Arden, Elizabeth (1878-1966) Encyclopedia Article

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Contents

Arden, Elizabeth (1878-1966) Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Arden, Elizabeth (1878-1966).....3

Arden, Elizabeth (1878-1966)

Elizabeth Arden symbolizes exorbitance and luxury in the multi-billion dollar beauty industry. Born Florence Nightingale Graham, Elizabeth Arden was a self-made woman of steely determination. She started her business on New York's Fifth Avenue in 1910. Responding to women's desires for both well-being and beauty, she offered cosmetics and treatments for home application as well as salon pamperings at her famous Red Door salons and her Maine Chance retreat. While Arden always respected the laboratory matrix of beauty treatments—offering a selection of more than 300 varieties of creams and cosmetics—Arden added essential grace notes to her products. She replaced medicinal aromas with floral scents; she created elegant, systematic packaging; and she opened luxurious and artistic treatment venues, which contrasted strongly with the hospital-like austerity of other beauty-culture clinics. In the 1960 presidential election, Jacqueline Kennedy, responding to allegations of her extravagance, retorted that Pat Nixon shopped at Elizabeth Arden. Arden's business sold for $40 million after her death in 1966.

Further Reading:

Lewis, Alfred Allan, and Constance Woodworth. *Miss Elizabeth Arden: An Unretouched Portrait*. New York, Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1972.