

Suki Skincare Specialist

By Maralyn D. Hill and Sherrie Wilkolaski

We had the opportunity to interview Suki Kramer of the suki skin care line, which is re-launching in December. We were quite interested to see what Suki had to tell us. The product line has many more products than we tested. We would suggest checking out the website to consider the right combination for your needs.

LBM: How did you get interested in skincare products and get started?

Suki: I struggled with skin problems and sensitivities my whole life and the loss of confidence that came with them. I grew up teased and bullied, and of course, felt reluctant to participate fully in life like many people with that kind of background. I tried everything from pharmaceuticals that temporarily blocked symptoms, to synthetics that inflamed and irritated my ultra-sensitive skin, to “gentle naturals” that at best, moisturized with no effect. In my 20s, I began experimenting with a more holistic approach to skincare and lifestyle, and started creating my own 100% pure herbal preparations, while studying and researching traditional remedies. It was then that I learned the cause of skin problems lies under the surface of the skin. Therefore, treating only symptoms, which is what the science of topical treatment is all about, is just a frustrating cycle that offers no real solution for people with real problems or sensitivities, nor any great skincare for people in general.

I started suki skincare in my kitchen about 17 years ago, and incorporated my company in 2002. I was looking to create a cure...100% toxin-free and scientifically advanced, effective treatments, well, for me, really! I sought out the teachings of progressive chemists, because most traditional scientists flat out said what I was looking to achieve, formulating a pure plus high-powered botanically active cosmetic, could never be possible, much less as effective as a synthetic. I persevered and became a formulator myself. I experimented for over 2 years each night, while working three jobs, as well as learning about marketing, web development, business development, branding, design, everything it took to create a cosmetic business. The most important things I learned though, were there were root causes of skin problems – inflammation, systemic issues of bacteria and oil production imbalances, allergies, etc. Eventually, I launched a simple line that I could take around to stores, and here we are today.

LBM: This is such a competitive field, at what point did you feel you could make a difference?

Suki: I always knew I could make a difference, as soon as I solved my own skin problems and those of my friends and family, and as long as I never swayed from my ideals. While it is a very competitive industry, we stand out because of our integrity, reputation, formulation strategy, real, visible results and our

commitment to our independent retail partners.

LBM: We realize you are re-launching the suki® skin care line with redesigned products. Could you tell us why and what innovations brought this about for the various products?

Suki: Throughout the history of the company, I've tried to inform people that a pure product is not only efficacious, but this product has clinicals. We conduct third party clinicals not done in the industry that show my formulas outperform most synthetic formulas! The branding and design became a bit too clinical, as a result of trying to educate the public. So at the beginning of the year, my goal was to bring the soul and voice back into the line.

The suki tag line, strong, safe solutions for your skin problems and sensitivities, really says it all about what we do for people. “Know your beauty” will always be the empowered philosophical meaning behind my brand.

I also hired an independent market research team that helped us simplify the line, making the brand easier to sell and buy – and providing the categories we have today.

LBM: Could you explain TLC™ technology and what it means?

Suki: TLC implies just what you would think, tender loving care. The unique suki® formulation strategy combines

TLC™ technology, the first high-potency actives derived from botanic sources and highly stabilized to deliver deep into the derma for long term effectiveness, so that VSA (Volatile Synthetic Active) inflammatory response, that caustic irritation usually felt when using say high potencies of Vitamin C, Salicylic





As a woman, I have been underestimated and misunderstood on more than one occasion, but that makes the successes all the more satisfying. More women create their own companies because of the lack of truly infinite growth that can occur for us in traditional business settings.

I am often questioned for my decisions, and must explain myself on an ongoing basis in a way I see men do not. I tested this “theory” by bringing in men to say the exact same things and people just listen to them, no questions asked. But what can you do but continue to be successful? A life well lived and all that...

LBM: Is there one aspect of skincare that you feel is the most important?

Suki: Exfoliation is extremely important to me, to keep the skin youthful, plump, clear and really smooth, and that’s all over! The reason exfoliation is so important too is that, for having well-hydrated skin, like most things, preparation is the key. Your canvas (the skin) must be fresh, dry-patch free and smooth. An exfoliate that actually works will provide that. With a body brush or loofa, and your favorite exfoliate (get one that doubles as a cleanser and you’ll save time), you’ll start your routine with fresh, new, soft skin. Your driest parts will take some time to get back to a state of real softness, so don’t be discouraged if this takes a couple weeks!

LBM: What do you see in the future for skincare product development?

Suki: The overall trend toward buying “naturals” continues, and will indefinitely, of course. We all want the best there is and are willing to pay a premium for more healthful products. The trick is knowing that what we are paying that premium for is truly more healthy and pure, and formulated to actually work. Many consumers are unaware of the questionable industry ethics, hidden ingredients and toxins in this largely unregulated industry. We are starting to finally make some headway in oversight, thank goodness, California, of course, leading the way. But there are also good-natured, badly informed people out there making decisions who are effective manufacturers, but that do not actually do anything in the end, for consumers.

LBM: When you are not working on your company, what do you do in your free time?

Suki: I love writing, driving long

Acid, Vitamin A, Retinol – for example, is avoided. This is true is all aspects of our products.chemistry/sebum.

LBM: What have been your biggest challenges to overcome with building your brand?

