

JANUARY 2016

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“Women of all ages are more well-informed on skincare treatment options than ever before thanks to social media and a vast amount of information available via the internet. They know they can

help prevent the signs of aging by utilizing quality products and are **investing more than ever in results-oriented treatments** and at-home products.”

—Howard Kaminsky, CEO of B.Kamins Laboratories



“My background is deeply rooted in traditional European herbalism, passed down to me from my great-grandmother, but **my own skin struggles led me to the study of biochemistry** and the

exploration of various skincare treatments and ingredient technologies.”

—Irena James, vice president of product development at YG Laboratories

Learn more about **Kaminsky** and **James** in this month's Bright Spots.

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Eco-friendly wooden chairs provide a chic place to sit at the Spa at @thepeninsulany. #thepeninsulanyc



The new @russakplus aesthetic center led by Julie Russak, M.D., creates healthy skin from the inside out.

Register for an informative webinar from **Dermalogica** and the **International Dermal Institute** this month at www.americanspa.com/webinars. **Annet King**, director of global education, provides tips on how to adapt your business to consumers' rapidly shifting behaviors.



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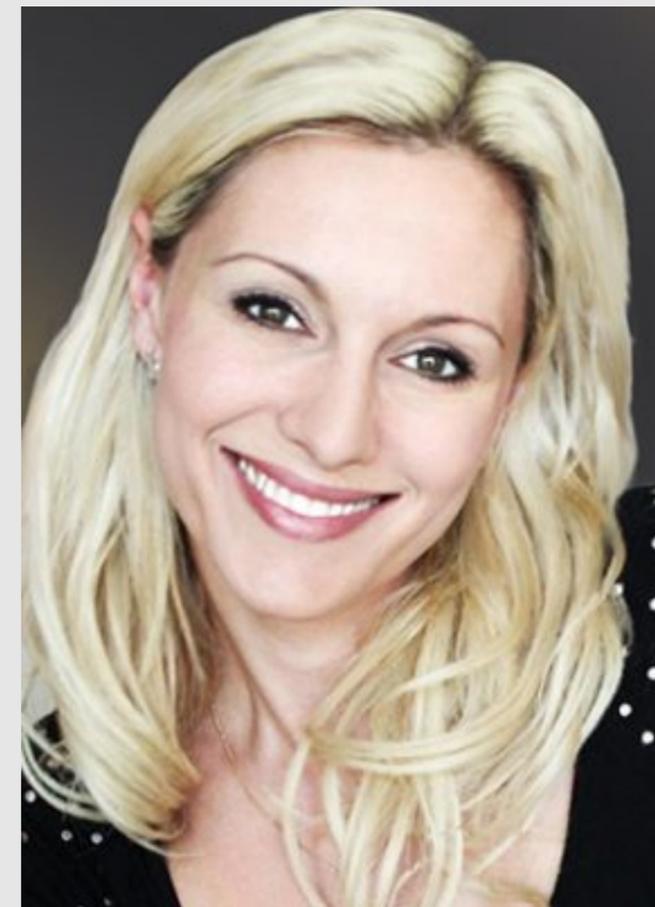
Q&A with Irena James, vice president of product development for YG Laboratories

[product%20development%20for%20YG%20Laboratories%2C%20discusses%20the%20challenges%20and%20rewards%20of%20the%20skincare%20industry.](#)

January 5, 2016

How many years have you been involved in the spa/hospitality industry?

I've been involved in many different aspects of the skincare industry over the last 23 years. My background was deeply rooted in traditional European herbalism, passed down to me from my great-grandmother, but it was my own skin struggles that led me to study biochemistry and the exploration of various skincare treatments and ingredient technologies. My fascination with biochemistry and skin physiology has been reflected in my educational and career choices. Over the past two decades, I have educated generations of students, clients, and industry peers on skincare ingredients, treatment protocols, and brand development. I have been a hands-on skincare therapist, Professor of Esthetics at Seneca College in Toronto, Canada, assistant instructor at the UCLA Extension Cosmetic Sciences Program, and director of business development in the EU. I am also a member of Beauty Industry West and the Society of Cosmetic Chemists and as vice president of product development for YG Laboratories, I oversee development of all formulations and applications of new, award-winning technology and successful skincare products and brands.



What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being in the skincare industry?

The most challenging aspect of skincare product development is keeping up with the latest ingredient introductions and ensuring that the most viable technologies are included in the formulations. So many new technologies are becoming available daily. Maintaining a balance between those ingredients that have already gained traction, in which clients are familiar with and trust, and incorporating exciting, new ingredients that are yet to spark consumer's interest can be challenging at times. Fast-paced innovation is also one of the most rewarding parts of being in this industry, as many new solutions are becoming available for previously "hard-to-treat" skin conditions and indications.

What qualities do you look for in your staff?

Being a team player is undoubtedly one of the most important qualities we look for when recruiting new staff members. Being a family owned business, it's important to us that a high level of mutual trust exists between all of us and that every employee knows that they are an integral part of our family. Understanding the company's dynamics and how multiple departments and individuals come together in order for the project to be completed promotes accountability, as individuals gain deeper realization of the importance of their own role in the company's success.

Where do you think the industry is heading?

Like all other industries, the skincare industry is affected by advances in technology, which results in new ingredients, devices, and modalities becoming available more rapidly than ever before. New testing methodologies are allowing us to better understand how ingredients interact with the skin and in turn we are not only able to produce products with more profound activity on the skin, but we will also be able to demonstrate the results of these products better in the future. New apps will also be allowing consumers to become more involved in their own skin analysis and product selection process.

What's your favorite skincare ingredient?

I very much value the synergistic effects of so many fascinating ingredients, including peptides, plant stem cells, and many algae extracts, but lately a particular group of ingredients, called "adaptogens", has been showing an incredible range of activity in helping our own skin adapt to environmental damage resulting from urbanization. These ingredients can include plant flavonoids produced in response to environmental stressors, as well as biotechnologically-produced sugars that modulate cellular responses to external stressors. Instead of responding to everything foreign with inflammation, cells are instead able to redirect dialogue to a more pleasant communication and exchange of information with the environment.

How would you sum up your personal philosophy?

The only constant thing in life is change, so I embrace it and believe that one should never grow complacent and never lose a sense of curiosity. There is always so much to learn, there are always more ways than one to look at any given situation, and there is certainly always a way to improve—be it a process, a product, a protocol, or a skill. Becoming complacent leads to a lack of satisfaction with our careers and our personal lives, which causes poor performance in both. Curiosity undoubtedly leads to new discoveries, new solutions, and ultimately, new ways of adapting to the next round of change that life inevitably throws our way.
