

# VOGUE

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## HELLO, PERFECT SKIN

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AND THE ART OF WORLD DOMINATION





EXCLUSIVE

# doctor *nature*

Playing skin guinea pigs in a Swiss lab and harnessing the power of nature, **DIVYA** and **NEHA MEHTA** tell us about their custom-solutions beauty brand.

By SHAHNAZ SIGANPORIA



Neha (left) and Divya Mehta

**T** Neha Mehta raided every chemist and cosmetic store she came across and her medicine cabinet was filled to the brim with a range of therapeutic lotions and serums, along with terabytes of home remedies. Struggling with depigmentation, she recalls, “I never left the house without a hat, sunglasses and an umbrella. When a product worked, it had adverse side effects, or it *didn't* work. I couldn't really find something that would protect my skin the way it ought to, especially given the harsh summer sun in India.”

Her fraternal twin, Divya, decided they needed to do something about this. They tapped into the resources of their family business—Alchem International, which works in the field of phytoceuticals—and went on to create Epique, a skincare brand developed specifically for mature skin.

The 35-year-olds have lived “identical lives” in spite of their distinct personalities; their similar interests led them to Purdue University, USA, where they both studied engineering. Working together was a natural progression. “We have a great understanding of our strengths and weaknesses. This makes our work-life balance a smooth ride. Of course, we have our off days, but that’s when we know to steer clear of each other!” says Neha, the older of the two (by eight minutes) and the perpetual delegator

with a keen interest in marketing and sales. Divya is more involved in research and development, supply chains and business development. With delineated roles and a common goal, the twins abandoned the one-for-all approach of beauty brands and focused on creating products suitable for 30-somethings and above.

Their initial research revealed that if plant molecular extracts could be made more potent through specialised phyto-extraction technology, there could be a possibility of creating formulations that were effective and come with no side effects.

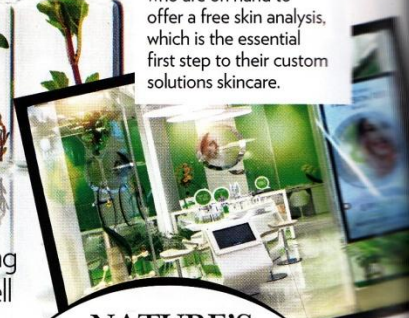
The next three years were spent testing and developing this hypothesis in their labs in Switzerland—Neha doubled up as their test subject and harshest critic. Divya explains, “One of the main reasons we tested on ourselves was because we care. We’re not selling ‘hope in a bottle’, we are selling phyto-concentrates that are specially customised for the needs of your skin.”

In 2014, they opened their flagship store in Delhi’s Ambience mall. Since then, the brand has grown, finding its way into Good Earth stores and online (*Myepique.com*).

Divya sums up the twins’ sojourn (and brand philosophy) perfectly: “The Epique woman doesn’t want to be the 25-year-old girl because she knows that the 25-year-old girl can’t wait to grow up to be her!” ■

## ▼ SCIENCE LAB

Clinical, efficient, relaxing—the Epique store instantly wins your trust with its laboratory-like interior and white-coat-clad skin experts, who are on hand to offer a free skin analysis, which is the essential first step to their custom solutions skincare.



## NATURE'S WARRIORS

All you need to know about phyto-concentrates

**What they are:** Phyto-concentrates are the purest and most concentrated form of plant extracts, obtained using advanced extraction technology, making them more powerful than herbal extracts.

**How they work:** Phyto-concentrates work at an intracellular level to reverse adverse effects on mature skin by enhancing its ability to restore, repair and regenerate. They do not contain chemical ingredients like parabens and phthalates, which, when you decode the fine print, reads: no side effects!

**Star kids:** Divya recommends Epique Advanced UV Protection Formula—a clinically tested lightweight dual-action formula with powerful anti-ageing benefits as well as SPF50 broad-spectrum UV protection. Or go with Neha's pick, the Intensive Luminescence Cream, which diminishes age spots and illuminates skin in about two weeks.



## ◀ COOL TOOL

Epique's Intensive Revitalising Eye Formula has a built-in vibrating applicator that massages the delicate under-eye area, gently urging the deep conditioning, restorative phyto-concentrate formula into the skin. “It visibly diminishes dark circles, puffiness, fine lines and wrinkles around the delicate under-eye area,” insists Divya.

Epique Intensive Revitalising Eye Formula, ₹3,200