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Face value

Organic cosmetics—because what we put on our face should be more than skin deep

BY TANYA HENRY

Many of us feel pretty good about ourselves and occasionally even a bit smug, secure in knowing that we're "thinking globally and acting locally." But when you think about it—buying organically grown vegetables from the farmers market, purchasing books from our local bookstores or patronizing a nearby mom-and-pop store instead of a mega-retailer just isn't that hard to do. This kind of conscious consumerism doesn't place an undue burden on us—in fact, it's pretty darn convenient.

However, the notion of trading in our favorite moisturizer or lipstick for a local, sustainably produced version—now that is a different story. Few of us have given up our trips to the Nordstrom counter where we routinely fork over big bucks to the billion-dollar cosmetic industry because we believe "that our faces are not something we want to experiment with," or we are convinced there is "only one product that works on our particular skin type."

According to one statistic, the average woman uses between 10 and 25 personal care products on any given day. If you fall into this category, it is likely that you have a pretty strong attachment to "your" products. It is quite remarkable just how effectively and insidiously the cosmetics industry has managed to shape our collective cosmetic conscience. For instance, many of us believe that good makeup/skincare products can only be found at upscale department stores, must come in lovely porcelain packaging and carry a very high price tag. Conversely, inexpensive makeup, conveniently available at our nearby drugstore, is essentially worthless and almost certainly ineffective, or even worse, could damage our skin. This notion has somehow been instilled in many a woman's psyche. Additionally, many of us have given little thought, if any, to what is actually *in* our skincare products. We've been spoon-fed everything from eyeliner to anti-aging cream without ever questioning what the long list of ingredients on the back of the pretty bottle even means. Fortunately, a couple of women in Marin began asking the question—what are women putting on their faces and bodies? And by extension, what are they transmitting to their children?

In July 2004, after several years of collabo- > 20



Marin-based skin care product manufacturers Juice Beauty and EO are determined to revolutionize the billion-dollar cosmetic industry—one organic creation at a time.

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ration, Karen Behnke and Melissa Jochim officially launched their revamped organic line of products, dubbed Juice Beauty. For three years the San Rafael company has been producing what it claims is the only skincare collection on the market that uses an organic base made from juice concentrates. According to Behnke, their patent-pending formulas have up to 95 percent organic ingredients—the highest level of any product on the market. The company's line of over 20 products includes everything from the high-end green apple collection that can be found at Sephora stores, upscale spas, boutiques and Whole Foods, to a just-rolled-out, less-concentrated line that will soon be on drugstore shelves. All the products are pesticide- and petroleum-free and contain no artificial dyes or synthetic fragrances. "We believe that a healthy, organic lifestyle not only means what we eat but also what we put on our faces and bodies," says Behnke, who points out that her products are sustainably produced from juices that are farmed by indigenous people in the rainforests of Costa Rica as well as family farms in the Pacific Northwest and California. "I swear by Juice Beauty's green apple line," says Jackie Hoffer, who is in her mid '40s and says she's tried everything from L'Oreal to Lancôme. "These just work with my skin—I especially like the anti-aging products." The company claims that, with the "help of powerful science," Juice Beauty is set out to revolutionize the beauty industry. It seems Hollywood has noticed—Madonna and Cameron Diaz are fans. Check out www.juicebeauty.com to learn more. Not far down the road is Corte Madera's EO (Essential Oils), an all-natural beauty product and cosmetics manufacturer equally committed to offering high-quality personal-care products that are made with sustainably produced ingredients. Fourteen years ago, Susan and

Brad Black started EO in their Potrero Hill garage in San Francisco. Today the company employs more than 30 people and offers more than 100 home and body products. The husband and wife team initially set out to import and distribute a small line of aromatherapy products from the United Kingdom; eventually they began manufacturing the products themselves in an effort to have more control over the quality of ingredients and ensure that the products were truly as natural as they wanted them to be. The company's motto is "Love Life. Live Clean." Their essential-oil-based products spill over into house-cleaning solutions, hand sanitizers and a full line of hand- and foot-care items, all easily recognizable by their handsome, cobalt-blue bottles and packaging. Whole Foods is well stocked with many of them, but the entire line can be found at www.eoproducts.com.



There is even a woman in San Anselmo who promotes her own beauty line and nutritional supplements—T'Zerah, which incorporates a philosophy of attaining health from "in and out." Israeli-born Tzeira Sofer is a big believer in the benefits of pomegranate seed oil and claims the omega-5-rich fruit is quickly absorbed through the skin and provides countless health benefits. At \$68 for a 50-milliliter jar of Sofer's pomegranate healing cream, the price tag is steep, but if the claims are true it might be worth it. Find the pomegranate products at www.tzerah.com or on the shelves of Whole Foods and Mollie Stone's.

Perhaps the time has come to bid adieu to our fancy "made in France" products and take a chance with a locally grown product or two. Who knows, with choices like these, we might just discover that our skincare purchases can be as deliciously nurturing and satisfying as those organically grown strawberries and salad greens we love to buy from our local farmers. *