

WWD FRIDAY

Beauty

The HBA Report

Facialist Finds Inspiration at Mt. Fuji

NEW YORK — Japanese facialist Shizuka Bernstein's eponymous skin care line may capture the Zen of Eastern philosophy, but Shizuka New York Skincare System is designed to deliver results, too.

Bernstein, who developed the line with her husband, cosmetic dermatologist Robert M. Bernstein, sought to meld her Eastern holistic knowledge with Western dermatology. The result is a four-item anti-aging skin care collection based on ingredients native to Japan, such as sake, mushroom extract, soy, green tea and pearl protein. The lineup includes Foaming Cleanser for Normal to Dry Skin and Clay Cleanser for Oily Skin, for \$60 each, and Skin Freshener and Moisturizer, for \$80 each. She is currently mulling over line extensions, such as an eye cream and vitamin C serum, for mid-2006.

Bernstein acknowledged that the beauty industry is bursting at the seams with new offerings, but said her insistence on manufacturing these products in Japan and using Mt. Fuji water as the principal ingredient sets her collection apart.

The products launched in Bernstein's Midtown spa, Shizuka New York, located at 7 West 51th Street, in July. The plan is to eventually roll them out to apothecaries, boutiques and high-end department stores, as well.

Industry sources expect the collection could reap more than \$300,000 in first-year retail sales.

Trained as a medical aesthetician, Bernstein brushed up against the pharmaceutical industry while working at

her husband's practice and later while renting space at a fellow Manhattan dermatologist's office.

"I began thinking that natural botanicals could deliver results similar to those achieved with pharmaceuticals, and be less irritating to the skin," recalled Bernstein.

"Natural products work more slowly," she added, "But are much safer."

Bernstein, who began getting regular facials at age 20, opened a modest-sized spa in Midtown six years ago. Her business grew and soon necessitated a larger space. In June, Shizuka New York moved to its current location, a 3,000-square-foot spa with six treatment rooms and a staff of seven aestheticians. Bernstein recruited Japanese architect Fusayo Yokota to design the interior, which, like the products, blends Eastern hospitality with Western practicality. Each treatment is followed by a cup of green tea and two miniature Japanese biscuits.

She also seeks to distinguish her spa from dermatologists' offices by making treatments more pleasant. For instance, after microdermabrasion, she places a collagen mask on

skin to soothe redness.

Bernstein also has studied the intricacies of the Japanese tea ceremony, and said it has influenced how she treats her clients, right down to the movements for massage. She said, "I wanted to bring a lot of Japanese influence to the spa."



PHOTO BY THOMAS IANACCONE

Items from the Shizuka New York System.

— M.P.