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Beauty

Guerlain cultivates enthusiasm for its Orchidée Impériale collection and reintroduces its l'Heure Bleue at an event in Los Angeles, writes **Elyse Glickman**

Photographed by the author

Guerlain refreshed







All the elements were in place for a blissful evening at the Guerlain Spa at the Regent Santa Monica, bathed in the luxury and indulgence that have made Guerlain legendary for nearly 200 years.

The evening began with an immersion into the opulent retail space, which featured its full complement of skin care, cosmetics, and fragrance bars that rival some I visited in Paris. There was a special spotlight on the newest iteration of a perennial classic, L'Heure Bleue (introduced in 1912), followed by a tour of the spa's highlights, from signature









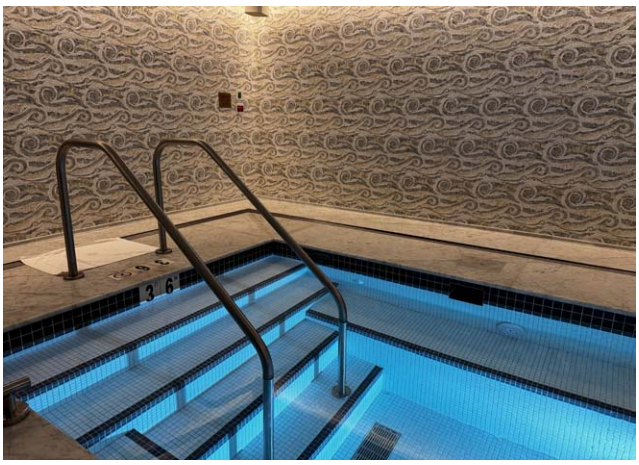




experiences like Crystal Vibes and Skin Perfection to spa parties for groups of six or more, and a customizable after-dark spa experience.

Given that the Regent at Santa Monica Beach has become one of the LA area's most prestigious addresses, and the chosen location for an outpost of the renowned spa, the tour included special exclusive bonuses such as personal post-service fragrance wardrobe recommendations, make-up refreshes with Guerlain's covetable make-up line, and access to the co-ed Champagne Lounge. This

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space provided the perfect backdrop to introduce Guerlain's Orchidée Impériale collection, incorporating research on orchid-derived ingredients, sustainability initiatives, and clinical testing on human skin.

Aaron Shea, the skin care expertise and education manager for Guerlain in the US, stressed that beyond the fact that Guerlain products are made in France under strict EU standards, they earn their cachet in part from being tested and perfected with human study participants. He used a slideshow and actual products from the collection to connect Guerlain's nearly 200-year heritage and the now-20-year-old Orchidée Impériale skin care line. Assistants from the spa walked around the room and put drops of each cream or serum onto each person's skin to show the product's effectiveness alone and when layered.



'While we pride ourselves on crafting beauty from nature, we are obsessed with results,' Shea continued. 'While every cream, serum, or gel needs to feel good and smell good, we need to see the benefits. We spent a lot of time researching over 30,000 species of orchids to narrow it down to the few that have the most potent molecules for anti-ageing regeneration, and to basically slow down time. The art of wellness and our collaboration with Regent is super-important, so one can not only experience these formulas on your skin, but learn how to make them a part of your routine and your ritual as well.'

Shea explained the chain of research involved in the creation of the products, involving Guerlain's in-house ethnobotanist, phytochemists, and an orchidarium where much of the research is undertaken on the healing properties of specific orchids. The latest incarnations in the line were clinically tested under dermatological supervision, and he projected slides that showed how firmness, density, plumpness, and facial contours improve by 30 per cent in just 30 days. He then had attendees compare hands treated with the serum alone, and later, with other treatments in the line layered on. He also detailed the eco-friendly packaging, with glamorous refillable containers and refills made from upcycled cane sugar byproduct.

'With Orchidée Impériale in its sixth incarnation, getting to this stage was a major undertaking, from Nobel Prize-winning technologies to the new longevity formula partially drawn from a particular little orchid … a queen of the orchid world … *Vanda cærulea*, discovered in India in the 1800s. She's considered extra-terrestrial, meaning that she grows and lives up in the trees, and she has 40 m long roots that sway and can grab energy from the air, the water, or the bark. Her biomass and rich phytochemical profiles make it the foundational active ingredient because of its anti-ageing properties.'

The special outdoor sound bath at dusk (a.k.a. *l'heure bleue*) concluded an evening dedicated to Guerlain's philosophy of reconciling full-blown luxury, responsibly procured self-care, and sensory experiences. Imaginatively crafted bites during Shea's talk, served with champagne, meanwhile, encouraged greater exploration of the hotel, including its modern Mediterranean restaurant Orla, which has its own spin on blending a mix of seasonings and herbs, resulting in an experiential menu. •