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## Biologique Recherche: Is This The World's Best Facial?

by ELLIE BALFE

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I come from a beauty background, having spent the guts of twenty years working as a professional makeup artist, before moving into beauty journalism. I had heard of the French brand Biologique Recherche, but knew nothing of it specifically, other than it has a cult-like following amongst top-tier celebrities (Madonna and The Olsen Twins use it), and fashion people are known for hunting it on their travels.

So, when I knew I was going to experience one of the signature facials, I did a little internet-hunting on the brand, and found such an interesting treasure trail, scattered with such fervour for its products, that I spent hours trawling to see what else I could find.

One of the (many) unusual things about the brand, is that it is notoriously hard to find – with only a handful of practitioners and

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## The Treatment

First up was the Biologique Recherche Skin Analysis, which is done via a machine with little probes applied to separate areas of the face – these can pick up the levels of hydration, the thickness of skin and density of pigment among other things. It is an extensive consultation and a valid one as they explain that the treatment is then designed for you, according to how they wish to rebalance your skin.

After then being swept into the beautiful, lush surroundings of The Greenhouse treatment rooms and ensconced on a soft, heated bed with a warm blanket on top of me, I was told that some elements of the treatment are 'different' to other facials. This treatment uses no hot water, as cold water is needed to protect the enzymes in the products. Then, there is the smell of the product...

It's not a terribly nice smell, in fact some parts of the treatment routine absolutely stink, but there is a good reason for it. The brand use a lot of yeast in the products, as well as other potent, active extracts. And being typically French and stubborn, they refuse to mess with the alchemy of their products to add fragrance or other niceties.

In my imagination I can hear a French man saying to me, *"do you want good skin, or do you want a cream that smells of flowers and does nothing?"*

At this stage in my life – 42 years old and knowing a lot about skin, I do, in fact just want a product that works!



The facial is a long routine of basically prepping your skin for their treatment products; after cleansing, the famous P50 is applied on cold, damp cotton – it stings slightly - but not in a bad way. Then a sequence of serums and masks are applied. One mask, the Masque

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One of the (many) unusual things about the brand, is that it is notoriously hard to find – with only a handful of practitioners and skin clinics across the globe and a 'no online retail' policy, (you can purchase from a clinic that houses it, but none of the big beauty retailers have it).



The most famous and most hyped product is the Lotion P50, which is a witch-hazel and vinegar mix toner that is stored in the brand labs in France for weeks before being released for sale and is checked daily by lab assistants, to check that its PH becomes perfectly balanced. This tonic has been called 'life changing' by *Sstyle.com*, *Vogue* said it's 'a miracle in a bottle', *Allure* named it as one of the Top Beauty Products of all time and the facial is chosen by all the Victoria's Secret models pre-show.

I quick scan of their [US Instagram account](#) is all you need to see the adoration for the iconic brand from press and skin experts, and to see celebrities such as Salma Hayek, Alexander Wang, Nicole Richie and Charlotte Gainsbourg wax lyrical about it. What I also discovered, and this was what mattered most to me, was that the brand won't work with influencers and have a 'no-paid media' policy too, so all those effusive reviews you see? They are authentic. And, God knows, in this day and age where celebs are paid to endorse everything and anything, that's rare!

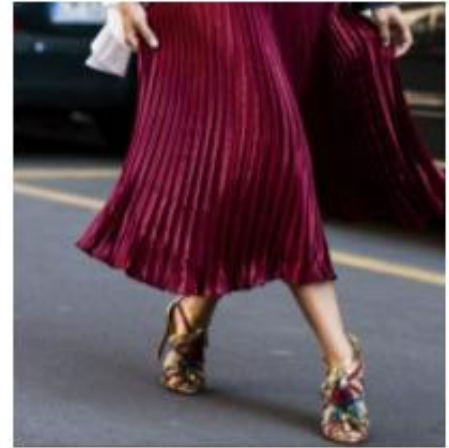
So, my interest was piqued and I showed up with great curiosity for my facial at [The Greenhouse Project](#) in Dun Laoghaire, who have recently become the showcase clinic and distributors for Biologique Recherche in Ireland.

Now, being a beauty writer, I test a lot of products and this means that from time to time my skin can break out and its levels of hydration and irritation can waver. Winter also plays havoc for all our skins - nipping between central heating and the biting cold does it no



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