

Tan in a can group eyes glory in Portugal and Brazil

July 1, 2011 7:15 pm by Michael Kavanagh



Forget the sunbed, creams, sprays and tablets which promise consumers a quick route to achieving the look of sun-kissed skin. For those who prefer their tanning aids over ice, help may soon be at hand.

Businessman Artur Tavares has just launched his tanning drink Sunlover in Portugal and is keen to bring his so-called “nutricosmetic” beverage to market in Brazil and the UK as soon as possible.

UK packaging company Rexam is supplying the venture, which is also backed by Lisbon-listed distribution group Jerónimo Martins.

The tanning drink, which contains beta-carotene, minerals and vitamins aimed at accelerating and enhancing tans, is being made in Oviedo, Asturias in Spain with the support of mineral water and soft drinks producer Inbesa.

If successful, Sunlover could help drive the sales of a small but growing band of nutricosmetic foods and drinks. These are products sold not just for their general nutritional value, or functional efficacy as a pick-me-up or as a sports performance aid. Instead, they are designed and marketed as an ingested “beauty from within” alternative to external cosmetics.

In recent years, food manufacturer Mars has also experimented in the nutricosmetic arena with the launch Dove Beautiful, a defunct vitamin-enhanced chocolate bar which was fortified to help promote beautiful-looking skin, while US company Frutelshave also marketed an acne-tackling chocolate.

So far, just 24,000 units have been produced for the test market of Portugal but production is accelerating. But Mr Tavares said he has secured distribution at up to 2,000 shops in Portugal while he also hopes to establish the 250ml cans of Sunlover – similar in style to those used by hit energy drink Red Bull- as a fixture at bars and nightclubs. He expects it to retail in supermarkets at about €1.4 and in beach bars at €2.50.

He argued the tanning tonic can help tackle the deleterious effects on the skin of a boozy night on the town. “A vodka and Sunlover rather than a vodka and orange – why not?” he argued.

The product’s backers are targeting sales of up to 2m cans a year in their domestic

market while plans are afoot to fully establish the brand in Brazil by December – in perfect time for summer in the southern hemisphere – with the help of local drinks maker Grupo Thonino. The drink’s cans are being made by Rexam in the less sun-blessed location of Gelsenkirchen in Germany.

Talks have begun to secure distribution into the UK – which Mr Tavares says will be the launch pad into wider marketing across continental Europe. So far, Mr Tavares and his partners have sunk \$2m into the project and estimate they have €500,000 to spend on marketing the brand to establish as brand leader in a new beverage market.

He hopes to attract private equity or family fund backing for the brand which he suggests could eventually attract the interest of a major drinks group. “If you come to the market and you start to make some noise starting in Brazil or UK, there is a risk that a huge operator can join the market,” he says. “But if we create a first category product with good sales potential, the first tactic [of a competitor] is not to go into the market with another brand, but to buy us.”

Once established on the beaches and bars of Brazil, Mr Tavares’ ambition is to establish the UK as his bridgehead into Europe, taking advantage of the growing popularity of tanning treatments for those unable or unwilling to spare the time and expense to top up at the beach or sunbed.

Last September PZ Cussons, the maker of Imperial Leather soap, added the fake tan brand beloved of celebrities such as Victoria Beckham to its stable with the acquisition of the St Tropez self-tanning business for £62.5m.

Tags: consumer

Posted in Brazil, Global, LatAm | [Permalink](#)

[Back to top](#)
