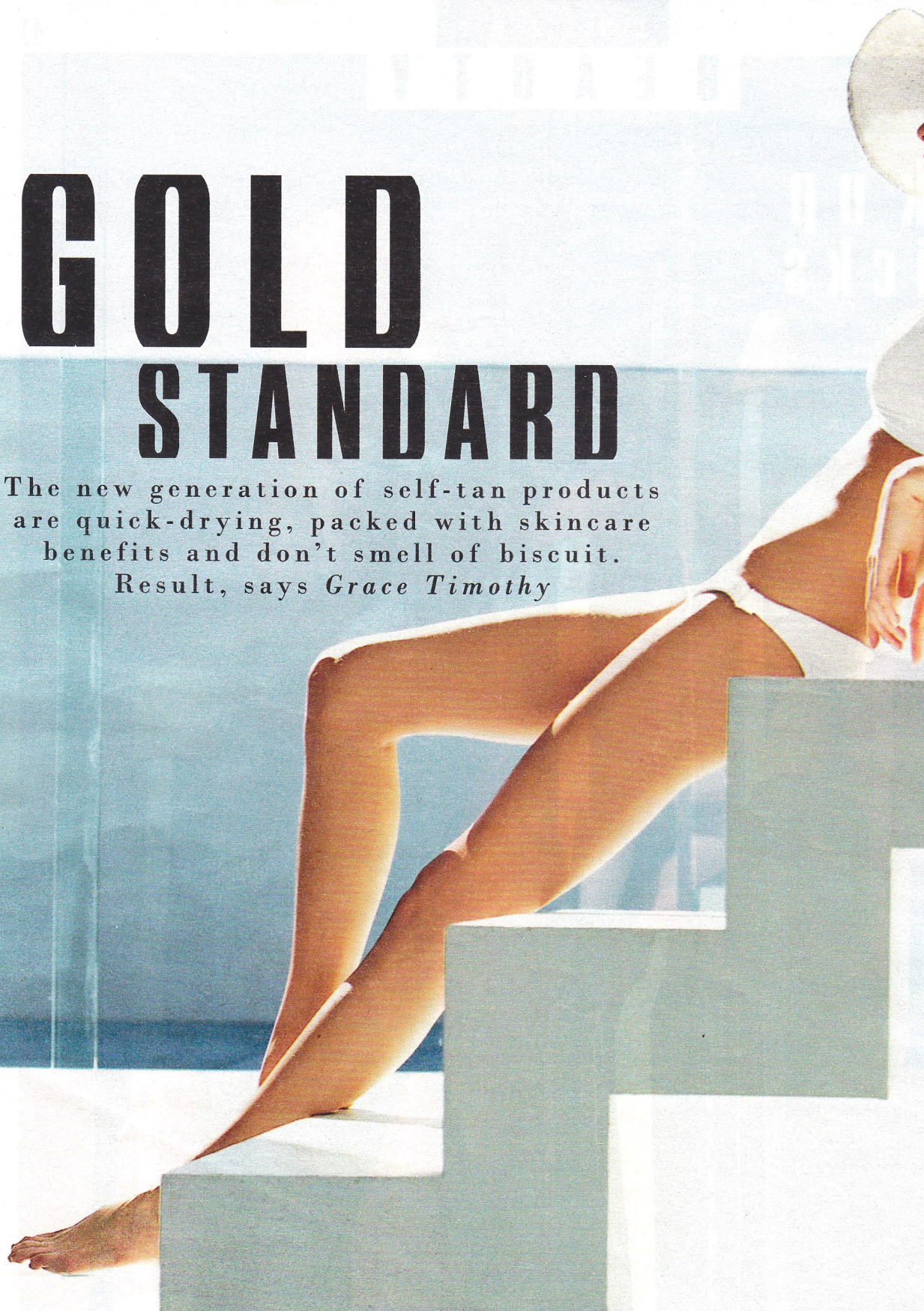


GOLD STANDARD

The new generation of self-tan products are quick-drying, packed with skincare benefits and don't smell of biscuit.

