



GLOBAL
COSMETIC
INDUSTRY®

The Beauty Innovator's Resource

The 2026 Ingredient Agenda: 5 Forces Rewriting Beauty

Highlights from the in-cosmetics Global
Innovation Zone

April 2026

5 Forces Rewriting Beauty: Highlights from the in-cosmetics Global Innovation Zone

Formulation complexity and storytelling sophistication are evolving in tandem to redefine what performance means in modern beauty.

This year, in-cosmetics Global is setting a new benchmark with the unveiling of more than 230 groundbreaking ingredients in its Innovation Zone—an all-time record. Proudly supported by *Global Cosmetic Industry* and *Cosmetics & Toiletries* as official media sponsors, the Zone showcases pioneering technologies from companies across the globe, offering a glimpse into the future of beauty and personal care. With so many innovations on display, it can feel overwhelming to navigate. That's why we've partnered to deliver a concise analysis of emerging trends in ingredients and claims, along with actionable insights to inspire marketers and product developers in shaping their innovation strategies.

Our analysis of this year's new crop of ingredient innovations found that, as consumers demand more efficacy, transparency and emotional resonance from their routines, the supply chain is responding with everything from scalp-focused actives and longevity science to neurocosmetic experiences and invisible SPF. The result is clear: formulation complexity and storytelling sophistication are evolving in tandem to redefine what performance means in modern beauty.

1. Skinification of the Hair & Scalp

The next wave in hair care goes beyond strands to focus on the scalp as a true extension of facial skin. By incorporating high-performance actives—ceramides, peptides and microbiome-supporting compounds—formulas now address root health, scalp balance and fiber aging at their source.

For formulators, this means adapting skin care ingredients for rinse-off systems without compromising efficacy or hair feel.

For marketers, it's an opportunity to champion scalp-first positioning backed by dermatological proof, creating a compelling case for premium, performance-driven hair care across mass and prestige channels.



BRAND PERSPECTIVE | Scalp-First Solutions: Targeting Growth, Longevity, and Hair Health from the Roots Up

- In 2025, Olaplex expanded beyond bond repair with the launch of its No.0.5 Scalp Longevity Treatment, a serum designed to position the scalp as the foundation of long-term hair health. Framed around “scalp longevity,” the product targets sustained scalp condition and resilience as a pathway to stronger, healthier hair over time.
- SickScience Labs’ PowerCycle Scalp Treatment Serum positions the scalp as the control center for hair growth, using its NX35 technology, a plant-based biomimetic exosome technology designed to support communication to cells, to act at the follicular level. The formula is designed to support the anagen (growth) phase, stimulate new hair development and reinforce keratin within the scalp environment, ultimately improving strand thickness, density

and tensile strength. By targeting follicle activity and scalp condition rather than just surface hair repair, the product aligns with the shift toward growth-focused, scalp-first treatments aimed at long-term hair vitality.

INGREDIENT PERSPECTIVE | Scalp Science Meets Sustainability: High-Performance Actives for Stronger, Healthier Hair

- Cascara Pro from Lipoid Kosmetik AG leverages upcycled, organic coffee cherry cascara to deliver scalp and hair benefits with both sustainability and science at its core. Rich in caffeine, trigonelline, polyphenols, and flavonoids, this bioactive energizes and protects the scalp while supporting follicle longevity and resilience. Clinically substantiated, it enhances scalp health, promotes hair vitality, and helps maintain density by reinforcing the micro-environment of hair follicles. Responsibly sourced through a traceable Brazilian supply chain, Cascara

Pro combines high-performance scalp care with an on-trend, eco-conscious positioning, giving formulators a naturally potent, upcycled ingredient that aligns with both efficacy and sustainability goals.

