



Laboratory director Lucien Aubert has worked with Biotherm for more than 35 years.



Biotherm Skin Vivo Reversible Anti-Aging Lotion, \$90, Eye Gel, \$90, Day Cream, \$140, and Serum, \$155.



Meet the brand

SKIN VIVO

A new line of skincare combines natural ingredients with DNA technology, Michelle Bateman discovers.

Here's the dilemma: you've always favoured a Mother-Nature-knows-best approach to skincare but now that you're showing the telltale signs of ageing — uneven texture, sagging, wrinkles — you're wondering whether you-know-who can deal with it.

Cosmetics companies have spent a lot of time and money tackling this question, and the science/nature partnership is one of the big beauty stories of the past few years. For Biotherm, however, this isn't especially new: the French company was founded in the 1950s on the use of thermal plankton found in European spring water, and has consistently refined its star

ingredient with scientific breakthroughs — from the ability to reproduce it as “pure thermal plankton” (PTP) in a lab, to a better understanding of how it actually works via the latest in DNA technology.

It's the latter that led to Skin Vivo, the company's newest anti-ageing range. Together with researchers at Stanford University, Biotherm's long-time laboratory director Lucien Aubert discovered that PTP has a direct effect on the gene that produces an enzyme called manganese superoxide dismutase (MnSOD), which helps to combat the formation of free-radicals, those nasties that are inextricably linked to ageing. Dr Aubert calls MnSOD a

“key point” in the ageing process because, “if we controlled free-radical formation ... you stop the chain reaction into the cell, the tissue, the skin, the body”. He explains that PTP helps to regulate the genes that produce MnSOD, and a steady production of the enzyme means a more continuous defence against free-radical damage.

He also notes that PTP, in conjunction with a plant-based ingredient called reverserol, helps to protect and repair DNA. “We need to protect DNA, especially with skin, because it's a barrier [and] we have a lot of aggression and aggravation induced by UV radiation, by pollution and other factors. This can change and make breaks in DNA. ... Not only do we protect — because it's impossible to protect 100 per cent — but at the same time, we

improve the natural repair process.”

The outcome of this molecular activity, Biotherm says, is that skin can look up to 10 years younger in just four weeks. Claims such as this are generally met with raised eyebrows, but Dr Aubert stands by it — with a few qualifiers. Best results, for example, tend to be seen in more mature skin, “because if you want change, it's not on 20-year-old people that you can find it!” And while he says the effects are cumulative — meaning that further years may be shaved off the longer you use it — results will eventually reach a plateau.

Having worked with PTP for more than 35 years, Dr Aubert says he wasn't surprised by these latest gene-based discoveries. “The plankton was working the same way 20 centuries ago, but now we understand [how]”, he explains. “So I am not surprised but very happy and for biologists, it's a very exciting area because with such technology, we really open a new window on the secret of life.”

