



Frankie Apothecary incorporates aspects of traditional Maori medicine. Photo / Supplied

New Zealand Skincare Brands For Those Who Like To Shop Local

Janetta Mackay checks out some skincare start-ups offering more choice to conscious consumers

By Janetta Mackay

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FRANKIE APOTHECARY

Frankie Apothecary is the third baby of Michele Wilson, a former lawyer whose efforts to deal with her elder daughter's eczema led to a new career making natural skincare. This incorporates aspects of traditional Maori medicine, known as rongoa. She harvests native botanicals, such as kawakawa leaves – long used on irritated skin – from family land in Northland.

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The founding of this family run business has encouraged Michele and her father to reconnect with wisdom nearly lost after the death of her grandmother, the last full Maori in the family. While other companies have recently shown an interest in kawakawa as a skincare ingredient, Frankie was a pioneer and further stands out in how it harvests – sustainably in sync with nature and following moon cycles.

Products include a skin repair balm and a bath soak, plus an all-purpose body oil and a winter-ready roll-on with kanuka. Find Frankie at Nature Baby and Huckleberry health stores and at [Frankieapothecary.com](https://frankieapothecary.com/) (<https://frankieapothecary.com/>)



Sianna skincare founder Anne-Constance Palmeri. Photo / Supplied

SIANNA SKINCARE

Sianna skincare is a coming together of things founder Anne-Constance Palmeri loves. For starters, it's named after her 13-year-old daughter and is part French and part Kiwi in inspiration. For the Provencal native, who trained in her homeland in naturotherapy, creating natural products was also an extension of her personal interests in skincare and perfume. A mother who used essential oils stimulated a love of aromatherapy. This taps into many levels, says Anne-Constance, having the ability to influence mood.

As well as making face and body care, Sianna offers to custom blend oils for clients, to match their physical and wellbeing needs. Most of the core skincare range uses neroli, rose, frankincense and lavender essential oils, in various combinations to best suit their application. "More and more women are aware of what they need, especially those 30 or more, and they want to trust it," she says. What we put on our skin, goes more than skin deep, she adds.

[READ: Eco-Friendly Beauty Products To Buy Right Now \(http://www.viva.co.nz/article/beauty-wellbeing/ecofriendly-beauty-products/?ref=article\)](http://www.viva.co.nz/article/beauty-wellbeing/ecofriendly-beauty-products/?ref=article)

Her natural moisturising formulas have been supplemented with skin-loving vitamins and plant actives for added potency. Anne-Constance worked with chemists on this. She has a laboratory in Takapuna, where a cross-cultural fusion of ingredients also features, from French clay to manuka honey. The aim is to make Sianna 100 per cent eco-friendly across its operation. This is coming along, with re-usable glass pottles and organic ingredients in play; honey mask aside, most products are vegan.

The company launched in March and this month the store at Te Papa museum in Wellington will begin stocking items from its collection. For Anne-Constance, who has lived in New Zealand for five years, this is a significant welcome.

[Siannaskincare.com \(https://www.siannaskincare.com/\)](https://www.siannaskincare.com/)



Netball star Maria Folau has endorsed Zeosoft's range. Photo / Supplied

ZEOSOFT

Zeosoft is a gentle mineral cleansing range, with its hero ingredient, soft zeolite, sourced from thermal spring valleys between Rotorua and Tokoroa. The skincare, made in Auckland, caught the eye of US brand-hunter Anthropologie, which this year began stocking a selection.

Zeolites are micro-porous aluminosilicate minerals long used industrially for their absorbent qualities. They are found in everything from water filters, to cat litter, to dietary supplements said to aid detoxification. It took a New Zealand geoscientist, Dr Ray Merchant, to identify that specific zeolite rock deposits here were geologically young at 10,000 years old and were therefore extra absorbent. When ground down they could have a use in skincare, he suggested. Zeosoft chief executive Phil Connolly explains that negatively charged so-called "soft zeolites" act like a Pac-Man gobbling up positive contaminants. This makes them ideal for use as cleansers and in micro-bead free exfoliators, plus they are gentle on waterways. They can absorb excess oils and grime on skin. The face scrub, which contains lemon tea tree oil, is suitable for acne sufferers.