- Adesilnat from Exsymol offers a comprehensive approach to scalp and hair health by combining bio-fermented adenosine with bioavailable silicium from rice hulls, creating a 100% natural-origin, multifunctional complex. Clinically tested on individuals with telogen effluvium, it stimulates the autophagy pathway to promote hair renewal, maintain follicles in the anagen phase, and improve density, thickness and growth longevity. Beyond boosting hair vitality, Adesilnat also balances oily scalp and sebum production, supports scalp detox, and delivers anti-aging benefits for both hair and skin. For formulators, its multifunctional performance, natural sourcing, and biodegradability enable eco-conscious, high-efficacy products, while end users enjoy visibly stronger, fuller, and healthier hair along with improved scalp comfort and overall vitality.
- AC Det'Ox Hair from Active Concepts delivers a unique, science-backed approach to scalp and hair health by targeting the root causes of environmental damage. This yeast-biofermented kale active chelates heavy metals and neutralizes pollution-induced oxidative stress, protecting keratin from degradation, preserving color and strengthening hair fibers. Its fermentation process enhances bioavailability of α -lipoic acid and antioxidants, improving scalp and hair affinity for superior protection and shine. Clinically supported for metal removal, fiber resilience, and color retention, AC Det'Ox Hair offers a high-performance, eco-conscious alternative to synthetic chelators, giving consumers visibly healthier, clarified, and more resilient hair while meeting clean beauty expectations.

2. Slow Aging, Deep Impact: Skin Care That Works at the Cellular Level

The next frontier in skin care goes from simply fighting wrinkles to preserving long-term vitality at the cellular level. By targeting mitochondrial health, DNA repair and regenerative pathways, formulations aim to maintain skin resilience and radiance over time.

For formulators, this means leveraging advanced delivery systems such as exosomes and liposomes to transport sensitive longevity actives deep into the skin.

For marketers, the story shifts from correction to preventative maintenance and bio-resetting, appealing to consumers across generations who want to proactively support skin health rather than just respond to its decline.



BRAND PERSPECTIVE | Next-Gen Longevity: From Cellular Health to Visible Age-Defying Results

- This year Lancôme has pushed deeper into longevity science with its Absolué Longevity MD collection, reframing skin care as a tool to influence biological aging rather than simply mask its effects. Built around mitochondrial health and powered by Mitopure (a topical form of urolithin-A), the range targets the visible signs of aging by supporting cellular energy, renewal and resilience over time. Structured across three life-stage interventions — Anticipate, Intercept and Reset — the collection aims to proactively delay, manage and even reverse visible biological aging markers, positioning skin care as a long-term health span strategy designed to maintain vitality, strength and radiance across the skin’s lifespan.

- RoC Skincare is also expanding its focus on longevity with the launch of the Empowered Aging initiative, emphasizing both the visible and biological aspects of aging. Central to the effort is evidence-backed skin care, including its Line Smoothing Eye Cream with time-released RoC Retinol, shown in clinical testing to reduce apparent eye age by up to seven years. Beyond products, the initiative incorporates a Longevity Council, a research fund at Brown University’s Center on the Biology of Aging, and ongoing mental health advocacy, positioning RoC as a leader in supporting long-term skin vitality, resilience, and overall well-being throughout the aging process.

INGREDIENT PERSPECTIVE | Rewriting the Rules of Anti-Aging

- Exovive Lift from dsm-firmenich is an anti-aging active that leverages plant-derived exosomes to communicate directly with skin cells, effectively “speaking” their native language to restore and reprogram cellular function. Its dual mode of action—combining bioactive secondary metabolites with miRNA cargo—targets multiple hallmarks of aging, including wrinkle formation and loss of elasticity, with plant miRNAs shown to regulate key proteins involved in skin rejuvenation. Visualization techniques like holotomography microscopy have reportedly confirmed that the vesicles penetrate cell membranes and migrate to the nucleus, providing unprecedented insight into mechanism of action. Clinically, Exovive Lift delivers the following results: after two months, skin elasticity increases by up to 33%, and visible wrinkles are reversed by the equivalent of eight years.
- Bakuchiol NAD⁺ BCR from Bio Component Research (Grant Industries) is a longevity active that combines bakuchiol and niacin in a bio-engineered ester to restore cellular energy and resilience in skin. By synchronizing these two actives, it drives NAD⁺ biosynthesis under UV and environmental stress, supporting DNA repair, antioxidant defense and extracellular matrix maintenance. Its controlled enzymatic release enhances skin retention and tolerability, avoiding niacin-induced flushing while delivering sustained benefits for hydration, firmness and barrier integrity. Unlike conventional NAD⁺ boosters, this technology overcomes permeability and sensitivity limitations, providing visible improvements in skin resilience and recovery from environmental and UV-induced damage. For formulators, it offers clean INCI positioning, strong mechanistic validation, and multi-pathway longevity claims, while consumers gain a scientifically grounded, daily-use solution that supports skin health, anti-aging and overall vitality.
- ANKros-CPD from Antarka delivers longevity benefits by repairing the DNA damage that drives photoaging. This recombinant Antarctic photolyase enzymatically reverses UV-induced cyclobutane pyrimidine dimers (CPDs), restoring skin to a pre-irradiation state and protecting against cumulative photoaging effects. Its intrinsic skin accessibility ensures rapid, widespread repair throughout the epidermis without the need for liposomes or delivery systems, providing enduring protection at the cellular level. Clinically, ANKros-CPD has been shown to improve skin elasticity (+28.7%) and firmness (+25.4%) while reducing biological markers of skin aging, effectively slowing visible signs of aging and extending the skin’s resilience over time. The result is a science-backed, longevity-focused active that supports both immediate and long-term skin health.

