

Power of the Plum

Beauty entrepreneurs Jacqueline, Allison and Elaine Taylor use plums grown on the family farm in nearby Sutter County to create their skin care brand Le Prunier, whose now cult-favorite facial oil lives up to the hype.

By Keri Bridgwater



Le Prunier founders Allison Taylor, Jacqueline Taylor and Elaine Taylor

WHEN MODEL CHRISSEY TEIGEN shared a "little secret" about one of her go-to skin care products on Instagram last year, within hours, the "magic" and still somewhat under-the-radar facial oil by Le Prunier (www.leprunier.com) sold out overnight. It also racked up a wait list in the tens of thousands. "I thought Shopify was broken, so I called Allison and said, What's going on," says Marin resident Jacqueline of the unexpected moment during the pandemic that catapulted their indie brand into the big time. "Being spotlighted like that was incredible — we had a waitlist of 25,000 literally overnight — but being a mom-and-pop operation, we knew we also faced a large task ahead to catch up," adds Allison.

Made using a single ingredient from the family farm (the world's largest grower of organic plums), the "from seed to serum" multipurpose oil is rich in antioxidants, polyphenols and fatty acids that seem to work miracles when it comes to evening out complexions and preventing the signs of aging. "Another wonderful aspect of Le Prunier is that it's non-comedogenic and hypoallergenic, so terrific for sensitive skin," says Jacqueline. "I suffer from hormonal acne, and it's always been a challenge to find products that don't contain essential oils or fragrances, which can cause irritation. Le Prunier is powerful yet gentle and leaves my skin glowing."

Plum oil might be a relative newcomer to the beauty market stateside, but it's one of the best-kept skin care secrets among women across Asia. The sisters first learned about the "power of plum" after joining their father on business trips to Japan and Korea and later combining their career expertise in pre-med biopsychology, marketing and business to soft-launch Le Prunier in 2017. It quickly caught the attention of Neiman Marcus and the Indie Beauty Expo in New York and

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was stocked in Neiman Marcus stores within the following year.

Allison explains it was a slow build at first, helping consumers learn about and understand the superfruit's benefits, but thanks to early international distribution deals — including one with iconic department store Le Bon Marché in Paris and another with the Shinsegae Group's glossy Hanam store in Korea — a loyal brand following was soon established in Europe and Asia.

Combining the star of Le Prunier's

principal product with an antioxidant-rich ingredient derived from seaweed, the sisters just launched their second act: Plumscreen, a broad-spectrum SPF 31 made with Plum Superfruit Complex. "There are so many inherently potent properties in plums. For example, during our early research, we discovered the kernel oil is high in melanin inhibition, which helps reduce age spots, sun spots, and hyperpigmentation, and has a natural SPF of 10. So, creating Plumscreen felt like the

natural next step," explains Allison.

It's not just Le Prunier's clean beauty products that pack a feel-good punch. The sisters uphold sustainable and zero-waste farming practices, too. "The plum kernels are upcycled, and we use a revolutionary filtration system called BioFiltro to help us cut down on our wastewater," says Elaine. She adds they use bees to pollinate the crops naturally and, once the harvest is over, 2,000 goats are brought in to help eat down any excess. Having grown up near the fourth-generation family farm and helping their parents at local farmers markets, Jacqueline says that while their father took some convincing that a clean beauty product was a good business idea, their mom was very excited. "Our parents are definitely our biggest supporters," she adds.

Clean beauty fans can shop Le Prunier at Beauty Heroes (817 Grant Avenue, Novato), Ayla (1825 Bush Street, San Francisco) and online at www.leprunier.com. 🍷

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