



# QUIET LUXURY

Kathryn Conway meets the man championing natural, organic skincare for the modern age



Quiet luxury is a concept that has been simmering away for a few years. Low-key and understated, it is the kind of luxury that is whispered by those in the know, by those who understand that indulgence doesn't necessarily lie in a high price tag and a flashy logo. London, if you scratch beneath the surface, is full of establishments that embody this ethos. Indeed, the city is the veritable champion of companies that quietly go about the business of creating beautiful products, usually without fuss and without fanfare, for people for whom quality not price is key.

Guy Morgan is at the helm of one such business. His eponymous brand is the epitome of the term artisan and was borne out of Morgan's own quest to find efficacious skincare products that were both natural and responsibly produced. "I grew up in Somerset surrounded by beautiful countryside and woodland, and the natural world was something I developed a keen interest in," Morgan reveals. "My mother was a botanist so we had a herbarium and a modest-sized greenhouse, but whenever we were out on walks together, she would teach me about the flora and fauna, pointing out species that had a particular use, for example,



so I grew up with a real affinity for the power of plants.” This passion for botany piqued an interest in natural skincare and it wasn’t long before Morgan was washing his face with oat grains and researching how clay might help his troubled complexion.

“Like most kids, I had problem skin as a teenager and I was keen to find an alternative to the synthetic, chemical-based solutions out there,” says Morgan. “I became interested in the ability of clay to draw out impurities but I also wanted a product that could exfoliate without drying out my skin.” After much trial and error, Morgan hit upon a winning combination of finely ground volcanic pumice stone, calcium bentonite clay, rhassoul clay and organic neem leaf and his first product – *Toujours Pur Clay* – was created. This exfoliating wash and mask was quickly shared among friends and family who spurred Morgan on to make his formulation available to the wider public. As a result, in 2015, he set up his business. Make no mistake, however: handmade his products might be, but Morgan is a man intent on bringing a touch of modern luxury to an industry he considers still suffers from the stigma of “having a hippy, Seventies vibe to it”.

#### FORMULATED FOR RESULTS

With an obvious grounding in natural and organic ingredients, the expansion of Guy Morgan’s product range has been carefully considered. “It’s easy to get swept up in the hype of a miracle ingredient of the moment, so I constantly research the claims, looking into the science and also the proof to back them up,” says Morgan. “At the moment, there is no law that stops a brand from saying that something is organic and natural and there are people out there creating DIY skincare recipes that are frankly dangerous. I wanted to create a brand that was completely

transparent about the ingredients used and to pay due diligence to ensuring that the combination of ingredients in any given product will garner results.” As such, Morgan sources only verified organic ingredients from suppliers that are approved by bodies such as the Soil Association and COSMOS, favouring those that have been tried and tested.

It is perhaps why you won’t see a great multitude of products available under the Guy Morgan label. Its creator has instead staked his reputation on a few key products which adhere to the three principles that Morgan feels are the key tenets of a good skincare regime whether you are a man or a woman: cleansing, exfoliation and hydration. Sadly, *Toujours Pur Clay* is no longer available, but its spirit lives on in Morgan’s *White Marble Exfoliating Mask* – a fine marble powder that acts as a gentle exfoliating cleansing clay mask or facial polish. What is rather genius about Morgan’s masks is that they all need to be mixed with water, forcing their user to become a little more ritualistic in their approach. “Skincare should feel indulgent and people should want to take a little time over it,” Morgan explains. “The activation of my masks forces people to take a moment to focus on themselves.”

*Midnight Black*, another cleansing mask, has been specifically formulated for blemish-prone skin and utilises Australian black clay and activated charcoal to achieve its striking colour. “It is our most popular product and is particularly sought-after by men,” Morgan reveals. “I know charcoal has become rather hyped up of late, but I use an activated coconut shell charcoal. This has been burnt at a much higher temperature to increase the surface area, making it much more porous and therefore capable of absorbing a lot more dirt and excess sebum. Unless it is activated, charcoal

OPENING IMAGE: GUY MORGAN IN THE SHIRLEY SHERWOOD GALLERY AT ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, KEW. THIS PAGE: MIDNIGHT BLACK CLEANSING MASK BY GUY MORGAN







really won't do a great deal for you." For hydration, Morgan turns to the power of Himalayan salt – available in both bath salts and as a mask – while additional products include a Black Thorn Facial Oil, which is ideal for anyone concerned about fine lines and wrinkles.

### ROOTED IN THE PAST

New on the horizon is Dagger Rose, a beauty balm that uses an organic rosehip oil and is a development that perhaps reveals most about the underlying passions of its creator. "If you look back through history, some sources think rosehip or dog rose is a corruption of dagger rose, so-called in reference to the shrub's jagged-edged leaves. I thought dagger rose was an amazing name for a product and I loved that it was a bit unexpected, a bit mysterious."

This appreciation for symbolism can be found in Morgan's choice of logo, too, which was taken from a 15th-century religious book containing teachings about morals. "I found this picture and was immediately struck by it. The book is written in Latin so I am unsure of its exact meaning, but the image of a tree bound by a splint with one hand coming in to tend to it and another seemingly taking away from it resonated with me," says Morgan. "To me it seemed to be the perfect metaphor for how we treat nature – the dichotomy of caring for the natural world while stripping away its natural resources. It's a reminder that we need to treat nature with a bit more respect, to use it responsibly – it's a philosophy that I hope I have communicated through my products." From the responsibly sourced formulations to the sophisticated, minimal packaging, there really is no reason why Guy Morgan isn't currently the name on everyone's lips... except that in the world of quiet luxury, Morgan doesn't want that and neither do his band of enlightened followers. So, shhh! We haven't said a thing.

HIMALAYAN SALT HYDRATING MASK BY GUY MORGAN. ALL IMAGES © THEA LÖVSTAD