3. Beauty Meets Brain: Neurocosmetics & Sensorial Synergy

The emerging skin-mind trend is transforming beauty into a tool for emotional well-being, where textures, scents and neuro-active ingredients go beyond aesthetics to reduce stress-induced inflammation and enhance mood.

For formulators, this means leveraging tactile polymers and warmth-triggering emulsions that deliver a subtle haptic response, turning every application into a moment of relaxation.

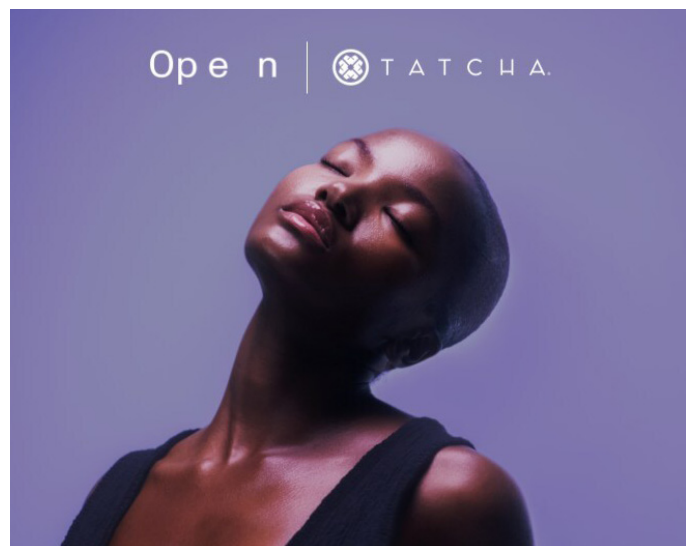
For marketers, it reframes skincare as emotional regulation, using concepts like calming, pleasure-in-use and mindful rituals to deepen consumer engagement and foster brand loyalty.

BRAND PERSPECTIVE | Beauty Meets Mind: Neurocosmetics and Skin-to-Mood Rituals

- In 2025, Amare Global introduced Skin to Mind, a neurocosmetic skin care line designed to connect skin health with emotional well-being. By combining proprietary HuG Cell technology (comprising adaptogenic rhodiola plant cells and L-theanine) and what it calls NeuroScnt Science, the collection targets visible signs of stress while actively supporting feelings of calm, clarity and optimism. Clinically validated products like OptiMIST Facial Mist, NeuDay Serum, and NeuNight Serum reportedly improve radiance, firmness and hydration but also deliver measurable mood benefits.
- Last year, Tatcha deepened the link between emotional well-being and beauty with its collaboration with Open, launching a 7-class guided program on the Open app in honor of World Mental Health Day. The initiative transformed daily skin care routines into mindful rituals, integrating breathwork and meditation to reduce stress, cultivate presence and



strengthen the mind-skin connection—a principle Tatcha calls hinou-dokon, or “skin-mind, same root.” By pairing sensorial skin care with practices that nurture mental calm, the program encourages participants to experience radiant skin as a reflection of inner harmony, while extending year-round access through community events and inclusive wellness opportunities.



INGREDIENT PERSPECTIVE | Mind-Skin Revolution: Neurocosmetic Actives for Stress, Mood & Well-Being

