



Xandre Probyn investigates the possibilities of fighting ageing effects on her skin.

For me, morning and evening rituals are often filled with guilt and desperation as I lathe the latest miracle cream onto my face, neck and décolletage. Thoughts of animal cruelty and possible harmful chemical ingredients are at war with my desires to retain at least some semblance of youth and desirability. Let's be honest, the only relationship I have with the word 'taut' these days is that I still remember how to spell it.

So imagine my initial envy when I bumped into a very chic friend I had not seen in ages and one look at her face showed her looking much younger than her years and more importantly, than me. Needless to say, I hustled her off for a coffee and a not-so-subtle digging session to find out what product(s) had resulted in this amazing transformation.

It turned out that she was using argan oil, a little-known treasure from Morocco. Unfortunately, at that stage, argan oil was not freely available in South Africa, so no immediate miraculous changes were in sight for me yet.

Imagine my excitement when, a couple of years later, I discovered an anti-ageing beauty range that had argan oil as its primary ingredient and guaranteed that it contained no chemicals or preservatives – making it 100% natural. No longer was there any need to worry about parabens and their possible link to breast cancer or the suffocating plastic-wrap feeling of liquid paraffin. Finally, my skin could breath and my cells go about their normal business of retaining and returning

a youthful appearance with the additional zing of natural health. The range is made up of a day and night cream, exceptionally effective eye cream, a face and neck oil to die for, a hand and body lotion and a travel moisturiser – handy for flights as it is appropriately-sized and can double as both a face and body cream.

My obsession with the 'what' and 'how' of ingredients sent me researching various scientific studies that would assuage my guilt by explaining the properties and benefits of the natural plant extracts used in the formulation of the Gold Qi cosmetics I had discovered.

Argan oil, which only comes from a specific area in Morocco, is often aptly referred to as liquid gold. There are many convincing reasons, including the fact that 100kg of fruit produces a mere 2kg of this beautiful golden-coloured oil. More importantly, I discovered that it is twice as rich in vitamin E as olive oil making it a potent anti-ageing agent that effectively fights free radicals, encourages cell regeneration and prevents additional cell damage. Interestingly, argan is also the only oil that contains the sterols schottenol and spinasterol, which fight inflammation.

After carefully reading the labels, I discovered that, in its entirety, the range contains 30 pure plant extracts that, my thorough research showed, worked synergistically with one another to prevent ageing and to heal the skin. For example, rhatany root extract is used in the day, night and eye creams for its anti-oxidant (this thrilled me as I felt that my

skin could do with as many anti-oxidants as it could possibly get), anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial benefits. Soy germ extract is one of the active ingredients in the night and eye creams as well as the face and neck oil. Soy germ extract contains phytosterols which are unparalleled in anti-ageing as they improve skin elasticity by encouraging the production of collagen. Soy germ extract is also known for its anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory benefits and its ability to protect the skin from harmful UV rays and reduce oxidative stress as it is also an excellent anti-oxidant. I could feel my relationship with 'taut' beginning to resurface.

Millet seed extract has been added to the day, night and eye creams to even the skin tone and complexion and to tighten the pores. It conditions the skin and regenerates the cells while soothing dry, damaged and irritated skin. The result: a flawlessly soft, supple and, yes, definitely taut face and neck.

The pomegranate extract in the night and eye cream prevents wrinkles and sagging skin by reducing the breakdown of collagen. 'Taut' and I were definitely finding one another again. I was also delighted that my research showed that pomegranate extract was excellent for wound healing and would thus erase the little dings and dents that at times participated in the war zone of my skin.

The night and eye creams also contain lavender flower extract to soothe and heal the skin and calm acne and eczema. It appears that lavender has many anti's: antiseptic, anti-bacterial, anti-toxic and anti-inflammatory.

The hand and body lotion and the travel moisturiser also contain Spanish sage seed extract, schisandra sphenanthera extract, rose geranium oil and rosemary leaf extract. Together they reduce wrinkles and other sign of ageing, improve blood circulation, fight inflammation, tone the skin, regenerate cells and act as an anti-irritant, astringent and mild diuretic and further promote my budding relationship with 'taut'.

The face and neck oil comes as a roll-on, which is small enough to fit into a pocket or bag and it is my constant companion throughout the day. Besides its dual function, the travel moisturiser has a fragrance that is addictive – even my ex-husband has become a groupie and lavishly splashes it all over his face and body. The hand and body lotion is non-greasy but extremely moisturising and is packaged in an easy-to-use pump action bottle for convenience.

But my favourite has to be the eye cream – infused with ginger, it is a wonderful pick-me-up for tired and stressed eyes. One can actually feel it working immediately and it has become my life-saver after many a night of late night writing. Everyone that I have introduced to the eye cream has raved about it and become devoted slaves to its benefits.

The name, Gold Qi, says it all – the synergistic benefits of the plant extracts are worth their weight in gold and Qi or life force, is exactly what my skin is gaining every morning and evening. Here's hoping that your experience of the products is as rewarding as mine has been and that friends are clamouring for you to have coffee with them. ☐

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