

BEAUTY JOURNAL

Each month, a Top Santé role model reveals a lifetime of influence and inspiration



Jo Wood, 54, former model and founder of Jo Wood Organics, shares her fondest memories with us



Jo's mum was her early muse

When I was growing up, my mum worked as an Avon lady. She was one of the coolest mums in the Essex neighbourhood where we lived, and I remember being really envious of the patent case she carried with her when she did door-to-door sales. I knew it was filled to the brim with all manner of creams and colourful lipsticks that I couldn't wait to grow up and use, too.

Twiggy rose to superstardom when I was in my early teens, and the iconic picture of her short crop and fluttering eyelashes changed the course of my life. I not only discovered the power of mascara, which made my barely there lashes visible for the first time but, like her, I had my sights set on a modelling career. I joined an agency when I was 16 and had the time of my life travelling the world for six years.

When I was younger, I lived for the day and didn't invest much time in my beauty routine. But with age and experience, I've started to think more about my skin. I swear by the rule, 'Protect by day, nourish by night,' and use sunblock in the morning, switching to a face oil before bed. I'm currently using one from the US: Intelligent Nutrients Certified Organic Anti-Aging Serum. It's a gorgeous, organic brand created by the founder of Aveda.

My eyes are my best asset, and I'm never without my MAC Eye Kohl to define them. My Holy Grail is finding an organic equivalent to its intense colour and velvety texture. Make-up artist Barbara Daly, who I worked with a lot when I was younger,

Bergamot is a special scent



The iconic Twiggy

MAC is a must-have

Frangipani is a favoured fragrance

Jo copies Brigitte's famous look



taught me to always use concealer under my eyes. It doesn't just hide dark circles, it makes the whole area brighter.

I converted to an organic lifestyle in the 90s after I was misdiagnosed with Crohn's disease. I was pumped full of steroids, but just got worse, so I went to see a herbalist, who said I should eat only organic food. It was a revelation: I went from someone whose favourite line was, 'Pass me the ciggies', to the person offering everyone beetroot juice! I started growing my own organic vegetables and soon decided I wanted all my skincare to be organic, too.

With my beauty range, I set out to change the perception of organic skincare. When it launched five years ago, only a few people used these kinds of products and the packaging looked very 'homespun'. I'm so passionate about the nourishing oils, I wanted to celebrate them in glamorous bottles you'd be proud to display. The art deco swirls on my bottles reflects my love of 1970s BiBA, while the fragrances have all been given Swahili and Xhosa names in tribute to my mum's South African roots.

I've always been a lover of citrus scents, as they're so uplifting. When I was in my early 20s, it was fashionable for young girls to wear men's cologne, so I'd spritz myself in Dior's Eau Sauvage, with its zingy notes of lemon, grapefruit and bergamot. These days, if I catch a whiff of it, I'm instantly transported to the nightclubs of my youth. The fragrances in my own range are inspired by the places I've been. My first, Anka, reminds me of the south of France, with the scent of citrus blowing in the wind. The newest one, Tullah, is more floral, after a trip to Fiji prompted my love affair with the sweet smell of frangipani.

My ultimate beauty icon is Brigitte Bardot. In her heyday, she epitomised effortless chic with her mussed-up hair and sexy, smoky eyes. I'm not ashamed to say I've copied her look for all of my grown-up life. □