Suki: Honestly, each step along this journey has been brand new and full of challenges, fear, insecurities to meet and master, risks, sacrifices and doubt. I’ve had to learn everything I know each step of the way, but I’ve also had a lot of angels -- I was a freelance writer and waitress and had just finished my bachelor’s degree at 34 when I started this. I did not have a background in science or any training in business management. I went to the Small Business Association (SBA) for guidance on so many things, and they helped tremendously. I really started from scratch and learned everything from the ground up.

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drives in the sunshine, crisp fall air, horse back riding, biking, swimming, sculpting, cooking, I actually love going to the movies by myself but my true love is dancing...I started finally finding time for myself again 6 years ago, about 14 years after I started my business. Before that, I literally worked on my business from morning til morning!

I danced as a child and that was my dream, but not to be. I had taken classes in college and had a great interest in learning ballroom dance. It took about a year at least to fully commit to it, but I finally did, and since, I haven't looked back. I'm really lucky and grateful that I get to dance, because it is the one time of my day I don't think about the stresses of my business at all and it gives me so much.

Sherrie Wilkolaski's Product Review

Changing beauty products is challenge for me, given my propensity to have an allergic reaction to new fragrances and ingredients. When we decided to review the Suki Skin Care line for their new re-launch, my fingers were crossed. I received a box of Suki's personal faves, which include: exfoliating foaming cleanser, ultra-protect™ eye balm – night, 4-swipe™ formula lip care and ultra-protect™ body balm. The packaging is very modern with a modern white backdrop with yellow and black lights; very clean.

The first product I tested was the 4-swipe™ formula lip care. It comes in an oversized tube so there is no worry that you won't capture your entire lip during the application. For those ladies that have danced with Botox around their lips, you're sure to be covered. The product instructs "soften with skin's heat" and that is an absolute must. It is not something you can open and use, as the gel in the tube is very firm and it does not glide on, it does need the assistance of heat to work effectively. It has kept my lips soft after each application.

Next, I tested the exfoliating foaming cleanser and I really enjoyed this product. It has a very fresh smell of citrus, and the exfoliating beads stayed active long enough to get a good

cleanse before they dissolved. My face was smooth and clean after using it and it is my favorite pick of all the products I tested.

After my exfoliating exercise, I moved on to the ultra-protect™ eye balm – night product. The application instructions say, "gently massage small amount around eyes &/or lip area until absorbed." The product is a bright yellow color in the jar and, like the earlier mentioned lip product, it was very firm. It took a while for me to get the product warmed up and then I patted it around my eyes. It was a bit sticky and not smooth like a gel or cream. For me, gentle care around the lips and eyes is crucial to warding off the onset of wrinkles, and this product was very rough for what I feel is a sensitive area.

Lastly, I moved on to the ultra-protect™ body balm before slipping into bed. This product was very firm and required work to get out of the jar. "Warm a small amount between palm smooth into skin until fully absorbed", read the instructions. This product did not have the lovely citrus smell found in the exfoliating foaming cleanser. It had a very heavy eucalyptus-type of scent which I didn't like, and it was mixed with some other heavy fragrance that did cause me to have an allergic reaction and an evening of sneezing. That aside, I did use the product and worked it into my hands, forearms and elbows and it did work well. It was very thick and again, it needs to be warmed up. If the fragrance is appealing to your nose, I would recommend it for the winter months for those rough elbows, chapped hands and cuticles.

Overall, the products do work well, I will continue to use the refreshing exfoliating foaming cleanser, but will pass on the other products for either being too much work to warm-up before use, and with ultra-protect™ body balm, I have to pass due to fragrance.

Maralyn D. Hill's Product Review

My experience was different than Sherrie's in that, in general, I do not have allergic reactions. I'm always excited to try new skin care lines, but my attitude is quite results driven, as I've more age to contend with the damage when I was not careful.

I too, tried the 4



swipe™ formula lip care. As one ages, the lips get thinner and I don't like the lines that find their way sweeping down. I really like the 4 swipe and the suki@ difference sugar crystals that gently remove the dead skin are great. But I do have one wish, a little plastic mini spreader, not to spread the product, but to get it out of the jar. It is a challenge, as the product is nice and hard and I have to dig with my fingernails. As for the results, I do like the product.

The exfoliating foaming cleanser wins me over from the Suki's personal faves group. Its fresh light fragrance and exfoliation of skin were ideal. This product is gentle and effective at the same time. Again, I wish it had a mini spreader in the cap. Suki@ products are packed in tight, which as a result, are challenging to dig out of the container. But they are worth the effort.

The ultra-protect™ body balm won

me over with its eucalyptus scent. I am not sure of the additional scent, I would have been happy with just the eucalyptus. But it worked great, especially on the heels of my feet and elbows. I no longer live in cold weather, but if I did, this would be a once a week must. Again, I'd like the spreader in the cap. I really appreciate that the bottles are packed tight with the product, but wish they were easier to get out, except for the 4 swipe.

All and all, thank you, Suki, for giving us the opportunity to test out your products and get our different viewpoints. Everyone that use products are different and not all products are meant for all people. At Luxe Beat Magazine, we try to provide a balanced approach. Between our age difference and allergies, we provide a good team.

We encourage you to enjoy Suki products and would be interested in your reactions. For more about suki products go to sukiskincare.com.

