



News

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Cosmoprof Vegas 2025: K-beauty's Rebirth, Mood-driven Beauty Grows

A look at exhibitors and trends at beauty's largest U.S. trade show.



Cosmoprof North America returned to Las Vegas last week reflecting a **beauty** landscape in transition.

Held at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center, the industry's largest U.S. trade show unfolded against a backdrop of shifting global trade dynamics, tariff concerns, cautious capital and evolving consumer behavior. And yet the mood was optimistic, while remaining strategic and anchored in performance and purpose.

A standout this year: **K-beauty** commanded the show floor.

“Fifty-one percent more than last year,” confirmed Liza Rapay, vice president and head of Cosmoprof North America, highlighting the category's growing presence.

Among the most visible was Olive Young, the South Korean **beauty** and **wellness** retailer. Despite looming tariffs, following U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement of a 25 percent tax on imports from South Korea — and Japan — effective Aug. 1, the company remains undeterred from its commitment to the U.S. market with plans to open its first American store by midyear 2026.

“We want to increase the brand awareness of Olive Young, and we want to work with other U.S. retailers,” said Eun-Young Shin, Olive Young's executive vice president of private brands, through a translator.

The company showcased three of its private label brands, currently available to U.S. consumers on Olive Young's website, app and Amazon: Bioheal Boh, offering science-backed skin care; Bringgreen, vegan skin care for sensitive and acne-prone skin, and Colorgram, playful, Gen Z color cosmetics.



The Olive Young booth at Cosmoprof Vegas 2025.

“It was the rebirth of K-beauty,” said Wendy Liebmann, founder of consulting firm WSL Strategic Retail, reflecting on the show this year. “K-beauty was all the rage several years ago, and then it got very quiet.... And this year their dominance there and their level of innovation was really powerful.”

It didn’t go unnoticed by retailers, either.

“Overall, we were excited to be at Cosmoprof to check out the latest in K-beauty, **wellness** and technology, which are some of our key priorities right now,” said Muffy Clince, senior director of emerging brands and initiatives at Ulta Beauty, in a statement to WWD following the show. “The growth in K-beauty brands and innovation was exciting and refreshing to see, especially as we continue to expand on our existing K-beauty offerings in skin care and cosmetics. We were also keeping an eye out for any new ingredient stories, innovative packaging and application methods that lean into some of the experiential and sensorial trends we are seeing across all categories.”

Liebmann highlighted a shift toward simplicity in K-beauty innovation, with a focus on skin care, noting that brands are streamlining complex routines into concise and multifunctional products. One approach organized skin care by age groups, offering personalized four-product sets that deliver essentials in a single box.

“The other piece,” she went on, referencing trends, “was the blending of beauty and wellness, which we keep talking about, right? But we saw it in everything.”

A recurring theme throughout the show floor was the rise of wellness-driven beauty. What felt new is how it’s taken a more sensorial, emotional tone that emphasizes how products make consumers feel, from calming rituals to mood-enhancing scents.

“It’s all about clean, allergen-free fragrance,” said Christina Peng, an exhibitor and founder of Havyn, speaking about her brand.

A seasoned beauty executive, Peng most recently served as chief marketing officer at Coola before stepping down to launch her own company specializing in allergen-free perfumes. After her child experienced allergic reactions to fragrances — even products marketed as “clean” often contain natural allergens from essential oils and botanical extracts — Peng recognized a gap for allergen-free options.



Havyn

“The market hasn’t looked at this consumer, because they just automatically assume they’re going to take themselves out of the market and go fragrance-free,” Peng, based in San Diego, said.

Her formulas meet EU personal care standards, exclude 80 allergens and are crafted to elevate mood and evoke feeling, with names like “Hope” and “Grace.” Prices start at \$28 for travel-size bottles. She also offers \$24 hand creams made with marine-derived vegan collagen, ectoin and snow mushroom extract and \$42 candles using coconut and soy wax, also free of the 80 allergens.

Lynette Lovelace, founder of Lifetherapy, has been ahead of the curve in linking scent to emotional well-being. Since 2009, her brand has championed fragrance as a tool for emotional reset, positioning it as a daily ritual for self-connection with six scents (titled “Loved,” “Inspired,” “Energized,” “Grounded,” “Transformed,” “Empowered”) for body products and home goods, including a \$36 body wash-bubbling bath duo, \$48 salt soak, \$48 body scrub, \$65 diffusers and \$45 handpoured candles made of soy wax.

