

Win a spa trip to the new Ciel Spa in Beverly Hills! (page 12)

spa

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{ FOCUS ON VINTHERAPY }

*off the
vine*

New studies reveal that the antioxidant power of the grape puts all other contenders to shame.

BY AMY WESTERVELT

SOAKING IN a wooden vat of wine may not sound like a viable beauty treatment, but clinical research is now backing it up: The fruit of the vine is one of nature's most powerful anti-aging tools. We've all heard about the health benefits of consuming red wine in moderation—both the longevity and the low obesity rate of the French have been attributed to the country's favorite libation. It turns out the same antioxidants (called polyphenols) responsible for bolstering cardiovascular health and fighting cancer and obesity on the inside are capable of smoothing lines and erasing age spots on the outside.

One particular polyphenol—resveratrol—has garnered the bulk of the attention with respect to the external anti-aging capabilities of the grape. "Resveratrol is many, many times more potent than vitamin-based antioxidants like C and E that we've used



Packed with antioxidants, grapes are Mother Nature's perfect beauty remedy.

for years in skincare," says Richard A. Baxter, M.D., author of a groundbreaking paper on the benefits of resveratrol in skincare products published in the March 2008 issue of the *Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology*.

While all grapes contain polyphenols, resveratrol is typically found in

higher concentrations in red grapes, although researchers have discovered that when it comes to antioxidant concentration, the varietal is sometimes less important than the environment in which a grape is grown.

"Grapes that are grown in cooler climates definitely have higher »

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levels of antioxidants, which is why French wine tends to be better than Californian varieties if you're looking to get the most anti-aging power," says cosmetic dermatologist Jason Lupton. Climate isn't the only factor; polyphenols build up in the skin of grapes to protect the flesh of the fruit from various types of environmental stress, including UV rays, bacteria, fungi, and viruses.

The jury's still out on whether there's a measurable difference between the topical benefits of grapes versus wine. Many spa treatments and beauty products that purport to be wine-based are actually grape-based, incorporating unfermented skins, seeds, or grapeseed oil. However, some polyphenols increase in concentration in the course of fermentation, so Baxter says a product or treatment with actual wine in it may be better than one with just grapes. Lupton cautions, however, that wine can stain the skin, and thus recommends reserving it for your glass instead.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the current wine spa trend got its start in France. A chance encounter between winemakers



Caudalie's Pulpe Friction massage incorporates grapes to deliver both relaxation and anti-aging benefits.

at the Caudalie vineyard in Bordeaux and a visiting professor who told them about the antioxidant power of the grape led to the launch on that very vineyard of the world's first wine spa. Caudalie has since trademarked the term "vinothérapie," launched a line of skincare products, and opened spas in Italy, Spain, and New York. The French line has been joined by skincare companies and spas all over the world (see "The Real Deal," opposite),

often in wine regions where treatment rooms look out over sprawling vineyards and it's easy to find plenty of skins and seeds left over from the wine-making process.

While experts may squabble about the benefits of fermentation and whether wine or grapes make the best beauty boosters, most agree that vine-based beauty is about to become even more prevalent, especially now that pharmaceutical companies are selling resveratrol as an ingredient to skincare companies. According to Baxter, it's only a matter of time before resveratrol replaces vitamin C as the antioxidant of choice for keeping skin beautiful. Cheers to that!



stock your cellar These products help you harness the beauty of the grape.

- 1 **Olavie Chardonnay Body & Massage Oil** A super-hydrating blend of grapeseed, macadamia, jojoba, avocado, and coconut oils. (\$43, olavie.com)
- 2 **Caudalie Beauty Elixir** Equal parts toner and serum to smooth wrinkles and boost your moisturizer. (\$49, caudalie-usa.com)
- 3 **Eminence Mimosa Champagne Sugar Scrub** Powerful exfoliation for normal to dry skin. (\$48, eminenceorganics.com)
- 4 **Le Vin Eye Serum** Blends vitamins and antioxidants to eliminate crows' feet, bags, and under-eye circles. (\$98, levinskincare.com)
- 5 **29 Cosmetics Wine Blot Lip Treatment** An unbeatable lip moisturizer that works equally well in the snow and at the beach. (\$24, 29cosmetics.com)