

Arab beauty

THE NEXT GLOBAL POWERHOUSE

K-beauty has dominated the world. Is 'A-beauty' next in line? Jo Allen investigates

Kohl smokey eyes, thick eyebrows, hair extensions and perfume rituals with signature scents such as oud – the Middle Eastern beauty aesthetic has become a mainstream and aspirational beauty ideal globally. But Arab beauty – or 'A-beauty' – is just getting started.

As a beauty hotspot, A-beauty's influence is increasingly extending beyond aesthetics to ingredients, textures, product performance and storytelling, and experts are betting on the region becoming the next global powerhouse – following in the footsteps of K-beauty.

"The impact of Arab Beauty was already visible ten years ago with the success of Huda Beauty, founded by the make-up artist and influencer Huda Kattan," explains Mai Nguyen, Creative Director and Marie Duvivier, Head of Consumer Intelligence at trend forecasting agency Perclers Paris. Dubai-based Huda Beauty has continued to rank as the world's most popular beauty brand in Cosmetify's Q3 2025 Beauty Index – for the third quarter in a row.

"Today, we can see the influence of Kayali (by Mona Kattan, Huda's sister) on the fragrance world," add Nguyen and Duvivier, "with sweet gourmand olfactive notes, the scent layering trend and the same for [oud] scents, an olfactive territory that we can see now in every fragrance brand and appreciated by international consumers."

The Middle East's big beauty players

Beyond the Kattan brands, heavyweight players from the region include Amouage, which Nguyen and Duvivier state, "has redefined the art of Arabian perfumery and garnered a reputation for being one of the most loved internationally recognised fragrance brands."

Bestselling Arabian fragrance brand Lattafa, meanwhile, continues its US domination with its viral perfumes. Last year, Lattafa, which launched the Give Me Gourmand collection in late August with scents such as Mallow Madness, Choco Overdose and Vanilla Freak, was named as a "brand that won beauty in 2025" by Spate. The brand's popularity in the US grew by 102.1% across Google, Instagram and TikTok during the year ending September 2025.

In fact, during October Prime Day in the US, Arabian fragrances captured four

of the top ten fragrance slots, with Lattafa leading at 12.4% share of sales, according to Market Defense's *Beauty Dealmakers: Prime Big Deal Days October 2025 Beauty Report*.

Hoping to follow in Lattafa's footsteps is Match Perfumes, an 'inspired-by' fragrance brand, founded in Saudi Arabia, that officially launched in the US in December. The accessibly priced brand says that in a hyper-competitive 'inspired-by' perfume market, it saw a clear gap. "Customers want luxurious fragrances that actually perform like high-end perfumes, but at a price that makes experimentation and everyday wear possible. Match eliminates that gap," says Omar Haimed, President of Empire State Corp, the holding company for Match Perfumes US. The scents are created using high end perfume oils to mirror the original inspiration, achieving a match rate of over 90%.

Emerging stars

Beyond fragrance, the region is home to rapidly expanding skin care and make-up brands, including Asteri Beauty, which launched in Ulta's first-ever store in Kuwait in November, and is planning to launch further internationally.

"I feel like it is the natural progression to go to Europe and the UK, but also Asia – India is very suitable for us as the weather is closer to here and the skin tones are closer to ours," Asteri Beauty's founder Sara Al-Rashid tells *Cosmetics Business*.

The Saudi Arabian brand creates desert-proof make-up which is both long lasting in the heat but hydrating at the same time. Its latest 3-in-1 Shadow Liner, which works as a kohl, liner, or eyeshadow, offers full matte colour intensity and long-lasting wear that withstands regional climates. It contains Zeolite, a naturally occurring mineral with oil-absorbing properties, and emollient dimethicone to prevent moisture loss.

Aiza, which launched last May, is "on a mission to take Arab ingredients and rituals global, creating modern skin care and hair care that's as rich in culture as it is in quality," says the brand, offering products such as Scent Storm Protective Hair Mist with the essence of bakhoor, and Date Setter, a lightweight brow and lash boosting serum containing nutrient-rich

\$95.2bn

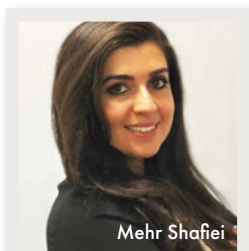
Projected value of
MENA market by 2030

*US Dollars.

Source: BCC Research



A-beauty has gained a reputation for climate-adapted cosmetics and fragrances that shape new olfactive directions globally



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Euromonitor International

dates. Mehr Shafiei, Consultant at Euromonitor International says: “When we talk about Arab beauty, local or indigenous ingredients take centre stage, for example, saffron, henna and black seed. Brands like Aiza are using storytelling to explain why specific ingredients ‘work here’, considering heat, UV exposure, water hardness, humidity, halal requirements and hair texture.”

Further A-beauty brands that are growing increasingly popular are Simihaze Beauty, Ilik, Juana Skincare, By Moudz, and Secret Skin – known as ‘the Goop of Middle East’, say Perclers’ Nguyen and Duvivier. “The fusion of local traditions with science, innovation, and a cosmopolitan outlook makes Arab Beauty highly exportable and able to resonate with consumer aspirations across markets,” they explain.

Shafiei adds: “Many local brands are just beginning their global expansion. Historically,

the Middle East has been dominated almost exclusively by international brands, with very little local manufacturing. So the current explosion of local brands, often influencer-led, is remarkable.”

A-beauty: the next K-beauty?

A-beauty may be next in line for beauty hotspot domination, but could it ever have the same impact as K-beauty? K-beauty is closely associated with Korea’s cultural impact, while the Korean government gave a lot of support to beauty brands to create the phenomenon it is today.

Shafiei comments: “There is no direct equivalent to Korea’s coordinated push, which was highly centralised. Korean universities actively fund R&D in skin care, and beauty is a major export sector. No other country in the world has anything to this extent.

“However”, she says, “in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, government support exists but is more indirect and sector-wide. The GCC broadly aims to diversify its economies, and retail and beauty fall under that umbrella. Beauty brands benefit from incentives for SMEs and initiatives like Beautyworld Middle East and roundtables hosted by the Halal Trade and Marketing Center, which help drive interest in beauty across the region.”

“There is clearly a favourable general context for the ‘Arab Beauty’ phenomenon to emerge,” state Nguyen and Duvivier. “Arab Beauty is a key strategic lever of the Middle Eastern Soft Power. To us, A-beauty is indeed ‘next in line’ – not in the sense that it just popped up out of nowhere, but because it feels more relevant today than it used to and is under the spotlight, much like the Middle East more broadly in the worlds of fashion, beauty, and luxury.”

“The Middle East is poised to become a global powerhouse,” adds Michael Nolte, SVP Creative Director of global trend and market insights platform Beautystreams. “Climate-adapted beauty, lightweight textures, high-coverage pigments, long-wear performance, and advanced SPF, will shape global formulation strategies beyond the region. The fragrance sector, already influential, will continue shaping new olfactive directions internationally” ●

ACTION POINTS

- 💡 Arab Beauty reflects the wider rise of Arab and Middle Eastern economic and cultural influence – and how the world is beginning to recognise it.
Mai Nguyen, Creative Director and Marie Duvivier, Head of Consumer Intelligence, Perclers Paris
- 💡 When I speak to Arab brands looking to grow internationally, the number one challenge they cite is trust. Brands can overcome this challenge through storytelling – connecting with their audience and emphasising that while local manufacturing may be new, many beauty traditions (like kohl and rose water) are centuries old.
Mehr Shafiei, Consultant, Euromonitor International