

# Natural women

Ready for their close-ups, they turn to organic beauty

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Katy Mostertz sat on her sofa watching TV when she had a beauty brainstorm.

The Upstate needed a business that allowed women to enjoy the health benefits of a sunless tan without strong chemicals.

"I actually was watching 'The Doctors' one day with my mom, and we were like, 'There's nothing like that around here,'" said Mostertz, a Clemson University junior.

Mostertz started her spray-tanning business two years ago and now has about 80 regular clients. The ingredients in Bronze Belles' spray-tanning formula are like those on the label of a fancy soap: tea extract, aloe vera, glycerin.

She compares the organic tanning process with a browning piece of fruit.

"It's sort of like when you take a bite out of an apple, and the skin gets darker and darker," she said.

A colorless sugar called dihydroxyacetone is used in Bronze Belle tans, and it enables the skin to tan.

Mostertz will not be found lying too long on a beach because skin cancer runs in her family. She is one of many women who are choosing skin and beauty products with natural and organic ingredients over traditional formulas. They eschew bottles listing parabens, sulphates, mineral oil and silicon for or-

ganically-grown extracts and natural preservatives.

Despite the unemployment rate of 9.2 percent in the United States, women aren't willing to give up their favorite beauty products. Ibis World USA, which monitors various markets, reported \$10 billion in cosmetics and toiletries revenue in 2010. Products containing natural and organic ingredients often cost more than their counterparts, adding to revenue.

"It doesn't mean they're necessarily better," said Ed Schack, principal of EES Cosmetics Solutions.

His company supplies organic ingredients to cosmetic companies such as Revlon and Estee Lauder.

Health prompts many women to change their buying habits.

The cancer diagnosis of Lynn Cooper's father inspired her to open a beauty salon that practices earth-friendly techniques. Shear Transitions in Anderson uses shampoo and styling products with organically grown ingredients such as fruit extracts.

"My whole lifestyle just changed beginning with the way I eat and what I put on my body," Cooper said.

She applies that philosophy to her salon, down to the guacamole-green paint, free of volatile-organic compounds, that covers the walls. Some paint releases such compounds as it dries, which can cause headaches and dizziness.

Cooper uses biodegradable

cotton strips instead of aluminum foil to dye hair. Cooper's own dark-brown hair is dyed with the same ammonia-free hair color she uses on clients.

"Why would I want to put these harsh chemicals on my scalp?" she asked. "I actually feel like I look younger and feel better."

That's the key to the organic beauty trend. Once a woman forms a bond with a product, it lasts, Schack said.

If she can't afford a new outfit on payday, chances are she will spend on a mineral makeup foundation or lip balm, he added.

"That's why the cosmetics industry is typically recession-proof," he said.

Though some companies such as Aveda, Burt's Bees and Origins have produced formulas with organically grown ingredients for years, it took a while for the trend to go mainstream.

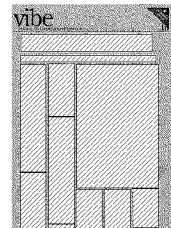
"Typically things will start in the food industry and will travel over to the health and beauty products," Schack said.

When they do, the money speaks.

"We've started out with the best first quarter in company history," Schack said.

Luxury brands also have emerged to fulfill demand.

Nude Natural Skincare, launched by Ali Hewson, wife of Irish rock star Bono, started in 2007. Tata Harper Skin Care, another new name, uses rose, sandalwood and witch hazel in its face serums and body oils.



Unlike produce though, organic makeup and beauty products are harder to classify. While the U.S. Department of Agriculture defines the term "organic" for cosmetics and toiletries, neither it nor the U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulates products that claim to contain organic or natural ingredients. That leads to misleading labeling for consumers and business owners such as Cooper.

"We're confused because they have three different kinds of organic categories," Cooper said.

The USDA defines a product as 100 percent organic if it contains only organically produced ingredients, excluding water and salt. A product can still be labeled organic if it has at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients. It receives the title "made with organic ingredients" if 70 percent organically produced materials. Other labels are rated by private standards, and imported ones adhere to the country of origin's regulations.

It's tough to use only organic products or earth-friendly products, Cooper said. Some do not measure up to their non-organic competitors, and she's not willing to sacrifice the quality. Aerosol eco-friendly hair-spray is available, but she's still looking for one she likes. Being conscious of products hasn't placed a significant strain on Cooper, but some items, such as laundry detergent, have added expense, she said.

But she'd convert all over again.

"I feel better than I did at 30 years old, and I'm 43," she said.



NATHAN GRAY Independent Mail  
Sheer Transitions Salon owner Lynn Cooper uses Organic Color Systems and All Nutrient Certifiably Organic Color products to dye hair at her Anderson business.