

SEED-TO-SKIN BEAUTY

ESSÈNCI SKIN CARE PROMOTES RENEWAL, HEALING, WELLNESS, AND BALANCE



For Yetunde Beutler, shown on opposite page, a trip to France led to a commitment to organic skin products.



When Yetunde Beutler embarked on a road trip through the South of France in 2014, she had no idea that an impromptu vacation would carve out a new path, let alone an organic skin-care line.

That vacation with her husband, Michael—who is the director of sustainability operations at Kering, the corporation that owns a mélange of luxury brands including Gucci and Balenciaga—would lay the groundwork for Essènci, a luxury, seed-to-skin beauty brand headquartered in Paris.

While on holiday, she and Michael handpicked lavender from the fruitful fields of Provence and learned how to distill the botanical into essential oil, sparking a notion to create sustainable beauty products using French ingredients. That lavender lesson in the countryside led to research and development, and eventually, to the co-founders' debut of Essènci.

Along with her partners in France, she curated Essènci's formulations, a process that took several years before Essènci was ready to launch in 2020.

The name Essènci translates to "Essence," in the language of Provencal—apropos because the beauty

line is rooted in the region. Beutler says the brand is about streamlining. "What does a person need to have great, beautiful skin? I don't think you need tons of products," she says.

Beutler, 48, has an M.B.A. in sustainable management and worked for Borghese and L'Occitane en Provence. At Essènci, she oversees product development, packaging, and much more but is vocal about her husband's expertise in sustainability and contribution to the beauty line. "I'm lucky because I have my husband who does that day to day," she says.

Science-backed, 100% organic certified, and aromatherapeutic, but with no added fragrances, Essènci's Regenerative Collection contains natural ingredients from the South of France and Corsica, including raspberry seed, apricot kernel, wild carrot, and immortelle (curry plant or Italian strawflower) essential oils. Its unique formula promotes renewal, healing, wellness, and balance and benefits all skin types.

The first product launched is L'Immortela Elixir Bio, an aromatic serum in an elegant bottle and an "on-the-go" roll-on version for travel. According to Beutler, as an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant stimulating microcirculation, L'Immortela is an excellent everyday serum, whether used alone or under a moisturizer. "I do believe that our elixir is like no other oil-based serum out there on the market today," she says.

A hydrating face cream, Renouvèla La Crème—also available in Riche and Extra Riche depending on skin needs—will debut this year. In the future, Beutler intends to add several products, including eye cream, cleanser, and body lotion, while still keeping the collection streamlined.

Beyond adhering to France's strict regulations, perhaps Beutler's greatest challenge is redefining the term "luxury" as we know it. "In my book, luxury is sustainable, diverse, and inclusive," she writes in a post she authored on the brand's website. As one of a few Black women steering a beauty brand, she realizes the importance of opportunity for all as well as social sustainability, a necessary companion to environmental sustainability. While Essènci champions eco-conscious beauty, the company strives to impact responsible business practices and inclusivity. All of Essènci's employees are women.

For packaging, Beutler chose to use glass instead of plastic. In addition to the environmental upside, she wanted consumers to reuse the vessels or place them as decor in their homes.

The entrepreneur envisioned the containers as art, turning to the Brittany-based Japanese artist Mikio Watanabe to sketch a motif for the beautiful white porcelain bottles produced by the legendary Maison Bernardaud in Limoges. "The idea was that people would not throw them away," she muses. "I wanted to create something beautiful as well." ■

Essènci launched with an aromatic serum. All of its products are made in beautiful, eco-conscious packaging.

Courtesy of Essènci (3)

