

Romuald Vallée

Formulating the ultimate universal product to heal and defend the skin has taken three years of R&D for Phytomer, the French luxury marine skincare brand. The company's scientific director tells *Spa Business* about the launch of the groundbreaking Prebioforce serum

Creating a product which can improve the skin in any situation and be used by people of any age at any time, has been a dream for skincare companies for decades.

Now, Phytomer is to launch Prebioforce, a new universal serum which can heal and prevent acne, inflammation, sensitive skin, redness and irritation. It does this by harnessing the power of the skin's natural healing mechanisms and balancing the skin's natural defences.

"Skin is the first barrier of protection for the body," says Romuald Vallée, scientific director at Phytomer. "We used to believe that we only needed to protect



Prebioforce has a wide application, says Romuald Vallée. It can be applied after any facial for up to a month

its structure, now we know it's just as important to protect the skin microbiome because this - in turn - is protecting us.

"There are more microorganisms in the human body than stars in our galaxy", he continues. "Our skin microbiome typically has between 1 million and 10 million bacteria in just a 1 sq cm area and these are present from birth - they're the first gift a mother gives her baby.

"The health of the skin relies on these bacteria being in balance and their equilibrium can be easily upset by things like deep dermabrasion," explains Vallée.

Other lifestyle factors, such as UV exposure can also destabilise this fragile ecosystem: "Researchers carried out a study where they compared two groups," he says, "One group was leading a stressful life and the other a stress-free life.

"Results showed the balance of

microorganisms in the skin of the stressed group was totally different from those leading a stress-free life.

"The stressed group had acne, inflammation, sensitive skin, redness and irritation, due to imbalances in the skin microbiome as a result of the impact of stress on the immune system.

"These findings were reinforced by another piece of research done on people living in Paris that found 80 per cent had acidic skin, as a result of lifestyle factors, stress and pollution.

"This is because bacteria produce high levels of acid and so the pH of the skin decreases. They also love sebum, so once the skin becomes acidic, problems begin. The pH must be 5.5 - 6.0 for the skin to be in balance," says Vallée.

"Most people living in cities would clearly find it difficult to change



The innovative serum works to balance bacteria on the skin to promote a healthy skin microbiome



It's taken three years of testing marine ingredients to perfect the formula



Prebioforce is a serum for any age which can heal and prevent acne, inflammation, sensitive skin redness and irritation



(We used to believe that we only needed to protect the skin's structure – now we know it's just as important to protect the skin's microbiome, as this is protecting us)

their lives, so it became clear to us at Phytomer that there was a need for a new product to enable people living with stress to rebalance the skin.

"We set out to develop a product in our own laboratories which would restore and protect the skin by rebalancing the microbiome.

"This was a challenge because skin varies considerably between people and we needed to make a product which would work for everyone.

"After three years of testing marine ingredients such as polysaccharides, trace elements and amino acids, our dream has come to fruition in the form of a new product called Prebioforce.

"This product, created entirely by Phytomer and exclusive to us, is the first prebiotic serum – a light emulsion with a delicate texture which

improves the balance of the skin.

"Naturally healthy skin bacteria live in a hydrolipidic film of water and fat. The balance and health of this film are very important to every bacteria and the new product is designed to restore and maintain this balance.

"Prebioforce can be used alone or in association with day or night cream – essentially it's a hydrolipidic emulsion that creates the right balance for the skin microbiome.

"The product has a very wide application," says Vallée. "Prebioforce should be used universally for your skin – it can be applied after every facial and skin treatment to strengthen the skin and so is compatible with all existing treatments.

"It should be used for between two weeks and one month after a treatment or a skin outbreak to support the recovery

of the skin: the deeper the treatment, the longer it should be used."

The product will initially launch as a line to be retailed through spas, although there are also plans to develop a professional range.

Vallée is one of a select group of researchers working on the skin microbiome and he expects further breakthroughs in the area of the skin microbiome over the next few years: "This is the beginning of a new era for skincare – a new set of tools," he says.

"Before we discovered the skin microbiome we were thinking that the skin was a series of layers of cells but the bacteria living on these layers are hugely diverse, making it a complex and nuanced process to nurture and balance them," he concludes. ●

● www.phytomerpro.com