

L'Occitane
en Provence
Immortelle
Brightening
Essence (\$60)

La Prairie
White Caviar
Illuminating Eye
Cream (\$420)

Kiehl's Clearly
Corrective
Dark Spot
Solution (\$54)

Vichy ProEVEN
Daily Dark Spot
Corrector (\$44)

{ MASTER CLASS }

BRIGHT
SIDE

How to STOP your face
from looking like a VINTAGE
leather jacket. *TEXT: ALLY DEAN*

Women in ancient Rome used to cover dark spots with white chalk, while women in China relied on a concoction of herbal remedies to even out their skin tone. Today, the formulas and processes for brightening skin have matured (thank goodness) and employ a blend of sophisticated, effective ingredients. Brightening creams are your ticket to a flawless finish.

SUNNY SIDE Wrinkles and fine lines are always in the anti-aging spotlight, but “90 percent of visible aging is caused by uneven skin tone or dark spots,” says Donna Paty, national education manager for Kiehl’s. “By the time you’re in your 20s, you’ve already accumulated 80 percent of the sun damage you’ll get in your life.” Sun exposure causes skin to produce an excess of melanin, which ultimately causes uneven skin tone (hyperpigmentation). Skin changes don’t show up right away, though. “UVA damage occurs in the skin’s deep layers,” says Paty. “You won’t see the effect until you’re 30 or 40.”

LIGHT SCREEN “Everyone should add a brightener to their skin-care regimen,” says Paty. “Who doesn’t want even, glowing skin?” We concur. These lightweight serums and creams feature a cocktail of active ingredients designed to prevent the production of melanin and break up existing melanin clusters (melanocytes). Paty suggests using a product that contains vitamin C—“skin’s saviour”—which prevents the overproduction of melanin and limits its transfer in your skin. A product that also has an exfoliating agent (like hydroxy acid) helps speed up skin’s renewal process so you’ll see results more quickly. If, like Kris Jenner,

you’re looking for instant gratification, a brightener that contains optical diffusers (either light-reflecting minerals or silicones) will give your face immediate radiance.

SPOT ON Hydroquinone is the Tom Brady of bleaching agents. “Hydroquinone blocks the enzyme tyrosinase, which is responsible for melanin production,” explains Dr. Harry Krakowsky, a general practitioner who specializes in dermatological and cosmetic procedures. This leading lightener—which can have severe side effects if used incorrectly—is available over the counter in both 2- and 4-percent formulations but should only be used as a spot treatment under the supervision of a dermatologist. For more advanced cases of hyperpigmentation, Krakowsky suggests either an acid peel (glycolic acid, azelaic acid or salicylic acid can all be effective) or laser treatments. “If you don’t wear an SPF 30 every day, it doesn’t matter what treatment you use,” he says. “Safe sun is harder than safe sex, but if you want to age gracefully, there’s no other option.” □

Sisley Paris
Phyto-Blanc
Intensive
Lightening
Serum (\$352).
For details, see
Shopping Guide.

L'Oréal Paris
Youth Code Dark
Spot Correcting
& Illuminating
Serum (\$30)