[READ: How The Hair Industry is Moving Towards Sustainability \(http://www.viva.co.nz/article/beauty-wellbeing/hair-industry-moving-towards-sustainability/?ref=article\)](http://www.viva.co.nz/article/beauty-wellbeing/hair-industry-moving-towards-sustainability/?ref=article)

The company's early years were spent in developing a now-patented method of suspending the zeolite into a liquid formulation using natural ingredients. Phil, who has a business background in tech start-ups, sales and financing, first became involved in 2011 to help out its founders, but was later caught up in the beauty business potential. A refocus has since taken place and he is pursuing exports to Japan. Netball star Maria Folau (pictured) — who was born in Tokoroa near where the zeolites are found — has endorsed the range as a natural choice for her skin. The company is looking to form partnerships with the netball community to offer a "give-back" component from sales. [Zeosoft.co.nz](https://zeosoft.co.nz/) (<https://zeosoft.co.nz/>)



Okana follows the no nasties approach for its skincare range. Photo / Supplied

OKANA

Okana taps into the goodness of fruit and vegetables, using juices and purees in face and body skincare made with an innovative self-preserving formula. The range follows the "no nasties" natural approach, but stands out in having a greatly reduced ingredient list, omitting common thickeners and stabilisers.

"What you see is what you get," is how originator Vibbs Amin puts it. She wanted to replicate the simple home-made recipes she remembers from her childhood in India.

READ: Eleanor Ozich's Beautifully Balanced Beauty Routine (<http://www.viva.co.nz/article/beauty-wellbeing/foodie-eleanor-ozichs-beauty-routine/?ref=article>)

The transition from applying tomato juice straight to skin, to doing this commercially in New Zealand in products with a shelf-life of a up to a year, took a lot of experimentation. Finding a sympathetic formulator was just the first step. Vibbs likens her approach to the difference between eating a homemade tomato sauce with just a handful of undiluted ingredients, to reading the long list on a bought bottle. The marketing graduate, who long battled problematic, oily skin had found products she bought might work initially, but in the longer term her breakouts would return. This saw her trying the likes of yoghurt, avocado and honey on her own skin, sparking the idea of a range with ingredients "like something I would eat".

Some are familiar antioxidant-rich berry extracts, others less usual combinations, such as the lettuce and cucumber juice in a toner. A sorbet-style cleanser contains just four ingredients (three plant and nut oils and mango seed butter).

If you fancy increasing your fruit and vegetable intake, Okana will soon be stocked in selected New World and Pak n Save supermarkets. For Vibbs, making this new approach affordable was important. [Okana.co.nz](http://okana.co.nz) (<http://okana.co.nz/>)



Monalinda is a stylish range that incorporates natural ingredients from New Zealand. Photo / Supplied

MONALINDA

Monalinda was recently developed by Auckland appearance medicine expert Margaret Chen to fill a gap she saw in the needs of clients at the Sapphire Clinic she runs with Dr Garsing Wong. She wanted a stylish range incorporating natural ingredients from New Zealand, the most surprising of which is ovine placenta. But, she says, her "biggest focus was to use a stable form of vitamin C, which was often lacking" in the sort of simple regime she was after. Avocado oil is a source she has used and plant-derived kojic acid also helps with complexion clarifying.

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Vitamin C is currently very popular across the skincare industry for its brightening effects, but is tricky to handle to ensure it remains effective. Placenta from sheep is at the less studied end of topical ingredients, but its nutrient-rich properties and peptides have been attracting some interest. Margaret describes it as "full of goodies to nurture new life and by adding the extract, we can stimulate repair of our skin." The extract is sourced exclusively from New Zealand. Other local additions to the four-piece range are kawakawa leaf extract and manuka honey, both known for healing properties, and rose water for fragrant hydration.

Margaret prefers to consult with clients about approaches to improving skin and collagen production and what different ingredients offer, but Monalinda is also available online. [Nzskinlimited.com](https://www.nzskinlimited.com/) (<https://www.nzskinlimited.com/>)



HZP & Co's All Day Anti-Pollution Serum has proved to be a hit in China. Photo / Supplied

HZP + CO

A shift from Auckland several years ago to live on a kiwifruit orchard set Hellen Faulkner off on creating HZP + Co, a natural skincare company that uses the Bay of Plenty's rich resources, including kiwifruit extracts and native botanicals. Her mission, though, is to do this with a science-based approach, using active natural ingredients.

