocked must-have cosmetics. They then created their own line of soaps, which rapidly developed into a range of 500 products. Last year, they opened their first stand-alone Fresh shop outside Boston, on New York's Madison Avenue.

CULT PRODUCTS Milk chocolate soap, £7.50; Fresh scents, from £20, all at Liberty, the Conran Shop (tel: 0171 589 7401) and Space

Helena Rubinstein

Polish-born Helena left her homeland for Australia at the age of 26. Before she left, she was introduced to what became the cornerstone of her business – a traditional mixture of herbs and essence of almonds and evergreen, which she named Valaz. The cream not only moisturised but contained a mild bleaching agent for those inconvenient hairs. The Australians went crazy for it, and Helena never looked back. This summer, Helena Rubinstein is being relaunched in the States with a new flagship store and spa in New York.

CULT CREAMS Pure retinol repair therapy, £42, and the Force C range, from £22, both at major department stores nationwide.

Estée Lauder

A Hungarian relative is credited with the recipe for Lauder's first mega-seller, All-Purpose Beauty Cream. She has been trading since 1946, and her company now commands about 38 per cent of the world market, with revenues of more than \$1.3 billion a year. Lauder's five main enterprises, Clinique, Prescriptives, Aramis, Origins and Estée Lauder, are stocked in every major department store and, with the addition of the younger and deeply trendy Bobbi Brown, MAC and Donna Karan lines, her world domination is now complete.

CULT CREAMS Daywear Protective Anti-Oxidant Creme, £25; Uncircle treatment cream for under-eye shadows, £21, both at major department stores nationwide.

Eve Lom

Eve Lom, a first-generation Czech, brings her own brand of natural simplicity to an oversold public. The roots of her range go back to her grandmother, who made natural remedies from plants in her kitchen garden. Inspired by her, Lom began experimenting and mixing the potions that have become her trademark.

The one-step Lom cleansing routine and signature muslin is an established favourite. **CULT CREAM Eve Lom Cleanser, £39.50. CULT TREATMENT Facial, from £65, all at Eve Lom, 2 Spanish Place, W1, as well as Dickins & Jones, Space NK, and Barneys, New York.**

Georgette Klinger

Czech-born Georgette Klinger has ruled the steam-and-cream movement for more than 50 years. After opening her first salon, in New York, she spread to every major city in the

Leigh and Amanda Plummer among her clients. Going to a Klinger salon is an experience in luxury, and almost every Klinger technician hails from Eastern Europe.

CULT CREAM Virtual Perfection Moisturiser, £52.

CULT TREATMENT Oxygen facial, £55, both at Georgette Klinger, 501 Madison Avenue, New York 10022.

Vera Kantor

A must-have in every smart LA girl's purse is an appointment card to Russian miracle worker Vera Kantor. She has been spinning her own form of healing for more than 25 years. Cheryl Tiegs, Madonna, Steve Martin and the Gabor are but a few of those beating a path to Kantor salon, where she uses natural products such as:

aloe, calendula, camomile and camphor. **CULT TREATMENT Verabella facial, £60, at Vera Kantor, 301 North Canyon Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210.**

Lucy Sarpe

One of the most closely guarded beauty secrets of Diana, Princess of Wales, was Romanian beauty therapist Lucy Sarpe. Schooled in all the traditional Eastern European treatments, Sarpe draws much of her inspiration from her mother's age-old remedies.

CULT TREATMENT Deep-cleanse facial, £30, at Lucy Sarpe, 2 Wellington Terrace, W2.

Tamara Voronina

Ukraine-born Dr Tamara Voronina works from the inside out. Her series of cleansing treatments includes enemas, supplements, fasting and acupuncture, topped off by the Russian-developed Mountain Air Therapy, which involves sitting under a plastic space helmet and breathing your way to good health. **CULT TREATMENT Mountain Air Therapy, £25, at Dr Tamara Voronina, 22 Upper Wimpole Street, W1.**

Jessica Vartoughian

Jessica, born in Romania, is hailed in the States as the First Lady of Nails. Her salon and natural nail products cater to VIPs such as Julia Roberts, Nancy Reagan, Hillary Clinton, Vendella, Bruce Springsteen, Jodi Foster and Jamie Lee Curtis. Jessica helped Diana, Princess of Wales, quit her nail-biting habit.

CULT TREATMENT Deluxe manicure, from £16, at Jessica Nail Clinic, 8627 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles,