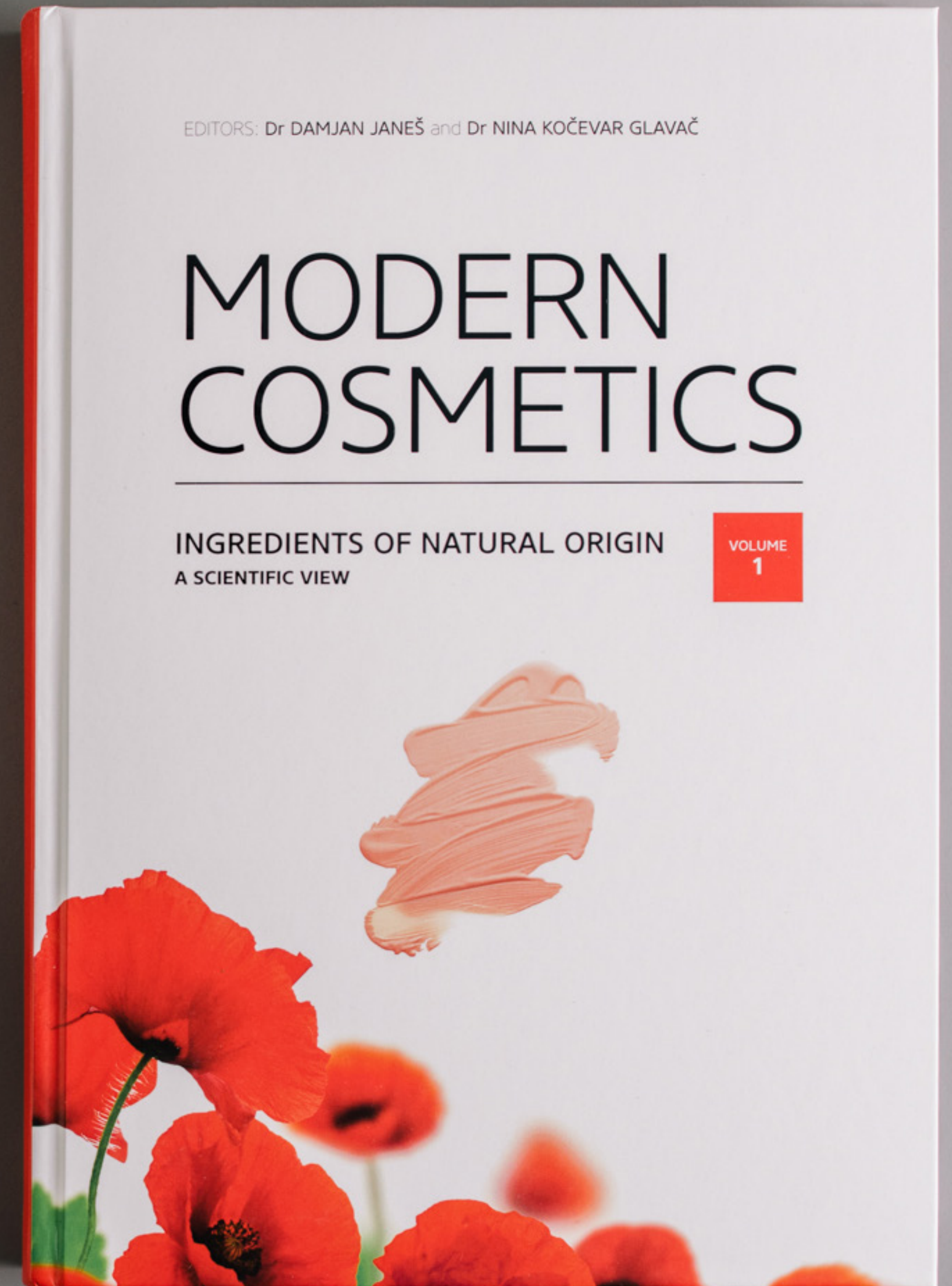


MODERN COSMETICS BOOK REVIEW



Today I'm excited to share a review of a beautiful new book that I am absolutely thrilled to have on my bookshelf and in my studio: Modern Cosmetics: Ingredients of Natural Origin. **For years many of you have been asking me where you can easily find clear, reliable, scientific information about natural skin care ingredients, and I haven't had a great all-in-one answer for you—until now.**