- Ganoderma Extract BG from Maruzen Pharmaceuticals Co., Ltd., is a stress-responsive, wellness-driven active designed for modern mind-skin formulations. Derived from the fruiting body of sustainably sourced Japanese reishi, it targets the effects of chronic mental stress by regulating cortisol activity via 11 β -HSD1/2, protecting tight junctions, and reinforcing the skin barrier. Clinically validated, it reduces TEWL, desquamation, roughness, redness and dark circles, improving overall skin quality and resilience. With standardized ganoderic acids A and F, this bioactive provides a science-backed mechanism to mitigate stress-induced skin deterioration while supporting emotional well-being. For formulators, it offers credible differentiation through measurable stress-specific efficacy, while for consumers it delivers healthier, more resilient skin even under ongoing stress, combining functional performance with sustainable, traceable sourcing.
- Bloomlight from Solabia Group offers a neuroscience-inspired approach to stress-impacted skin, targeting pigmentation at its root by modulating the neuro-cutaneous axis. Enriched with plant-derived exosomes from lemon thyme, it addresses both existing dark spots and the underlying signaling pathways that contribute to stress-related hyperpigmentation, providing a dual action of correction and prevention. Beyond brightening, Bloomlight supports skin longevity and resilience, helping maintain a more even-toned, luminous complexion. Eco-designed through green biotechnology, it combines high-performance functionality with sustainable sourcing, delivering a bio-inspired solution that bridges skin health, stress mitigation and visible radiance.
- Calneurin-Sense from Rahn AG is a chicory-derived, upcycled active that draws on the microbiota-skin-mind axis. It encourages the release of feel-good neurotransmitters such as dopamine and oxytocin, amplifying the pleasure of touch and promoting sensations of comfort, balance and inner well-being. Clinically validated, it improves skin evenness, luminosity and firmness in motion, creating visible lifting effects while enhancing tactile smoothness. By combining neuro-sensory stimulation with microbiome-friendly science, Calneurin-Sense delivers a multidimensional experience: skin looks healthier and radiant, feels supple and firm, and evokes emotional benefits that boost confidence and social connection, offering brands a scientifically substantiated path to the next generation of mood-enhancing, sustainable skin care.
- Akosky Dance from Akott Evolution is a preservative-free lipophilic active derived from Ganoderma lucidum that is easily incorporated into diverse formulations thanks to its high compatibility, colorless appearance and mild odor. Functionally, it helps regulate skin processes tied to circadian rhythms, promoting natural regeneration and mitigating the visible effects of functional stress. Clinically, it has been shown to improve overall skin appearance, reducing fatigue-related and aging signs, while offering a neuro-sensorial benefit that enhances the perception of skin vitality and well-being, making it a holistic solution for modern stress-impacted skin.

4. Accountable Sustainability & Climate-Adaptive Beauty

Sustainability in beauty is moving beyond buzzwords toward tangible eco-effectiveness, where traceable sourcing, upcycled materials and climate-adaptive formulations define the next generation of responsible products.

For formulators, this means choosing cold-processable actives and biodegradable, metal-free pigments that minimize environmental footprint without sacrificing performance.

For marketers, it's an opportunity to spotlight provenance, ecosystem impact, and transparent supply chains—leveraging farmer partnerships and verifiable practices to build both consumer confidence and regulatory credibility.

BRAND PERSPECTIVE | Conscious Care: High-Performance Formulas with a Green Edge

- Pureance recently launched an Ecocert COSMOS Certified collection for dry and dull hair. The silicone-free formulas leverage bio-identical proteins to repair hair from within rather than masking damage, while responsibly sourced vegan ingredients like betaine from sugar beets and argan oil provide hydration and shine reportedly without compromising environmental standards.
- Arbonne recently revamped its Hair Care Collection, which combines performance-driven botanical ingredients with environmentally conscious formulation practices. The vegan, cruelty-free line prioritizes plant-based actives like green coffee oil, pea peptide, snow mushroom, argan, avocado and squalane, and is designed to support scalp health and hair vitality without compromising ingredient integrity.



INGREDIENT PERSPECTIVE | High-Performance Actives with a Sustainable Edge

- Cashew Apple Pro from Lipoid Kosmetik AG is derived from the often-overlooked cashew apple fairly traded from Burkina Faso. This upcycled ingredient offers a sustainable alternative to conventional fruit extracts, the company argues. Functionally, it delivers superior hydration, improves skin firmness and elasticity, and visibly refines and





revitalizes skin appearance, providing a smooth, lifted and energized look. By transforming a by-product into a valuable cosmetic active, Cashew Apple Pro supports circular economy principles and ethical sourcing, giving brands the ability to combine proven efficacy with clear sustainability storytelling.

