

Breakthrough skincare: 7 ingredients to watch in 2009

By Alexandra Drosu

Every year new ingredients hit the market with promises of revolutionizing skin-care products and tapping the elusive Fountain of Youth. At times, they deliver, and substances such as retinol or peptides exceed expectations and change the landscape of skin care. Others fizzle with little or no impact. We've polled more than 25 experts and asked them which ingredients are worth watching (and buying) in 2009.



Açaí berry

What it is: Similar in appearance to a grape and native to Central and South America, the açaí berry is often praised as an antioxidant-fueled juice. Increasingly, skin-care companies are examining topical applications. "The açaí berry holds immense promise as a new anti-aging ingredient," cosmetic surgeon Dr. Antonio Armani says.

Why it looks promising: This tiny berry is rich in antioxidants, phytonutrients, phytosterols and essential fatty acids that protect against free radicals. It is hydrating, restorative and potentially helps prevent the signs of aging, says Rebecca Olpin, treatment supervisor at [Drift Spa in Las Vegas](#).

Status: The berry's blue color has proven challenging topically, but several skin-care companies are working on formulations that don't stain skin. In the meantime, try drinking an açaí juice, such as Sambazon (\$3.59; www.sambazon.com).