Modern Cosmetics: Ingredients of Natural Origin, A Scientific View , Volume 1 was released mid-November 2018 from Modern CosmEthics out of Slovenia (it was originally released in Slovenian in 2015). It is a 482 page textbook written by scientists, focussing



on natural ingredients used in skin care and cosmetics. It is divided into 26 chapters, complete with detailed write-ups, illustrations, and extensive sources.

When the book first arrived I was immediately delighted with how beautifully designed it is. **It is a hefty hardcover volume with beautiful full colour photographs and clear typography with excellent hierarchy so you can easily scan the text for the information you need.** As a graphic designer this sort of thing is likely more important to me than it is for many people, but good information design is so important. I've read many the textbook thrown together with little to no thought towards arranging the information in a way that makes it accessible. This book is not only lovely to look at, but it is user friendly.

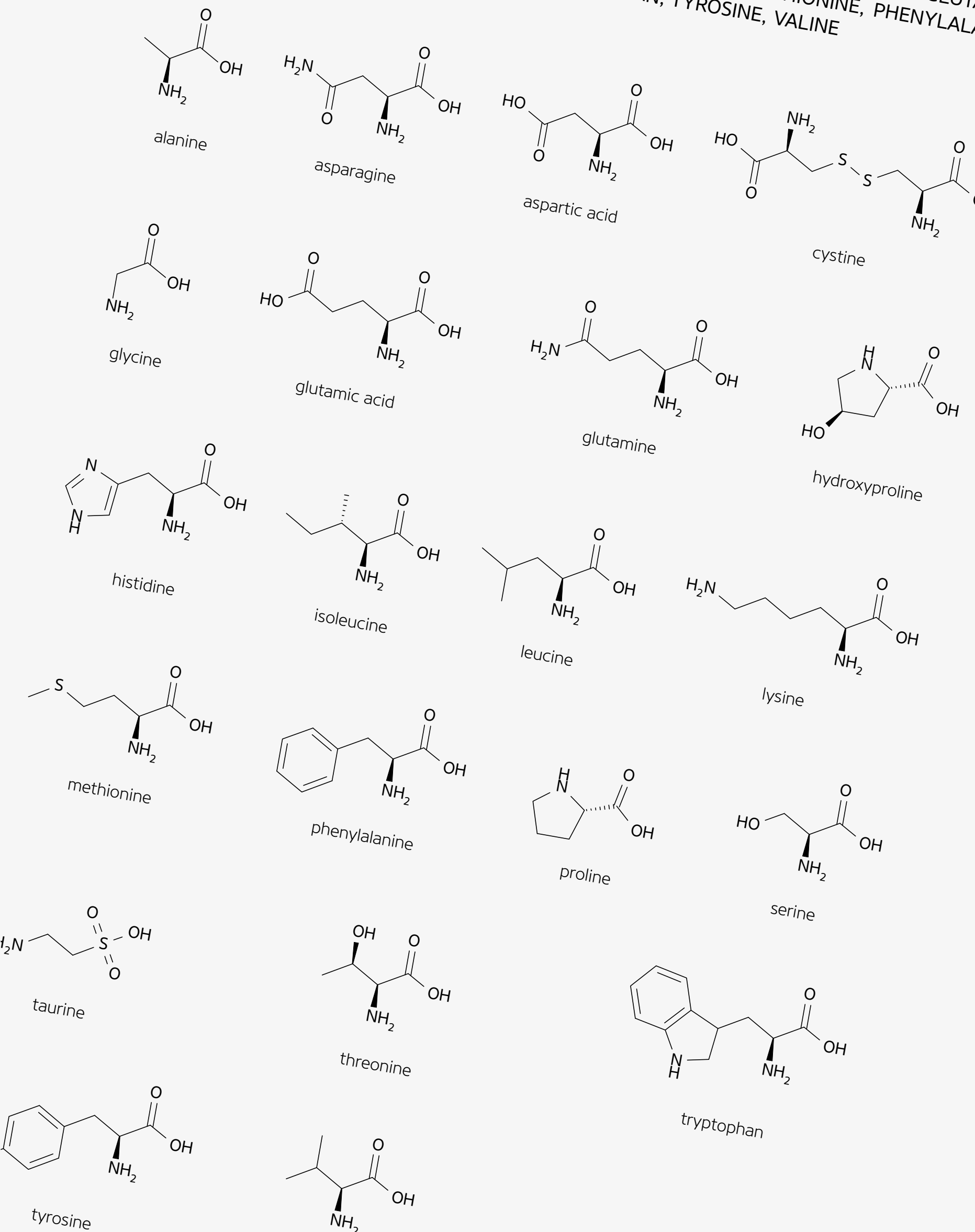
Modern Cosmetics is broken down into 26 chapters that had me positively vibrating with excitement when I first scanned the table of contents. The largest chapter by far is the one on vegetable butters and oils (125 pages!), but there are so many other wonderful things in here. Other chapters include: Emollients & Occlusives; Emulsifiers & Surfactants for Skin & Hair Cleansing; Thickeners, Moisturizers & Humectants; Vitamins, Cosmetically Active Ingredients with Anti-Inflammatory Activity; Exfoliants; Antioxidants; and more!

