

Sometimes it's all in the packaging

By Edwina Ings-Chambers

Published: October 21 2006 03:00 | Last updated: October 21 2006 03:00

It occurred to me as I perused the racks of beauty products at Colette in Paris recently that some of them looked so much more appealing than others, more attractive, more desirable. And not simply because of their basic packaging, but rather the power of the grouping of basic packaging.

Take Kiehl's, for example. Its packaging, with the clear, somewhat grandiose plastic bottles topped off with smart white caps, and the pared-down labels on the sides in unusual colours and typeface are renowned on beauty circuits.

Undoubtedly they look swish, albeit in an "I take care of myself but not in a ridiculously decadent fashion" way, for there's something stylish but stark about them, like a contemporary art gallery for body shampoo.

Yet group them together, in multiple batches of the same product, and the effect radically changes.

The singular purity becomes more group happiness; there's a harmony to it all, a gentle hum of perfect alignment that makes you giddy for more.

The same thing goes for Bumble and Bumble. The clear bottles with black tops look undeniably dignified but put a few of them together and suddenly they appear to be so swellegant, like a group of socialites dressed up and ready to go out on the town.

And so it is that I have vowed that when I purchase Kiehl's and Bumble in future, I shall multi-buy each product, in a dedicated bid to Colette-ify my very own bathroom shelves.

Some products work in quite the other way. One of them is Philip Kingsley's new 1000ml pump dispenser of shampoo, conditioner, and his Elasticizer - a once-a-week treatment to keep hair in tip-top condition and make it easy to comb. It is big, bold, almost defiant in its grand stature despite the inevitability of its end fate - for although these dispensers will hold enough to last you months, they are sadly not refillable.

Personally, I'll just keep decanting new, smaller bottles into the big ones as, frankly, they look so darned handsome,

I wouldn't want to be without once I get my mitts on them. But I don't consider that to be an entirely environmentally friendly solution to the problem.

Regardless, I lust after the bottles like I lust after a new pair of Chloé shoes. I love the look of these bottles, the scaled-up drama of it all. They are so statuesque in their white plastic with large printed names and descriptions. Yet they're also business-like, as though they were saying that I can take care of my own hair like a pro.

I'm also over the moon about the fact that I won't have to trek to the chemist to buy new bottles of shampoo for quite some time. Now, if only someone could do the same thing for toothpaste.

MORE COM

Everyone gr
is better' thi
Hail the nat
New ways t
problem
Houston, we
problem
Keep the gli
It's time for i
curtain call
Back to the
It's fine to fa
Scared of y
Calling all s
passengers