READ: How to Create Your Own Essential Oil Roller Blends (<http://www.viva.co.nz/article/beauty-wellbeing/how-to-create-essential-oil-blends/?ref=article>)

Her business has caught the attention of the Chinese market and she is heading back there to follow up after being part of a Tauranga mayoral business delegation to Shanghai. Plans for a store in Tauranga are also in the pipeline. One item of particular interest in China was an anti-pollution serum, with anti-pollution products designed to protect skin from environmental aggressors being a developing area. The All Day Hydra Defence Serum is in a easily absorbed gel base and uses hyaluronic acid for a moisture boost.

From Hellen's role as a mother, came the idea of developing several face mist sprays suitable for use on children. These use aromatic ingredients to calm or energise and are proving popular with all ages. HZP + Co has recently been picked up for sale at Auckland airport as an interesting example of New Zealand natural skincare. [Hzp.co.nz](https://www.hzp.co.nz/) (<https://www.hzp.co.nz/>)



Arture's hero product is a microdermabrasion cream. Photo / Supplied

ARTURE

Arture is the brainchild of the multi-talented Yun Liu, who turned her own skin troubles and desire to use only natural products during pregnancy three years ago into a business opportunity. After her dermatologist told her she couldn't keep using prescription skincare medications and that some off the shelf options had not been tested on pregnant women, she decided on making her own, working with a well-regarded laboratory. Exfoliation is a focus for healthy skin and her hero product is a microdermabrasion cream that uses natural crystals and botanicals.

READ: [How to Plan An Eco-Holiday \(http://www.viva.co.nz/article/culture-travel/plan-an-eco-holiday/?ref=article\)](http://www.viva.co.nz/article/culture-travel/plan-an-eco-holiday/?ref=article)

Two new products will soon be launched: an overnight treatment and a strong retinol that she says causes less sensitivity than synthetic versions. Yun has also worked with a perfumer to create a fragrance called Journey, based on her scent impressions of New Zealand, where she grew up.

After studying veterinary science, switching to psychology and then completing a Masters degree in business management. Yun worked as a crisis counsellor, before managing Lifeline services. On the side, she has raced cars. With a view to spending more time with her young daughter, Yun decided to use her skills to grow Arture rather than return to working for someone else. She says she has found the commitment to running her own business surpasses anything else she has tackled. The effort is paying off. Successful marketing in China has seen her New Zealand Trade Forum firm nominated for an Auckland Business Award. [Arture.co.nz \(https://arture.co.nz/\)](https://arture.co.nz/)



Syrene's products are 95 per cent natural. Photo / Supplied

SYRENE

Syrene speaks of the sea in its cool aquamarine packaging and its use of seaweed extract and marine collagen. It is 95 per cent natural and in this category stands out in being an early adopter of modern light gel textures. The range is the brainchild of Jo Gilbert who has a background in beauty product development for big brands in the United Kingdom. Since moving to New Zealand 10 years ago, she began the Bath House, a business making skincare for babies. Based in Titirangi, it is from there that Syrene was also launched last year.

[READ: How To Make Your Own Eucalyptus & Lime Liquid Soap \(http://www.viva.co.nz/article/beauty-wellbeing/eucalyptus-lime-soap/?ref=article\)](http://www.viva.co.nz/article/beauty-wellbeing/eucalyptus-lime-soap/?ref=article)

High in antioxidants, the range is about hydration, skin repair and rejuvenation. To this end a toner, gel lotion, intense cream and masque combine. Syrene contains several trade-marked marine ingredients and says its marine collagen is fished from the Pacific, off New Zealand. Native botanicals are also in the mix, including the new "in" ingredient kawakawa, plus pohutukawa extract and manuka honey. This all adds up to an aesthetically pleasing, but pricey range of basic daily skincare, available from selected Health 2000 stores. [Syreneskinicare.co.nz \(https://syreneskinicare.co.nz/\)](https://syreneskinicare.co.nz/)

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