

Good Skin Day Sells Missourians On Indie Brands With Its Glow Know-How

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Courtney Dunlop returned to her native Springfield, Mo., in 2016 for a calmer life, but she didn't abandon all the habits she'd picked up over 16 years in New York, where her professional path alternated between positions at magazines (Jane, Marie Claire) and beauty companies (Pureology, Clinique). She stuck to effective skincare products from emerging brands — and she yearned to share them with her new neighbors.

“Although the area had changed a lot since I left, the second I got back I

realized there was a lot of opportunity mainly because you couldn't find a lot of cool beauty stuff here. There is all this great beauty stuff that no one here even knew existed," says Dunlop. "Good Skin Day came about because I couldn't find any of my favorite products here. I wanted to get those products here, and I thought other people would really like them, too."

Good Skin Day, an outpost housing primarily indie skincare brands, opened less than a year ago at a 100-square-foot space inside Lavaré Spa, which Dunlop had visited for a facial, only to convince owner Elle Feldman to allow her to set up shop. Now, Dunlop and Feldman have partnered to convert the entire 800-square-foot Lavaré Spa to Good Skin Day, a destination dedicated to glowy skin and beauty offerings that aren't ubiquitous in the Midwest.



"I opened my mouth during a facial, and it ended up being the perfect match. We got along so well. It was the most wonderful, fateful thing to have

happened. She knew Springfield better than I did and had a client base,” says Dunlop. “I could test the concept the concept without having to commit to a huge retail location and lease. I was able to start small and inexpensively, and see if this thing had legs. Right away, it was a total hit. I pretty much knew immediately I was onto something.”

Over the holidays, Dunlop shares Good Skin Day’s sales surged 50%. She’s had trouble keeping key items in stock as customers clamor for them. Good Skin Day’s skincare selection spans 15 brands, and bestselling brands include [Indie Lee](#), [One Love Organics](#) and [Aquareveal](#). A few of the bestselling products are Aquareveal’s Satin Bright Soft Water Peel For Face, Cane + Austin’s Retexture Pad, One Love Organics’ Skin Dew Coconut Water Cream and Indie Lee’s Rosehip Cleanser.

“I needed a brick-and-mortar because I need facetime with people, especially in Springfield. These brands require introduction, education and explanation,” says Dunlop. “It’s really important to me that people know they are getting them from a trusted source. If they are replenishing, that’s one thing, but, if they are going to try a new product, they need to see a person first unless they’re very savvy consumers. Most people in the Midwest don’t live and breathe beauty products, and they need someone to help them learn about them.”



When selecting brands for Good Skin Day, Dunlop often depends on her extensive knowledge of ingredients to guide her decisions. A product is a no-go if its ingredient deck isn't up to snuff. Once it passes that test, the product has to fit into an assortment that Dunlop cultivates to cover a plethora of skin types and concerns. She points out there remains gaps in the Good Skin Day lineup for acne and eye items. She doesn't bring in brands that are already widely available in the Springfield market and, of course, she skips products that don't work.

“Most stores are overwhelming for people. They grab stuff, and they're unsatisfied with it. They don't want to feel they're being sold expensive products that don't do anything. They're really tired of that,” says Dunlop. “My customers use bigger brands and even I use bigger brands, but they really feel the big corporate brands are just about marketing. They don't feel

those brands are interested in them. That's where indie brands have a leg up on the competition. Indie brands are automatically seen as more trustworthy because of the personal story behind them. If they deliver the results, people get hooked on them."

While at most skincare studios with services, retail can be a secondary occupation, Good Skin Day's coupling of Dunlop and Feldman ensures that retail and services are equally relevant. The services incorporate the products that are sold, so clients can experience them through treatments as well as take them home. "Retailing products and performing services are different skill sets, and it's unfair to assume that an aesthetician will know everything about retail," says Dunlop. "The pairing of a retail person and an aesthetician is what makes Good Skin Day so unique."



The look of Good Skin Day's location has been updated since its time as

Lavaré Spa. The walls were bathed in nude hues, and midcentury modern light fixtures were installed. “It’s a bright, happy environment,” says Dunlop. “It’s different from a traditional spa that’s very serious. I always feel it can be a little somber inside spas. I don’t think skincare needs to be that serious.”

Dunlop and Feldman view Good Skin Day as a beauty lab where they can experiment. They try various brands, products and treatments. They ponder the directions Good Skin Day could head in, whether it’s additional locations, its own skincare line or installations within other retail or [spa formats](#). Dunlop muses, “We’re feeling out the best ways to grow and expand.”