I received the book in October and ever since I have really been enjoying having it nearby so I can look up the ingredients I'm working with and writing about. Each ingredient profile includes the common ingredient name, INCI name, CosIng information, sourcing information, and relevant information on composition, usage reasons and rates, function, and mechanisms of action and use. **The writing is clear, concise, and easy to understand without being simplistic.** The profiles vary in length, but I'd say the average is about a page per ingredient.



AMINO ACIDS

ALANINE, ASPARAGINE, ASPARTIC ACID, CYSTINE, GLYCINE, GLUTAMIC ACID, GLUTAMINE, HYDROXYPROLINE, HISTIDINE, Isoleucine, LEUCINE, LYSINE, METHIONINE, PHENYLALANINE, PROLINE, SERINE, TAURINE, THREONINE, TRYPTOPHAN, TYROSINE, VALINE



Every time I look up an ingredient in Modern Cosmetics I learn something new and am inspired to create (and sometimes to go shopping, ha). **Unlike many sources I'm sure we've all found, Modern Cosmetics doesn't just sing the praises of every ingredient: it outlines strengths and weaknesses, and the why behind what works and doesn't.** This specificity is part of what I find so inspiring—when reading about an ingredient I find ideas immediately start flowing when I learn about how the ingredient is particularly suited for some jobs, but not others.

Modern Cosmetics does not include sample formulations, but it does include usage rates where appropriate. Think of it as a book about food rather than a cookbook.

For criticisms, or things I'd change: I saw a comment on a Facebook group about how some of the photography could be more relevant, and I tend to agree. For instance, the photography sandwiched between the entries for cetyl alcohol and cetyl palmitate appears to be a close-up of a dandelion-like flower (there is no caption to clarify), and that doesn't make much sense to me. I understand the challenge of sourcing such imagery—high quality, interesting imagery of white pellets and amber liquids isn't plentiful (and even if you shoot your own, white pellets are still just boring white pellets!)—so I'm not sure I can offer a better solution. It would be nice to have herbs included in the book; while they are found mentioned as possible sources for compounds like carotenoids and azulene, it would be helpful to have stand-alone entries for common herbs like chamomile and calendula. I also wish there were more entries in the Semi-Synthetic Cosmetics Ingredients chapter, though that chapter could easily fill an entire book.

All in all, I would highly recommend getting yourself a copy of *Modern Cosmetics* if you love natural ingredients and have been looking for a solid reference text. The pricing is in line with other textbooks, at 120€ (~\$187CAD/\$137USD), which is cheaper than most of my university text books were. It's not an inexpensive volume, but I do think it's worth it. If you're anything like me you'll find yourself reaching for it again and again—for information, for inspiration, or just to peruse and admire the beautiful pages.

[original review]

