

## Tests Concerning the Use of Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena (ABTM) in the preparation of Natural Cosmetic Products.

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*Modena's Appennino has been trying, over the last several years, to reach a better position in the economy, tourism, and environment. Therefore, operators began take interest in the idea of growing officinal herbs in a ravine area that would not be suitable to other uses, because of its slope, high likelihood of landslides, lack of organic components in the soil, and insufficient water retention. Especially in the area of Polinago, in the northeastern part of the Frignano range, entirely within the valley of the Rossenna stream, the particularly favorable and exposed locations allow hundreds of species of aromatic and officinal herbs to be grown according to the principles of natural, organic, and biodynamic farming. Traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena (ABTM) is unique in the world among dressings. It is a first-processed farming product, exclusively obtained from specific varieties of grapes typical of the Modena province, whose must is cooked on a low flame in an open vessel until its volume drops by 30-60%. The resulting cooked must is then cooled and decanted, placed in wooden caskets and, for not less than twelve years, and is poured in progressively smaller caskets, where it slowly acetifies, concentrates, ages, and refines itself. All batches of "Traditional," before being marketed, are subject to the assessment of an expert commission of five tasters who decide whether the product can be sold. It is packaged only in the ampoule-bottle designed by Giugiaro Design, the same bottle for all producers, bearing a numbered seal of approval. The Appennino of Modena has a very rich flora and an excellent climate for the farming and gathering of several officinal plants. The plants chosen for the preparation of cosmetics, after their desiccation, extraction, and other processing specific for the single type of plant used, were mixed and prepared with various ingredients, including Traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena. The four products are presented under the name "Linea Oro Balsamico" (Balsamic Gold line), and each product has a name connected to the tradition of balsamic vinegar: "Armonia" (Harmony), "Aromatica" (Aromatic), and "Antichi segreti" (Ancient Secrets). "Tràgn" is the name, in the traditional dialect of Modena, of an earthen pot, globular in shape, with two or four handles on its shoulder. To create the serum (Armonia) we chose berries such as black and red currant, pomegranate juice, and grape extract, mixed with a very high concentration of sodium hyaluronate. The face cream (Antichi segreti) originates from a rich mixture of grape extract, rich in polyphenols, grape seed oil, and macadamia, with nourishing and elasticizing properties. The shampoo-shower soap (Tràgn) is made with lavender, aloe gel, wheat proteins, and vegetal tensioactives. The aromatic lotion (Aromatica) originates from the cosmetic vinegars of the 1600s and the use of scented aromatic waters produced during the distillation of essential oils. For the perfume, we chose a mix of precious organic essential oils with fruity and forest-scented notes, fit for the vinegar's aroma and able to blend with one another without either prevailing over the other. In the preparation of cosmetics, we used refined ABTM, i.e. aged at least 12 years, enough to positively influence the realization of cosmetic products.*

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