

## EXCLUSIVE: Universal Beauty Group Raises €1.5M From Audacia

The French natural cosmetics company produces the Végétolement Provence brand for hair salons and beauty professionals.

By Jennifer Weil on July 10, 2017



Végétolement Provence products, ©Studio Julius Magali Ponce Alex

**PARIS** — Universal Beauty Group has raised 1.5 million euros of capital from private-equity firm Audacia, WWD has learned.

The French natural cosmetics maker, which produces the Végétolement Provence brand for hair salons and beauty professionals, said the new funds will help back production and marketing, and broaden operations in its domestic market of France as well as abroad.

Végétolement Provence is slated to open a concept store in Paris next year.

“The arrival of Audacia marks a turning point for Végétolement Provence, and will enable us to provide a wider and stronger offer to our clients, reaching out to both beauty professionals and the general public,” said Jean-Marc Delabre, a cofounder of Universal Beauty Group.

Delabre, a longstanding hairdressing professional, and Vincent Faraco, a marketing executive, began Universal Beauty in 2008. At the beginning, it produced and distributed hair-care products for other companies. They then launched their own natural hair-care products under the Végétolement Provence label in 2013.

Today, products from Végétolement Provence, which is based in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, are carried in approximately 800 sales points, including more than 350 high-end salons, mostly in France.

The company sells in Western Europe, Switzerland, Russia and the U.S., where last year it opened a subsidiary primarily for Florida and the country’s West Coast. Végétolement Provence aims to grow in Asia — where it recently set up an office in Hong Kong — and the Middle East.

The brand is expected to generate sales of 5 million euros this year.

Universal Beauty Group said Végétolement Provence “has succeeded in satisfying the purist consumer looking for environmentally friendly product, whilst also catering to the technical demands of beauty professionals.”

The label's range includes shampoos, hair care, colorants, tea and, more recently, styling products for professionals. Looking ahead, it plans to broaden the skin-care and makeup categories.



A Végétalement Provence product.  
©Studio Julius Magali Ponce Alex

The natural beauty sector has been on a steep growth trajectory, with sales rising annually at up to 10 percent, according to Universal Beauty Group.

Richard Morgan Advisory and the Alcyra Conseil law firm advised Universal Beauty Group. CMS Bureau Francis Lefebvre was Audacia's legal adviser, and KPMG handled the private-equity firm's due diligence.

Audacia has invested more than 720 million euros in 320 companies from various sectors. It has in the past taken stakes in other premium consumer goods groups, including Cire Trudon, Olympia Le-Tan, APC, Fermob and Kusmi Tea.

Article appearing in Women's Wear Daily – July 10, 2017