

BEAUTY

Kate Middleton falls for a Vaud cream



The turnover has skyrocketed for a small family cosmetics business in Lutry (VD) whose name has been associated with Kate Middleton.

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The oxygen cream that the future Princess of England, Kate Middleton likes so much was developed by Dr Paul Herzog, a Swiss German artificial respiration researcher (from Stein in Aargau - Switzerland).

Yesterday during lunch with their banker, Noelle and Donato Palmiano saw the astonishment on his face. “He was wondering how our turnover miraculously increased by 20% since the beginning of the year”, recounts the couple at the head of the cosmetic company, Karin Herzog. “We told him that the miracle was Kate Middleton”.

Since the English press announced that the future Princess of Wales swears only by the products made by this small family business in Lutry (VD), the sales figures have skyrocketed. And Donato Palmisano, General Manager estimates that this is only the beginning.

Importers are in a flurry

An article that appeared in the Daily Mail at the end of November, shortly after the announcement of William and Kate’s engagement, is at the origin of this flurry of excitement. According to the article, the young woman who is under full pre-wedding stress is hooked on the Karin Herzog oxygen cosmetics. Her favourites include the anti-age and purifying treatments and the anti-imperfection formula. The revelation was made by Philippa Middleton, Kate’s sister and future maid of honour.

The English women’s magazines, which are already obsessed by the preparations for the royal wedding, immediately relayed the information. “Kate loves Karin”, was the title on the fashion magazine, Vogue. The magazine Brides went even further saying, “Kate Middleton’s beauty secret is finally revealed”! Inevitably, the buzz has its effect on sales. “We received calls from our importers immediately”, notes Donato Palmisano. “Countries like Greece and South Africa that were in a bit of a

slumber suddenly woke up. Sales soared in Australia and Canada. Demand also shot up in the United States and the Arab countries". This was enough to increase the global turnover, which is estimated at approximately 30 million francs, by 20%. A windfall with which Noelle Palmisano, President of Karin Herzog is delighted. "We are not L'Oreal so we will never be able to treat ourselves to a star as an ambassadress. This is an unbelievable chance for us"!

Not just a stroke of luck

The current buzz surrounding the brand is not purely a stroke of luck. Karin Herzog products, still hardly known in Switzerland, have long been known to the stars and professionals in the fashion world. Madonna, Kylie Minogue and Cameron Diaz have confided that they only use the miracle creams made on the banks of Lake Geneva. Each time, sales made a small leap ahead. "But never as much as today", concludes Donato Palmisano. "When Madonna talked about Karin Herzog, for example, it had no impact on turnover. With Kate, the impact is huge".

How did the family business created in the 1970s by Dr Paul Herzog which now has only about ten employees in its production unit in Lutry, seduce so many celebrities? "Word of mouth plays a big role", estimates Noelle Palmisano. "The stars love our products because of their quality, but also because of the confidential aspect of the brand". "Part of Karin Herzog's success", she adds "is also related to the efforts made by the English importer. We supply the products. She contacts the stars' makeup artists, TV channels, etc." When she was asked about this, the importer Julie Cichocki swore that she had done absolutely nothing to convince Kate Middleton to use the Karin Herzog products. "I have no idea how she heard about them, but I heard from a reliable source that she has been using them for a long time, probably since university". Julie Cichocki admits that on the other hand, since the buzz started she has been in constant contact with Clarence House, William's residence. The objective is to make Karin Herzog an official partner of the royal wedding. "We have sent several packages with all the products that Kate uses to Clarence House", recounts the importer. "We are also negotiating with them now, but I insist on being discreet. There is a whole protocol to follow and confidentiality rules, and I don't want to fall out with the royal family".

At the Karin Herzog Vaud head office, they claim not to know the details of these negotiations. "I only know that one of the ideas is to obtain the royal warrant to certify that Karin Herzog is an official supplier of the Crown", emphasizes Noelle Palmisano. "We suppose that if that happens, a part of our profits would go to Prince William's Foundation". "In any case, there is a strong chance that something big will happen in relation to April 29th", adds Donato Palmisano. "We don't know the details of the negotiations, but the English importer warned that sales could really skyrocket then and that we should prepare ourselves for the production". Needless to say, D-day is being impatiently awaited in Lutry.