

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Susan Ciminelli's passion for holistic healing and all-natural skin care offer women the power of beauty—and now **Wynn** guests can experience her magic touch.

BY KATHLEEN HANOVER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID HAMSLEY

It's no secret that the skin-care industry is booming. Every day new products and treatments are introduced as the "next big thing," yet many promise results they will never deliver. Confused consumers are too often bombarded with endless choices—from peels to masks to lasers and beyond—and aren't sure which path to travel in the face of so many options. Skin-care guru and spa innovator Susan Ciminelli feels your pain. For more than 30 years she has remained steadfast in her tried-and-true holistic-beauty philosophy: Pair natural, nourishing skin care with the right food and activities and the rewards will be endless.

Ciminelli's passion for skin started at the tender age of four while growing up in Buffalo, New York. As the second oldest of six children, the stress of living in a large family took its toll on her in the form of rashes and indigestion problems. She instinctively began doing shiatsu and yoga to help stay calm—even though she didn't know what they were at the time. As she got older, she recognized the correlation between her complexion issues and the processed "convenience" food her family ate. Ciminelli remembers, "I drove my mother crazy in the kitchen because I would want to make everything from scratch. I just felt better that way."

Then two life-changing events occurred that reinforced what she suspected about the relationship between natural living and beautiful skin. First, at age 15, Ciminelli went to Italy and studied with a surgeon who also performed acupuncture and other healing treatments. While she was learning from him, she ate fresh foods, became skilled at making simple, nutritious meals and felt the power of internal health. When she returned to the U.S., Ciminelli's face was radiant.

The next realization came to her in Las Vegas. At age 18, Susan was visiting a family friend, who took her hiking in Red Rock Canyon. When they arrived at a small pond that was black with algae, Susan waded in it for a while; when she came out her skin was "something I will never forget; it was like porcelain, tight and smooth," she remembers. "If I didn't see it for myself, I never would have believed it." That experience would later inspire Ciminelli to create Algae Fine Powder, a toning and detoxifying bath soak, and the Seaweed Body Wrap treatment at her signature spa.

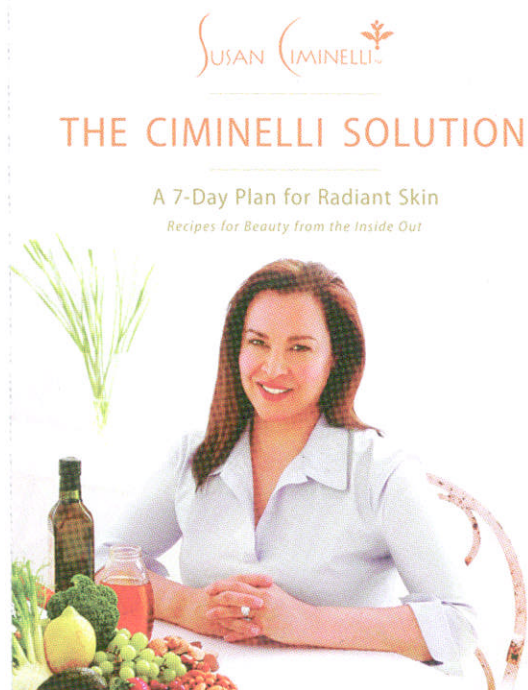
By the time she was 22, Ciminelli was doing facials professionally, and one year later she moved to New York City to work for an exclusive French skin-care

company. "I had to go off on my own after that," she says. "I hated all the perfumed creams that were big at the time. So in 1983 I started my business in my tiny apartment with only \$300." Ciminelli's clientele quickly grew, drawing celebrities such as Iman and Andie MacDowell, who didn't mind that facials were done on the floor or that Susan mixed the products in her kitchen. "I worked on my knees until I could afford a table, but I did make house calls to the Jagger home for Jerry Hall," she says with a laugh.

Ciminelli found herself swimming against the tide of accepted skin-care practices of the time, which was all about stringent cleansing with harsh soaps, resulting in tight, matte skin. Instead, Ciminelli's clients boasted skin that was dewy and fresh, a look that has come to be known as the "Susan Ciminelli Glow." It's all due to her innate ability to read skin and suggest lifestyle and diet changes. Too much sugar in your diet? You may have breakouts and a reddish cast to your face. She, of course, is a walking, talking promotion for the philosophy. Besides looking at least a decade younger than her 50 years, she is constantly linking internal care to external results. "I've been traveling a lot lately and not eating my usual salads," Ciminelli notes. "I noticed my eyelids starting to droop. I got back on track with the salads and the right vitamins, and they went back practically overnight!"

Eventually, Ciminelli opened her own namesake spa on Madison Avenue in Manhattan, and by 1996 she had moved it to the prestigious penthouse of Bergdorf Goodman. The spa focuses on total body wellness and treatments—such as her signature aromatherapy facial—all done in a luxurious setting. These days, however, the biggest thrill for her is the addition of two of her signature facials to the Spa at Wynn Las Vegas. "I can't wait to show everyone what can be done here," she notes. "It's a great opportunity for clients from all over the world to discover our techniques." Ciminelli is just as hands-on now as she was back in her tiny New York apartment, and she still gives facials five days a week. "I would like to have a real presence at Wynn, so I will be in Las Vegas as much as I can," she says.

The spas are Ciminelli's showcase for spreading her skin-care knowledge—"I only hire people with a lot of experience, and then I teach them my philosophy"—and where she introduces clients to her luxurious skin-care products. Her all-natural formulas pamper and fortify the skin, prevent premature aging and boost overall radiance. Unique products such as her Algae Deep Cleanse, Seawater mist and



TOP LEFT: Ciminelli on the cover of her book, *The Ciminelli Solution: A 7-Day Plan for Radiant Skin*. CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: Mineral-based makeup powders are the latest introduction from Susan Ciminelli, shown here in shades of Porcelain, Mahogany, Mimosa, Bone and Apricot Toast.