- Cherry Necta from The Upcycled Beauty Company is upcycled from rescued cherry stones—by-products of the jam and juice industry. This nutrient-rich oil delivers a balanced omega-6/omega-9 profile, natural squalene, γ -tocopherol and phytosterols, which work together to reinforce the skin barrier, enhance hydration, and protect against oxidative stress. Clinically validated to reduce TEWL and support a healthy microbiome, the ingredient reportedly promotes stronger, more resilient skin while remaining gentle and compatible with diverse formulations. The material is also fully traceable, cold-pressed and Upcycled Certified.
- CleanOil from Clean Food Group is produced via precision fermentation using upcycled food waste, transforming surplus ingredients into a lightweight,

silky emollient and creating a circular, bio-based solution that significantly reduces environmental impact. Independent life cycle assessments reportedly show CleanOil delivers up to 95% lower greenhouse gas emissions compared with conventional agricultural oils, reducing reliance on land- and resource-intensive crops. For brands, it enables compelling sustainability storytelling by linking biotechnology, circular economy principles, and high-quality skin care performance. For consumers, it provides fast-absorbing, nourishing hydration, proving that environmentally responsible ingredients can also deliver premium sensory experiences.

- Silkaress from Gattefosse SAS is designed for the climate-conscious consumer, delivering resilience and comfort in a rapidly changing environment. Inspired by the bioconversion of white mulberry leaves into silk, this bioactive enhances the skin's adaptive capacity, helping it respond dynamically to unpredictable weather, pollution and UV exposure. Beyond its cellular-level benefits, Silkaress aligns with sustainability goals: it leverages plant-based, renewable sources and a biomimetic approach to create a silk-like protective veil without relying on resource-intensive or synthetic materials. The result is softer, smoother, and fortified skin, providing both eco-conscious formulators and end-users with a climate-ready solution that marries high performance, sensory elegance, and environmental responsibility.

5. Hybrid Invisibility: SPF & Color

Sun protection and complexion products are converging around a new, “invisible” standard, where high-transparency mineral filters and weightless, skin-fusing textures integrate effortlessly into daily routines.

For formulators, this shift raises the bar, demanding advanced dispersion technologies that eliminate white cast—especially on melanin-rich skin—while still delivering robust SPF performance.

For marketers, it signals a clear repositioning: away from the legacy of chalky sun care and toward the language of “tinted protection” and “invisible correction,” aligning with the soft-focus, breathable aesthetic driving the #cloudskin movement.



BRAND PERSPECTIVE | No Cast, No Compromise: The Rise of Invisible, Skin-Fusing Coverage

- Designed for universal use across all skin tones and types, Goodspread provides reef-safe, non-greasy protection without compromising performance or comfort.



- The Wonderskin Hyper Bond Serum Foundation is designated to deliver a weightless, breathable finish that sets to a second-skin texture within minutes, allowing for buildable coverage that lasts up to 24 hours. Its Hyper-Bond technology reportedly fuses light-reflecting pearls, treated pigments and resins to create a foundation that moves naturally with the skin, eliminating the heavy, mask-like feel of conventional formulas. Clinically tested to stay put through sweat, water, and daily wear, it offers a fresh, radiant look while doubling as a skin care treatment, blending niacinamide, copper tri-peptides and carnosine for improved texture, firmness, and overall skin vitality.

INGREDIENT PERSPECTIVE | Invisible Performance: The New Sensory Science of Skin-Finish Materials

- Resifa Sunsphere NP-30-HA1* from AGC Si-Tech has introduced a new sensorial paradigm for sun care, where high SPF performance is delivered through an almost imperceptible, weightless touch.



Its surface-treated silica particles create a soft-focus, light-diffusing network that not only enhances UV filter efficiency but also imparts a smooth, dry-glide application with a distinctly non-greasy, bare-skin finish. On contact, the texture feels airy and silky, absorbing quickly without residue while subtly blurring imperfections. This elegant feel is paired with meaningful performance: the hydrophobic surface treatment enhances water resistance, helping the protective film remain intact under wear, while the optimized dispersion of UV filters ensures more uniform coverage and consistent protection. The result is a sunscreen experience that combines boosted efficacy, transparency and a refined, invisible sensory profile, aligning high-performance sun care with modern expectations for comfort and minimalism.