“I created a mantra for every fragrance to get the user thinking about how fragrance makes us feel,” Lovelace said. The brand was born out of her personal battle with severe endometriosis, enduring multiple surgeries that inspired her to create solutions rooted in healing. “The tag line of the company is, ‘Choose your mood.’ When you smell something, you feel something. It’s a mindful reminder of that.”



Lifetherapy

Despite the brand's long-standing presence, this was her first year exhibiting at Cosmoprof. Based in Chicago, her line has been carried in spas, hotels and boutiques, but now she's aiming for broader exposure and a national retail footprint. HSN stopped by her booth, she said.

"Whenever you're an indie brand you can get overlooked," she continued, adding that she envisions her brand on the shelves of retailers like Nordstrom or Bluemercury.

Lifetherapy, like Havyn, produces its products in the U.S. Lifetherapy's manufacturing is based in the Midwest, while Havyn's fragrance is made in New Jersey and finished in **Los Angeles** — avoiding the complexities of international tariffs and import regulations.

“We’ve always been agile with where we can manufacture,” said Benjamin Cohen, chief marketing officer of Knoll Printing & Packaging, in response to shifting tariff landscapes.

A family-owned business, he runs Knoll alongside his brother and their father, who founded the company in 1984 and has grown it into a leading provider of customized, prestige packaging products and services. Clients include Chanel, MAC Cosmetics, La Mer, Tom Ford and Augustinus Bader.

Headquartered in Syosset, N.Y., where design and engineering takes place, they own and operate factories in China, the Philippines and Europe — the latter in partnership with Albertini Packaging Group.

“We’ve been in business long enough that we’ve been through many evolutions of manufacturing,” Cohen said. “What’s happened now is the brands are asking us to manufacture outside of China. But we’ve been built for that shift and fully prepared for that change. So, it’s really left to the brands to decide and pull the levers that we have in the company, and the pressure is on them to think about the changes.”



Cosmoprof Vegas 2025 EDOARDO ANASTASIO

Knoll chose to exhibit at Cosmoprof for the first time this year as part of a broader effort to expand beyond its core cosmetics clientele, he said. With the beauty landscape becoming increasingly competitive, the company saw an opportunity to diversify and connect with a wider range of potential partners.

“The reality is that the beauty cosmetics industry is shifting,” Cohen said. “Our quality, our expertise, our engineering, our customer service are applicable to anyone that needs our services. So, we’ve actively been servicing other areas of the industry, like hair care and devices and things like that.”

Sustainability was the top question he was asked at Cosmoprof, he said: “It’s been the most important element.”

The company displayed one of its key innovations, which took home a Cosmopack award in packaging: the Ecoform Molded Pulp Compact, a plastic-free, biodegradable and recyclable compact made from a proprietary blend of bamboo, sugarcane and wood fibers.

“The material can be formed and shaped to anything,” Cohen explained.

Designed as a mono-material solution, the compact can serve as both a refill or an outer unit, eliminating the need for magnets by using a tab closure and built-in platform to hold the makeup pan. Brands can customize it with color dyeing, embossing and pad printing.



A look at Knoll Printing & Packaging's Ecoform Molded Pulp Compact.

On the retail side, some buyers looked to catch up to the immediate and fast-moving trends playing out across social media to better align product assortments with shifting consumer behaviors, echoed analysts.

TikTok Shop's growing influence, underscored by its presence on the show floor, sparked conversations around purchasing behavior and speed to market.

"TikTok Shop has broken through because there was a need for discovery and inspiration-based shopping, and that's what it's delivering," said Ajay Salpekar, head of beauty at TikTok Shop. "Brands, creators and consumers see it. So, the core value proposition of TikTok Shop, particularly for beauty, discovery e-commerce is not only shining through, but there's a real demand for it."

TikTok's audience of 170 million monthly unique users offers brands opportunities for customer acquisition and category growth, he continued, noting that the platform's content-driven approach democratizes product education, based on creator recommendations, and that personalized discovery expands entire categories.

"Every brand has experienced the offline halo [effect] from TikTok Shop, and so that just encourages them to continue engaging with creators and content," he added.



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