Luxury looks to clean beauty to navigate new personal care

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Clean beauty is becoming another key word within the personal care industry as sustainability and wellness take over in all aspects of retail, and luxury retailers are some of the first to take it on.

The face of the department store has changed, and so has beauty retail. Both Barneys New York and Bloomingdale's are among the luxury brands and retailers who are hoping to capture the wellness-conscious beauty consumer with new concepts.

"When we started putting this assortment together we looked for clean brands that really delivered results and had a point of difference," said Jennifer Miles, vice president of cosmetics at Barneys. "We looked at the ingredients, the story of the founder, and the efficacy of the brands."

Clean beauty
Consumers are more concerned than ever in regards to harmful chemicals in any product, but the beauty consumers as well as the luxury consumer are some of the most keen to these issues.

Department store chain Bloomingdale's first offered a "beauty happy place" for cosmetics-lovers with a boutique called Glowhaus back in summer 2017.

The boutique specializes in beauty products from a number of brands and gives customers a place where they can freely try out and test different combinations and products in a casual and freeform environment. The retailer opened five boutiques at various Bloomingdale’s locations in New York and California (see story).
Bloomingdale’s opens its Wellness Chemist boutique. Image credit: Bloomingdale’s.

Bloomingdale’s concept is to help keep up with shifting consumer demands, with specialty beauty retail continuing to grow.

As clean beauty flourishes in tandem with specialty retail, Bloomingdale’s is opening a second in-store beauty boutique focused on just that.

Wellchemist boutiques will begin to roll starting on Sept. 38 in the retailer’s flagship New York location. The shops will be about 250 square feet featuring an open-sell concept.

Bloomingdale’s concept shop will feature 35 different brands, all focused on clean beauty, touting products with only natural ingredients.

Boca Raton, FL; Century City and Fashion Valley, CA; Chevy Chase, MD; Chicago; Short Hills, NJ and SoHo in New York are some of the locations where Bloomingdale’s plans to debut the Wellchemist boutiques.

Previous to Bloomingdale’s announcement, this winter Barneys revealed a focus on clean beauty as well.

Selfridges London launches the Body Studio, a similar concept to Bloomingdale’s. Image credit: Selfridges

The department store chain introduced 10 new beauty brands to its clean beauty offerings including Nuori, Oskia London, de Mamiel, Aurelia Skincare, Pure Elixir, DNAEGF Renewal, Moon Juice, WelleCo, Rejuvenated and Grown Alchemist.

These brands were in addition to an already established partnership with health-focused brands such as The Organic Pharmacy, True Botanicals and more.

The clean beauty brands are spotlighted in special sections of Barneys’ Web site and stores that focus on wellness in beauty. In addition to the categorization, Barneys’ flagship store on Madison Avenue in New York features a variety of events to excite fans on clean beauty.

Other specialty retailers such as Sephora have established departments in their store for clean beauty. The LVMH-owned retailer has a dedicated portion of its Web site that spotlights clean beauty products in various categories such as makeup and skincare.

A variety of publications such as Clean Beauty Co build communities around these concepts, which brands can tap to flourish in this area.
Additional insight
The majority of cosmetics executives believe that health-inspired beauty along with personalization and digital engagement will be driving themes in the industry this year.

According to a survey by Euromonitor, skin health is a major factor within the beauty-manufacturing world today with an increase in brands creating topical probiotics. More than half of beauty execs believe that health in beauty, digital and personalization are the most important aspects of successful launches (see story).

"Consumers today have a greater awareness and demand of clean ingredients in their skincare," said Mirella Siciliano, cosmetics buyer at Barneys. "Our conscious beauty launch is our way of being mindful of their needs by providing product alternatives that will adapt to their lifestyle.

"The most important aspect of this launch is that we have this amazing opportunity to educate through the introduction of our new brands founded by precursors of the conscious beauty mission," she said.