Result, says *Grace Timothy*



Picture the scene: it's 2002. I'm a fresher — that is, fresh out of a two-year relationship and using Nottingham University campus as my own personal Tinder account. The campus was conveniently teeming with boys, all perma-tanned from gap yahs in Thailand. I had spent most of mine in the Sussex drizzle, so I turned to what I imagined would be

key to hooking a fellow fresher, but which, in reality, was like arsenic to boys: fake tan.

I thought that Rimmel Sun Shimmer, an instant tinted tan, would make me look like I, too, had spent a year tanning myself silly on the beach while building orphanages. The reality, though, was very different: I permanently smelt of a mixture of stale digestives, sweat and burnt hair. I looked like a carpenter had tried to varnish me like a sideboard. And if it rained, I became a shabby-chic distressed sideboard. My palms were a burnt-coral shade from the mixture of Sun Shimmer and bleach, which my housemate swore by for removing tan stains. And my sheets were permanently stained with perfect clay-coloured imprints of my limbs. It turned out fake tan was not sexy at all.

So, what about today? Thanks to evolving formulas and the enviable Insta-glow of celebs such as Millie Mackintosh and Olivia Culpo

terms of products and results is greater than ever," says Anna-Marie Solowij, the co-founder of This Is BeautyMart. "You only have to look at the product differentiation to know it's growing as a category, with oils, gels, sprays, mousses and powders. The constant innovation proves its strength and longevity."

The bronzing expert James Read, who has his own studio in Harvey Nichols, says: "These days, self-tanning doesn't have to mean long-winded regimes or that biscuit smell we all hate. Now you can get photo-ready skin that looks flawless from the moment a product is applied, with many skincare benefits."

"It's no longer about 'glam-tanning' or concealing paler skin tones," the London-based tanning expert James Harknett says of the reboot. "But rather taking a more natural approach, with an urban, downtown LA feel — think Gigi Hadid."

Teresa Fisher, beauty manager at the market-research company NPD Group, agrees. "Celebrities such as Kim Kardashian, who regularly appear on the red carpet looking tanned, are partly responsible for the rise in the market," she says. "'Self-tan' and 'fake tan' have also become popular hashtags on social-media sites, helping to raise the profile of products."

Here is our pick of this season's best new tanning buys.

THE DOES-IT-ALL TAN

"What has held innovation back is the fact that DHA is a tricky active ingredient, so creating a skincare product with it has been challenging," says Jacqueline Burchell, global product development director for PZ Cussons Beauty. "Now, however, we can take textures and properties to the next level, combining self-tan, skincare and cosmetics in one product." A case in point is **St Tropez Gradual Tan Tinted**

anti-ageing skincare, as v
oil to moisturise while it t
Read Gradual Tan H2O Tan
a primer, facial spritz,
hydrator, tanner and m
fixer, laced with refreshir
water. Spritz onto your fa
applying make-up and it
subtle hint of colour.

THE FAST TAN

No more waiting for 12 ho
you can shower, or walkir
an arthritic crab so you
smudge — **Xen-Tan Mist**
Spray Tan (from £20) takes
minutes to develop fully. I
use, **Sienna X HIT Express**
— that's High Intensit
obviously — takes just a
develop, and is also av
professional spray tan (froi

BISCUIT-FREE LOTION

This season's tan comes
whiff of fig. Try **Clarins S**
Tan Milky Lotion (£20).

THE FACE TAN

For me, facial tan nor
means blocked pores, no
able to cleanse and ill-
foundation, but **Clinique**
Face Gelee Complexion
(£23) has solved all these
oil-free and washes off, a
sheer formula means y
can control the shade by
layering. It's built to
withstand 12 hours of t
sweatiest, steamiest
summer days.

MY STAR BUY

He-Shi Express Liquid
Tan (£21) looks a bit like
flat Coke, but once you
realise you need to pour
tiny amount of this tann
water onto a good-qu
mitt and buff it on, rather