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## Press Information

Sparcana Limited

March 4th 2011

Things are set to heat up in the health and beauty industry after a new company received investment to help it launch its debut product.

Sparcana, based in Willicote, Stratford-upon-Avon, has just received £120,000 of investment from the University of Warwick Science Park's Minerva Business Angel Network and Midven, the West Midlands' specialist venture capital company, investing from the firm's Early Advantage fund.

The company, which was formed by couple Jane Scrivner and Kevin McWilliams, launched its first product - The Orb - during the prestigious Professional Beauty 2011 exhibition at London's ExCel.

The device is a portable, continuous heat chamber for warming skincare products such as waxes, clays and mud and was conceived after Jane spotted a gap in the market during her work as a health and beauty therapist.

“When dealing with customers you want them to feel as warm and relaxed as possible and so it is important that these skincare products are at an acceptable temperature when applied,” she said.

“There was nothing on the market which could heat these products accurately and safely while maintaining the temperature and I spent a lot of my time reminding therapists to put products back in the hot towel area or into warm water.

“Kevin designed the product after I came home one day and demanded a solution to this problem!”

By happy coincidence Kevin's background is in heating technology and he devised the state-of-the-art technology that powers The Orb which heats products in under 15 minutes and maintains the temperature of the contents for one hour after it has been removed from the heating source.

“Approaching Minerva was our first attempt at attracting investment,” said Jane.

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“We knew we needed help to grow and we wanted to be able to build a presence in the industry quite quickly.

“Going forward we aim to launch one new product to market each year for the next five years.”

The Orb will be available commercially in March and there are plans to launch a personal version under the Jane Scrivner label in June 2011. More information about the product can be found at [www.sppliance.com](http://www.sppliance.com)

The Minerva Business Angel Network, which is based at the University of Warwick Science Park’s Venture Centre, on Sir William Lyons Road, is headed up by Tim Powell.

It aims to assist small and medium size businesses with high-growth potential access the funding they need to fulfil their promise and in the last 12 months the Minerva investor syndicate who meet every month at the Science Park have completed 7 investments with funding in excess of £2m being raised.

Powell said: “What Sparcana has done is use cutting-edge technology to solve a basic every day challenge faced by professionals in the health and beauty industry.

“They have designed a product which is functional but attractively designed in order to help it perfectly fit in with the luxurious surroundings often associated with health and beauty treatment centres.

“The fact that this product has a practical application and meets the requirements to fill an obvious gap in the market is what has attracted the attention of our investors.”

Giovanni Finocchio, Investment Manager from Midven, who have a successful track record of investing in small and medium-sized enterprises in the Midlands, added: “We invested in Sparcana as they have an innovative, patent protected product developed for a market in which they have extensive knowledge. In addition the Company is working on a wider pipeline of products. All in all, these are exciting times for the business”.

Aside from funding, the Minerva investors will continue to provide practical business advice and guidance. The network also introduced Sppliance to the Manufacturing Advisory Service West Midlands who have provided invaluable support from their product development programme.

They were also put in contact with Smallfry product designers in Wolston and received professional, legal and accountancy advice from Varley Hibbs Solicitors and Edwards Pearson and White Accountants.

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### **About Midven and the Early Advantage fund**

Midven Limited [www.midven.co.uk](http://www.midven.co.uk) is a privately owned specialist venture capital company with a successful track record of investing in small and medium-sized enterprises in the Midlands over 15 years. It manages a variety of funds, one of which is the Early Advantage fund, and has invested in a wide range of sectors, including software, biotechnology, healthcare, engineering, manufacturing and distribution.

The Early Advantage fund is an £8m fund launched in December 2009, funded by Advantage West Midlands and the European Regional Development Fund. The fund targets investments along side business angels, generally in early stage and technology propositions with exciting growth prospects.