

Crème of the Crop

Kiehl's may be global now, but it hasn't strayed from the simple, efficacious products that made it famous



Above: Kiehl's New York City flagship. Below: a selection of Kiehl's products



JACKIE KENNEDY REGULARLY requested Kiehl's products be delivered to her apartment at the Carlyle hotel. And the brand is still a favorite of stars like Brad Pitt and Oprah Winfrey. But all that's a far cry from Kiehl's humble beginnings 157 years ago. Known as the Kiehl Pharmacy, the original shop—it still occupies a corner of New York City's 13th Street and Third Avenue—sold tonics and medicinal salves to the local community. When founder John Kiehl's apprentice, Irving Morse, took over in 1921, he kept Kiehl's name and added a line of made-on-site Kiehl's branded products. But it was Irving's son Aaron who put Kiehl's on the map. Under his watch, simply packaged, no-fuss products like Original Musk Oil (developed by the Morse family's Russian-prince cousin) and Blue Astringent Herbal Lotion (Andy Warhol used to buy it in 32-oz. bottles) became the first of many cult hits. In the '70s, to amuse men shopping with their wives, Aaron created a museum for his vintage motorcycles in a corner of the store. Today motorcycles are a fixture in all of the company's stores, and Kiehl's is the rare skin-care brand that attracts nearly as many male customers as female—not to mention all those horses and dogs. Yes, Kiehl's has lines for them too. —B.K.

