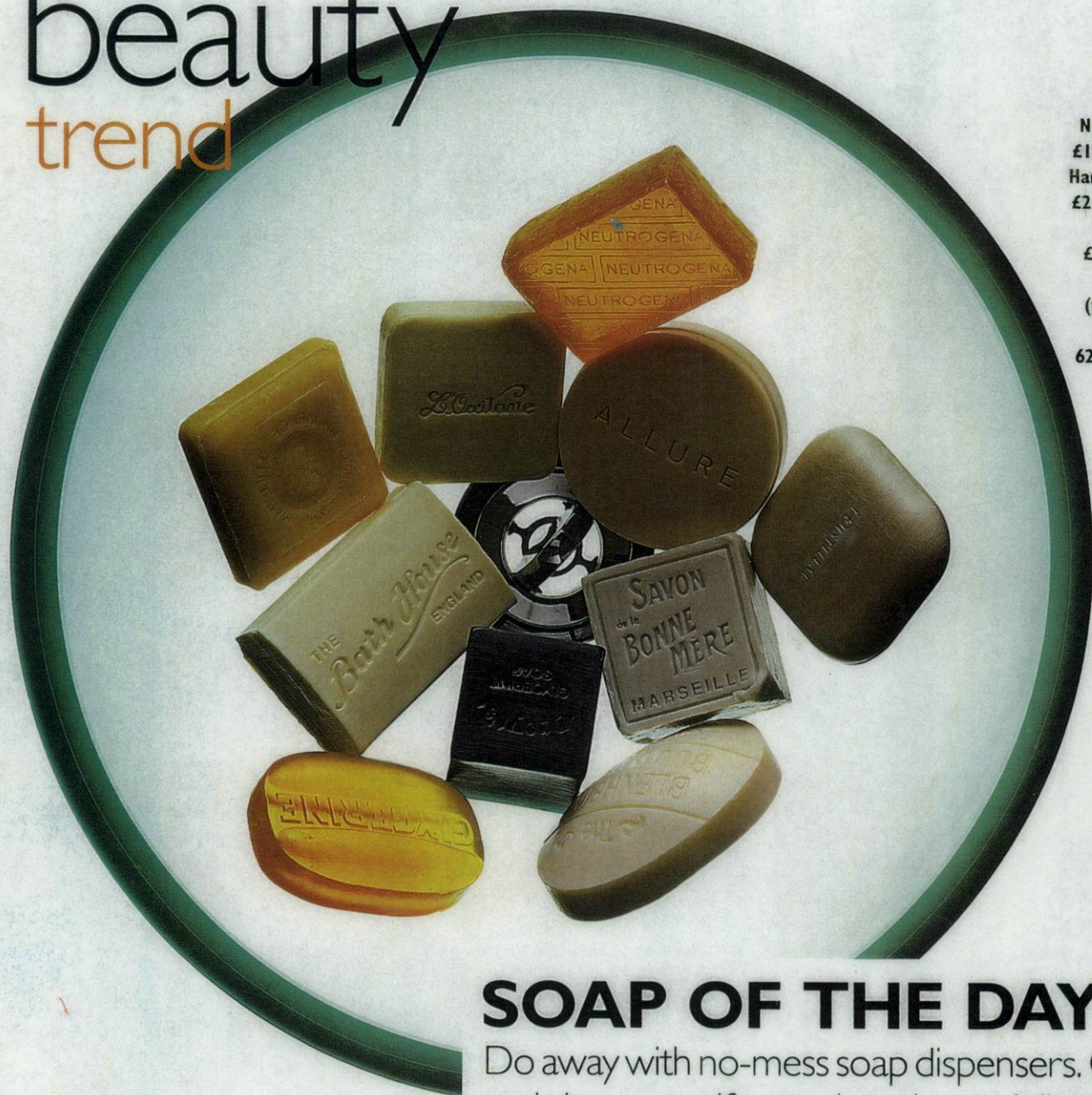




beauty trend



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
Neutrogena, £1.99; Chanel, £13; I Distillati, £3.50, from Harrods; Savon de Marseille, £2.95; Penhaligon's, £15 for three; Droyt's (blue bar), £1.95 (call 01257 417 251 for mail order); Droyt's (yellow bar), £1; The Bath House, £3.99 (call 01539 621 992 for mail order); La Compagnie de Provence, £10.95 for three; L'Occitane, £2.95

SOAP OF THE DAY

Do away with no-mess soap dispensers. Grab a bar and give yourself a good scrub, says Juliet Cohen

Pump dispensers are for Spartans – give me a bar of soap any day. Washing should not be a sterile, functional act, but an altogether more sensual experience. The key to a good scrub is in the ritual – the shape, colour and scent of the soap all add to the pleasure.

Just as minimalist chic finds its way out to let self-indulgent luxury back in, say hello, too, to the traditional bar of soap. There is something undeniably high-maintenance about a good old-fashioned bar. You may have to put up with a pile of

discarded paper after unwrapping, and a somewhat gloopy soap dish, but then glamour was never meant to come easy.

When it boils down to selecting your bar, the choice is endless. Whether you want to feel cosseted by traditional cakes from

Penhaligon's or Floris (Bluebell and Stephanotis are all-time classics), or opt for a more cutting edge approach (try the glycerine bars from Farmacia or Space NK) there is a soap out there to suit your every need. Just remember: no modern bathroom is complete without a plethora of soap bars piled high to make a sculpture, meaning that looks are just as important as ingredients in the selection process.

"Brands like Dr Bronner and Savon de Marseille sell out fast," says Sanjay Bhandari, founder of the cult Covent Garden shop Farmacia. "That's not just because of the quality of the pure plant extracts they contain, but because they look great in the guest loo, too."

So, as with all great traditional items, the bar of soap is set to stay. The no-mess, no-waste, no-style dispenser has finally become dispensible.

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