- RonaFlair White Sapphire NXT from Susonity represents a precision-engineered approach to functional fillers, leveraging synthetic sapphire technology to deliver a rare combination of high transparency, refined sensoriality and immediate visual payoff. Its ultra-smooth, uniform particle structure translates into a distinctly silky-to-velvety skin feel that enhances glide and overall texture

quality across a wide range of formulations, from powders to emulsions and sticks. At the same time, its exceptional dispersibility in both oil and water phases ensures formulation ease and consistent performance, enabling even distribution without agglomeration. On skin, it imparts a subtle, luminous effect—creating a soft-focus radiance or dewy glow without visible shimmer or heaviness—while helping to reduce perceived oiliness. This balance of tactile elegance, optical enhancement, and formulation versatility makes it a useful tool for brands seeking to bridge the gap between sensorial luxury and visible efficacy.

- Silmer Q7-G10 from Siltech Corporation is engineered to bring a new level of sophistication to long-wear formulations, combining durability with an unexpectedly refined sensory profile. Its flexible silicone resin network forms a clear, continuous film that adheres evenly to the skin, delivering exceptional transfer and rub-off resistance without the stiffness or tightness often associated with high-performance wear technologies. This film remains lightweight and comfortable, allowing for natural movement while maintaining a smooth, polished finish with enhanced shine. At the same

time, its strong pigment compatibility enables superior dispersion, ensuring color is distributed uniformly for richer payoff and consistent coverage across formats. The result is a seamless fusion of long-lasting performance, even color laydown, and a silky, non-dragging application that elevates both wear and feel across color cosmetics.

- Topcithin Care P IP from Cargill Beauty delivers a notably refined sensorial profile for a lecithin-based ingredient, overcoming the typical drag or soaping often associated with natural emulsifiers. Instead, it imparts a smooth, cushiony glide with a soft, conditioned afterfeel that melts seamlessly into the skin, leaving no residue or whitening during rub-in. Its high skin affinity enhances this experience, creating a biomimetic, almost second-skin finish that supports barrier comfort while maintaining a light, elegant touch. From a formulation standpoint, it reportedly excels in dispersal—efficiently wetting and distributing pigments and mineral UV filters to create uniform, stable systems with improved payoff and consistency. This optimized dispersion not only enhances visual homogeneity but also contributes to a more even sensory application, where texture, coverage, and skin feel remain balanced and cohesive across the formula.
- Alpicare DBS from Lamberti SpA stands out as a texture-first SPF enabler, transforming traditionally heavy, opaque sun care systems into sensorially elegant, visually seamless formulations. By efficiently

solubilizing crystalline organic filters while finely dispersing mineral actives like TiO₂ and ZnO, it creates a more uniform film on skin—translating into enhanced transparency and a noticeable reduction in whitening or chalkiness, even in high-SPF or mineral-rich formulas. The result is a finish that feels unexpectedly light and silky, with a medium-spreading emolliency that glides easily and absorbs without residue. This balance of optical clarity and refined touch not only elevates daily wearability but also supports the shift toward inclusive, reef-conscious sun care that doesn't compromise on aesthetics or performance.

- Uni-Cellulose A01 from Uni-Powder claims to redefine what a sustainable powder can feel like by delivering a sensorial profile that rivals—and in many cases surpasses—synthetic microplastics. Its pebble-like morphology creates a smooth, velvet-soft touch that glides across the skin without drag or dryness, avoiding the fibrous or dusty perception sometimes associated with natural materials. On application, it diffuses light to impart an immediate soft-focus blur, minimizing the appearance of pores and imperfections, while its advanced sebum absorption allows it to transition into an ultra-fine, transparent powder film. It disappears into a weightless, matte veil that maintains clarity and avoids buildup or caking, per the company. The result is a refined, breathable finish that balances optical blurring with true transparency.

What's Next: From Longevity to Mindful, Sustainable Science

The innovations showcased at in-cosmetics Global 2026 reveal a profound industry-wide transition from superficial aesthetic fixes to a deeply biological and empathetic approach to beauty.

By harnessing longevity science to address the cellular hallmarks of aging and neuro-regenerative pathways to restore sensory youth and emotional well-being, formulators are now treating the skin as an integrated biological system.

This scientific sophistication is matched by a commitment to holistic sustainability, where upcycled feedstocks and high-impact super-molecules reduce the industry's environmental footprint without compromising efficacy.

Furthermore, the evolution of mineral sun care and targeted scalp health demonstrates a renewed focus on inclusivity and specialized care, ensuring that high-performance solutions are both accessible and sensorially elegant for all consumers.

Ultimately, these five forces collectively rewrite the beauty narrative, prioritizing long-term resilience and a science-backed mind-care philosophy.

