



Purple Reign

Shaking off its antiquated image, lavender is being hailed as beauty's new all-round saviour

WORDS: FIONA EMBLETON

Ah, lavender. At this time of year Provence is covered with swathes of the stuff, the air thick with its sweet and gently woody scent. For some, its

fragrant buds bring on feelings of relaxation; others consider it fusty, reminding them of granny-fied perfumes. But it's time to bury these associations. The horticultural equivalent of a Swiss army knife, lavender is being hailed as nature's new power player, combining freshly proven beauty and health benefits. "It used to be only about rose but there's been a surge in the number of brands now using lavender because it's such a brilliant multitasker," says Margo Marrone, founder of The Organic Pharmacy. "I swear by lavender for its ability to heal the skin and its antibacterial properties, making it ideal for the treatment and prevention of acne and skin inflammation in general."

Not to mention its positive effects on our psyche. Next time you're in search of a new scent, look for one sloshed in lavender if you want to appear more trustworthy. Researchers in Holland now say that the scent of the plant promotes relaxation, which can help create mutual trust between two people.

Indeed lavender is now considered so integral to our wellbeing it's being created in pill-form. The Medical University of Vienna recently ran a trial involving more than 500 people diagnosed with anxiety disorders. After 10 weeks, researchers found that those prescribed with lavender had lower anxiety than those using alternative methods due to the lack of any side-effects. Powerful stuff.

Allow the following page to decimate everything you've ever thought about the herb. These brands are ahead of the beauty pack and tapping into lavender's powers for mind and body.

