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# ThursdayStyles

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## Sun, Sand And Suds

When the Rockaways are the destination, the beer starts flowing on the bus ride to the beach.



By SHEILA MARIKAR

On the morning of Memorial Day, as the sun broke through the wet blanket of a weekend, more than a dozen 20- and 30-somethings in striped tank tops and straw hats boarded a yellow school bus idling in a bleak parking lot in Williamsburg.

Carrying bags filled with beer and sunscreen, these young and budget-conscious denizens of Brooklyn were heading to the Rockaways, the fish-bone-like sliver of Queens that was among the places hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy. Few had visited since last summer, but they were determined not to let a beach day go to waste.

So the first chance they could, they booked seats on the Rockabus, which started offering nonstop rides to the Rockaways last June. Dubbed the "hipster jitney," its return is yet another sign that

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Above, a wristband for Rockabus. Top, Kirby Duncan and Patrick Mocerro, foreground left and right. Top right, Kathryn Harb, left, and Joel Moss. Near right, Rockaway Taco. Far right, Matt Hopkins. Below left, Elizabeth Gilchrist and Jide Alao of Veggie Island. Below middle, Nicolette Mason, left, and Ali Talan. Below right, Bill Gentle and his son Oscar.



# Suddenly, Toner Makes a Splash

SKIN DEEP



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Can't-live-without or worthy of a shrug, it is having a moment.

By ALIX STRAUSS

As temperatures climb, our thoughts turn to toner: that post-cleansing, pre-moisturizing, cooling concoction treasured in adolescence (Sea Breeze, Bonne Bell Ten O Six) for its ability to remove facial grime onto a cotton ball. Some insist that even in adulthood, their beauty routine would be incomplete without it. Others think it's an unnecessary step, scoffing that toner, while often refreshing, doesn't offer any real benefits to the complexion.

"Before cleansers became so effective, people needed to do what cleansers could not, which is why people gravitated towards toners," said Dr. Joshua Zeichner, the director of the cosmetic and clinical research department of dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical. "But formulation and technology has helped the cleanser evolve to the point that they're so good, you don't need the toner."

Even so, and perhaps surprisingly given how many other new concoctions are on the market, this oft-shrugged-over skin-care product is having a bit of a moment, at least from a marketing perspective.

La Prairie Cellular Oil Control Tonic (\$135 for 8.4 ounces), the company's fifth toner, purports to treat multiple signs of skin aging and imperfections while balancing excess oil. Introduced in May, it includes exotic ingredients like carica-papaya extract, which the company says is as

effective as 4-percent glycolic acid after 21 days of use. (According to the company, sales of its toners were up by 11 percent last year from the previous year.)

Laura Mercier Perfecting Water Moisture Mist, released in 2011, has been a steady performer for the company: toner in a slightly different guise. "It's my interpretation of a toner," said Ms. Mercier, admitting that, if stranded on a desert island, she would choose a moisturizer over the mist. "I think a toner serves a purpose, but it is an extra step, and the effects of the toner won't last all day," she said. "It's not a priority, but a needed element."

On shelves now are also PurActive Treating Mist with castor oil and aloe, by G. M. Collin (\$35 for 7 ounces), and Brightening Toning Essence (\$56 for 3.4 ounces) from Amala, a natural and organic skin-care company. And Kate Somerville said that because of customer requests, it is introducing KateCeuticals Toner (\$58 for 5 ounces) at Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman, with another toner planned for next year.

They may not be the BB cream of tomorrow, but "toners have a bad rap," said Dr. Paul Frank, a cosmetic dermatologist and the founder of the Fifth Avenue Dermatology Surgery and Laser Center. "They used to be associated with pimply skin and were alcohol-based or made to control the production of oil while rebalancing the skin's pH levels," he said. "Like anything else, they've dramatically changed. They're now used as a second stage of cleansing, and treat a variety of issues. They can exfoliate, reduce redness, fight aging and

Marketers have their hands full these days with all of the variations of toner. Below, products from, clockwise from top, Sulwhasoo; Lush; La Prairie; Elemis; Origins; Kiehl's; Origins; and G. M. Collin.



brighten the skin."

Besides preparing the skin to receive the benefits of products applied after, he said, they can soften and smooth the skin, and serve as a delivery system for antioxidants, vitamin B derivatives, retinoid and even glycolic acid.

"People have never understood the role of the toner, or the right one to use," said Chris Salgado, the president of Kiehl's, which has nine different toners, one of the largest selections from a skin-care company. Last year it sold 2 million bottles of the stuff, an increase of more than 9 percent from 2011, he said. The one based on calendula, an herbal extract, is its No. 1 seller of the lot, and in the top five of the more than 100 Kiehl's products sold, he added.

Karen Grant, a vice president and a global beauty analyst of the NPD Marketing Group, said toner sales in the prestige beauty category grew 13 percent in the first quarter of 2013 compared with the same time in 2012. She attributed it partly to the popularity of electronic facial scrubbers like the Clarisonic, which have a trickle-down effect, if you will, to other cleansing products. "People are realizing if you don't start with a cleaner base, everything else is not going to work very well," she said.

Dr. Zeichner is still bearish. "Toners, whether alcohol-based or not, can strip your skin," he said. "Oil has a purpose. It lubricates and hydrates the skin. People think oil means they're dirty, which is not the case. Ironically, the more you overstrip your skin with unnecessary products, the more overproduction of oil you can create."

Advocates argue that toners can be nourishing. Elemis offers a supposedly soothing apricot for sensitive skin, and a lavender intended for acne and repair (\$36 for 7 ounces). Origins Make a Difference Treatment Lotion (\$22 for 5 ounces) contains romantic-sounding ingredients like rose of Jericho and sea haricots. Its Mega-Mushroom Skin Relief Soothing Treatment Lotion (\$30 for 6.7 ounces), created by Dr. Andrew Weil, sounds good enough to eat.

And some, rather than being referred to as toner, are called the kinder, gentler-sounding "water." Lush refers to its three products — Eau Roma, Breath of Fresh Air and Tea Tree — as toner waters. Over the last year its toner retail sales have grown by 32 percent, the company said, and its moisturizer retail sales by 25 percent.

Then again, the lines between the two categories are blurring.

"For people targeting the pores and acne area, we are seeing a shift to more watery lotions, which are about soothing and treating, coming from Asia, especially Japan," said Shaunda Swackhamer, a vice president for global product and innovation for the Estée Lauder Company. "A growing number of brands that were typically distributed only in Asian countries are now being introduced" to the West.

Migrating here is Sulwhasoo, a brand popular with Korean women. It has three tonerlike products: TimeTreasure Perfecting Water, Snowise Brightening Water, and Essential Balancing Water, which is paraben-free and, wait, gel-textured.

"It's hard to define them now," Dr. Frank said. "Saying toner is like saying cream."