

Beautystreams' top beauty innovations in review 2023

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2023 was marked by novelty across the beauty industry. As we count down to the end of the year, revisit some of the most notable innovations, product launches, trends, and beauty news in Beautystreams' comprehensive *Top 50 Year in Review* report, available today for pre-order. Spanning eight categories, the report dives into the innovations that have marked the year – from ingredients to retail, packaging to technology to finished products – along with a selection of noteworthy beauty news, industry thought leaders, and social media trends that have made this year remarkable in beauty. To introduce you to the findings that will be shared in the full report, take a look at a selection of high-level insights below.

Product Innovation: Crafting fragrance from extinct flowers

In October, beauty biotech firm **Arcaea** launched a ground-breaking and first-of-its kind fragrance brand, Future Society. The brand's Scent Surrection Collection pushes the boundaries of scent crafting, as the brand launched six perfumes derived from the sequenced DNA of extinct flowers, giving users a unique opportunity to revel in floral scents lost. Renowned perfumers like Jérôme Epinette (Robertet), Daniela Andrier (Givaudan), and Olivia Jan (Givaudan) played a pivotal role in this unprecedented project.

Arcaea, whose name comes from the root "ancient" and "to lead the way," acknowledges that "to go forward, we must go back" as their mantra. Placing themselves at the forefront of a new movement, Arcaea establishes biology as a genre in the beauty industry with their debut collection that leverages DNA sequencing technology to access fragrance notes previously undiscovered.

Ingredient innovations: all mighty AI

It's no surprise that Artificial Intelligence has its place in a 2023 Year in Review. Among the innovations that have marked the year, Robertet's September acquisition of a **BioPod** – an AI-controlled bio farm developed by Interstellar Lab – is leading the way in revolutionizing the production of plant-based natural ingredients in the flavors and fragrance industry.

Used to sustainably grow plants in space, the BioPod is a cultivation tool that anticipates the challenges of sourcing and the environmental impact that comes with it. Resembling an egg-shaped cocoon, the BioPod optimizes water cycles, captures ambient CO2 and sunlight to reduce the energy consumption of artificial light, and is equipped with its own artificial intelligence to recreate climates autonomously, enabling the production of high-value-added plants and natural ingredients in a sustainable and replicable way. With this investment, Robertet expects to boost agronomic research in the fragrance, flavors and well-being industries bringing AI to new heights.

Technology innovation: In my own bubble

With the convergence of crises creating unprecedented levels of anxiety and stress among consumers, the bath has become an epitome of the escapism movement. With a general slowdown of routines and lifestyles, and heightened focus on meaningful moments, UK-based brand **Lush** has introduced an exciting innovation called the **Bath Bot**, designed to enhance at-home bathing and wellness experiences. As its first step into tech, Lush's Bath Bot was created by the brand's in-house Tech & Digital teams after five years of development and promises to make bath time all the more sensorial with an array of connected features.

The Bath Bot combines fully waterproof speakers with delightful light and color combination that aim to enhance one's bathing experience. With three modes – Sleepy, Fun, and Rave – the Bot becomes an undeniable bath companion and creates captivating lightscapes to transform the bath experience into a moment of pure escape.

Beauty business: Clean Sweep

Fueling the race to acquire the most sought-after independent beauty brands, acquisition deals have cadenced the year as none other than L'Oréal's most expensive acquisition to date was sealed on August 30, 2023, valued at US \$2.5 billion. Searching for a clean beauty brand with a distinguishable, high-end aesthetic to integrate into their portfolio, L'Oréal has since inducted the new brand into its Luxe Division, alongside Lancôme, Yves Saint Laurent, and Kiehl's. With 400 retail outlets worldwide, including 280 stores and about 100 department store concessions, **Aesop** (<https://www.premiumbeautynews.com/en/natura-co-sells-aesop-to-l-oreal,21816>)'s sales reached US \$537 million in 2022, skyrocketing by nearly 20 from its US \$28 million in sales ten years prior.

People in beauty: TikTok dermfluencer

This year like previous years, social media has delivered countless trends and although it may be appealing to follow and take part in TikTok's trending hashtags, certain trends have been questioned by professionals who call for wariness before diving headfirst. In skin care, **Dr. Muneeb Shah, DO**, has become a TikTok celebrity and is widely known as the "DermDoctor." As a board-certified dermatologist specializing in medical, cosmetic, and procedural dermatology, Dr. Shah helps debunk skin care myths, simplifies complex dermatological concepts, and empowers his followers to make the right decisions when it comes to their choice of skin care.

As a respected figure in the skin care world, Dr. Shah has received many offers to work with telemedicine start-ups but has been wary of partnering with companies who don't systematically partner with board-certified dermatologists. Approached by Cortina, a start-up founded by a faculty member at Harvard Medical School, Dr. Shah now serves as the company's medical content advisor and brings his expertise on the company's social content, ensuring the quality and accuracy of the company's medical output.

Packaging innovation: Toward circular beauty

In September, two US-based organizations, **Bluebird and Pact Collective**, joined forces to simplify packaging recycling for the beauty industry, especially for independent brands lacking substantial infrastructure. Bluebird, recognized for its accessible and user-friendly climate technology tools, particularly life cycle assessment (LCA) tools, partnered with Pact Collective, a non-profit organization dedicated to uniting the beauty industry to address packaging challenges.

The initial phase of their partnership involved offering a "turnkey solution" for over 150 beauty and wellness brands. This solution utilized an intuitive, interactive e-commerce widget to swiftly assess the recyclability of their packaging. The widget also facilitated clear communication to consumers about proper disposal methods. Integrated into a beauty brand's e-commerce site, the tool visually presents to consumers how each packaging element could be recycled, offering insights into the recycling process for various components.

Looking ahead, the collaboration between Bluebird and Pact Collective is expected to expand beyond enhancing recyclability evaluation and instructions. Future initiatives may include granting Pact-affiliated beauty companies access to Bluebird's life cycle assessment tools to measure the climate impact of their products throughout the development process.

Retail innovation: A scented bookstore

With fragrance's continued ascent and its growing presence in consumers' daily lives, the category is on its way to new heights, as brands turn to unique sensorial experiences to create emotional attachment with their consumers. As an example of this, China-based fragrance label **Documents** (<https://www.premiumbeautynews.com/en/ushopal-leads-new-investment-round,23197>) opened the first permanent scented bookstore in May on Shanghai's Yuyuan Road. Offering a unique blend of books and fragrances and embracing tree and nature themes, Documents Yuyuan Study curates a collection of 200 books around the topic and seeks to establish itself as a cultural hub, a community where literature, art, and cultural exploration meets sensory experiences through fragrance. Embracing the notion of escapism through literature and hoping to make the Documents Yuyuan Study a cultural destination, the brand leaned into their unique universe to create this novel retail experience.

Social media trend: All about age

As a central outlet for societal debates, social media has brought up many discussions this year around beauty, mental health, physical wellness, and society's changing mindset. This summer, a TikTok filter using AI technology to predict people's appearances was all the buzz as its hyper-realism shook the social media world. With 1.2 billion views on TikTok, the hashtag #aged shows users an impressively large amount of TikTok users trying out the filter and discovering a close-to-reality portrait of what they will look like later in life.

Sparking debate on the platform, Kylie Jenner's #aged video which garnered over 14 million views shined a light on the perception of aging in today's world. Igniting a conversation around beauty constructs and youthful ideals continuously depicted online, users encouraged each other to embrace age as it comes and are hoping to see the industry changing and celebrating natural, graceful aging in the same way that youthful beauty is celebrated today.