

# A natural beauty

Area companies offer chemical-free makeup solutions  
by Molly Cinquemani



Natural mineral eye shadow and Organic Love lipstick are just a few of many chemical-free beauty products offered through Afterglow Cosmetics, a company founded by Kristen Adams and distributed in Morrisville.

photos: Afterglow Cosmetics



Burt's Bees of Durham, one of the world's best-known makers of natural beauty products, offers Natural Acne Care Solutions in addition to its bestselling beeswax lip balm.



photos: Burt's Bees

Pristine Beauty Products was launched by Blaire Kessler of Raleigh after she discovered that the chemical-laden ingredients in makeup might have contributed to her cancer diagnosis. The company offers a full line of natural beauty solutions, including hair serums, deodorant and body creams.



photos: Pristine Beauty Products

The green movement and the idea of living well are impacting every area of our lives these days. From organic food choices at the grocery store to the many zero-VOC paint options available, consumers are searching for safer and natural alternatives.

Many women now are applying these principles to their beauty regimens, seeking ways to put the natural back into beauty. Three area companies are helping this search by providing natural alternatives to

synthetic beauty products.

## A beautiful glow

Afterglow Cosmetics, which is distributed from Morrisville, was founded in response to owner Kristen Adams' own sensitive skin. Her skin issues were derived from allergies, and changes to her diet failed to fix the problem.

"It didn't occur to me until my mid-20s that it mattered what the ingredients were in makeup," she says.

"I was already concerned with my food and was eating organic, but I hadn't adopted the same idea for my makeup."

Once Adams made the connection, she got to work, conducting her own research and attempting to eliminate certain ingredients from her makeup bag. However, she soon found the process to be almost impossible; simply too many products contained the petroleum-derived ingredients she was trying to avoid.

As someone with a background in fine

arts and painting, the next step was a logical one for her: She began making her own. Adams mixed colors and created simple formulas from iron oxides. She shared her creations with friends and family, and quickly found many other women who were looking for petroleum-free products.

In 2004, Adams founded Afterglow and upgraded her rudimentary formulas to pharmaceutical-grade oxides. Today, her range of 140 products contains bioactive ingredients such as mica and titanium

dioxide, as well as certified organic ingredients like pomegranate and grapeseed.

"These products have active properties that play a participatory, active function in the formula, taking on the role of skin care," she says.

"Many products are antiseptic, antifungal, antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory."



## A pristine look

Blaire Kessler of Raleigh also founded her company, Pristine Beauty Products, out of concern that synthetic products might be affecting her health.

"I was feeding my five-month-old daughter one night when she kicked me and I had a lot of pain," she says.

"When I went to the doctor, the physician's assistant told me it was probably

nothing, but I said I'd really feel better if they sent me for a mammogram."

Kessler had been using synthetic products for years when she was diagnosed with early stage estrogen-receptor breast cancer in 2005. After surgery and treatments, she was left with scars, dry skin, brittle nails and hair, and some hair loss. It was then that she first flipped the bottle around and read the ingredient list on the back of her beauty products.

"I Googled the ingredients and found out that the chemicals were cancer-causing," she says. "I didn't want to use these chemicals ever again. I was 31 with no family history of cancer, I worked out and I ate right. Why did I get cancer? Maybe this was it."

Kessler didn't want to make her own products, but she didn't know which natural products to choose so she began doing her own research. She looked into ancient cultures and recorded the herbs, minerals, and plants used by Native Americans, Egyptians, Chinese, and Africans, noting that several ingredients showed up in remedies used by several different cultures.

"I made it in to a game," she says.

"There are so many different things you can use, but when more than one culture used a specific ingredient, I thought, 'It must work.'"

Kessler used this information to create her first product, No Scary Hair, a product free from parabens, phthalates, and carcinogens that's used to restore dry and damaged hair. Soon after, she developed a scar treatment cream.

She developed both products in a blender in her kitchen. Today, she offers a selection of deodorants, hair serums and body creams, which are available online as well as at Whole Foods, Luxe Apothecary, and Nicole's Swimwear and Accessories. She's also developing a self tanner, shampoo and conditioner, and says she'll eventually have a line of facial treatments to add to the natural beauty mix.

## Worth the buzz

Durham makeup producer Burt's Bees is perhaps one of the best-known makers of natural products. And while it's currently local, the company actually began 25 years ago in Maine when founder Roxanne Quimby began using the leftover beeswax from her friend Burt's hive to make candles. The successful sale of her candles launched Quimby into the world of natural beauty products, first with the creation of the company's still-best-selling beeswax lip balm.

Today, Burt's Bees offers 150 products ranging from a Baby Bee line to a Naturally Ageless line. One of the newest additions to the brand is Natural Acne Care Solutions, which contains salicylic acid made from willow bark.

"It's really about caring for your skin. Natural ingredients have benefits and nutrients that you can't get from synthetics," says Gabrielle Prohn, public relations specialist.

"There are certain things your skin needs," she adds. "If you think about nutrition, your body needs certain components to be healthy. It's the same with your skin." **WL**

Molly Cinquemani is a freelance writer based in Raleigh.

## To learn more

For more information on area natural beauty companies and their products, visit:

- **Afterglow Cosmetics**, [www.afterglowcosmetics.com](http://www.afterglowcosmetics.com)
- **Burt's Bees**, [www.burtsbees.com](http://www.burtsbees.com)
- **Pristine Beauty Products**, [www.shoppristinebeauty.com](http://www.shoppristinebeauty.com)

For information on ingredients used in a variety of beauty products, visit [www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org).

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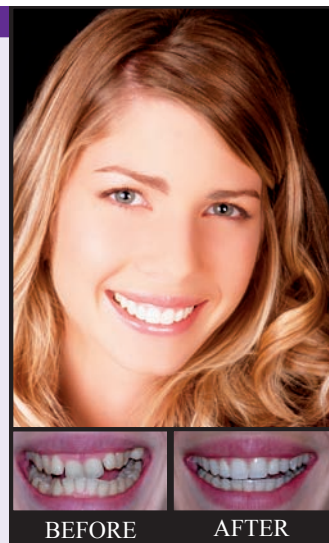
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