

BUSINESS LIFE

C-Section

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Pasha Carroll/The Sun
The "Custom Scenting Bar" at patchouli's offers personalized scents in all natural oils, lotions, body wash, spray, shampoo and conditioner.

Personalized P O T I O N S ~ AND ~ Peaceful P U R I T Y



■ Patchouli's Body, Bath and Home offers unique fragrance and exclusive skin care lines to South Walton.

BY PASHA CARROLL
SUN REPORTER

On a breezy February afternoon patchouli and China musk mix with Gulf water and gently scent the air outside of a bath and body boutique in Gulf Place.

Inside, the air is filled with the gentle music of Alana Davis. And all around there are products to make you soft as butter, smell as good as a rainforest waterfall, look like a teenager and feel like a pampered socialite.

Patchouli's Body, Bath and Home brings unique products that aren't readily available to people in the south Walton community.

Many people go to patchouli's for the "Custom Scenting Bar."

"This is what everybody wants," Linda Boswell, owner of patchouli's said, pointing to the skinny-test-tube-looking bottles of oil and the unfragranced lotions lining the bar.

"You find one oil you love and put it in lotion, body wash, spray, shampoo or conditioner," Boswell said.

The oils come from a private label company in Berkeley, Calif., and rain is the most popular scent. The ingredients aren't tested on animals and the lotions are vegetable based.

"Petroleum-based lotion keeps moisture locked out," Boswell explained. "With a vegetable base, moisture soaks in."

"If you wouldn't eat it, don't put it on your skin," she said.

The scents are not meant to be strong, like an alcohol-based perfume. They are meant to have a subtle hint of fragrance, to be "nice, light and clean," Boswell said.



Pasha Carroll/The Sun

Patchouli's offers a variety of uniquely scented soaps. Some come from local suds guru, The Soap Pedaler and are available in eccentric scents like "Smooches," "Cherish" and "Ginger Fish."

"It's the kind of scent you want to smell when you hug somebody," she added.

A bottle of oil, which is dabbed on pulse points, starts at \$8.75 for a quarter ounce. The personalized scented lotion starts at \$8.50 for four ounces.

"It's all about purity and what is good for the body," Boswell said.

A line of products by The Soap Pedaler, Celeste Cobena, includes all natural Sugar Scrub and scented soap. The scrub comes in scents like Sweet Goat's Milk. The sugar grain exfoliates and the oil leaves skin shiny and tight.

Makeup is available by Molton Brown, London. Molten Brown face powder is made from Japanese micronized talc and has names like "Party, Party" (which shimmers on the skin) and "Uptown Girl."

High-end skin care lines, like M.D. Skincare, which uses collagen renewal for skin repair and Astara, which steals its secret from a glacier in the Himalayas, are usually only found at designer retailers that sell Marc Jacobs and Manolo Blahniks.

But somehow former public relations guru, Boswell, convinces companies, like New York-based salon Bumble and Bumble, to keep patchouli's stocked even though they now exclusively sell to Bumble and Bumble salons.

And metrosexuals rejoice. Patchouli's offers two different skin care lines for men who care to exfoliate.

The Jack Black line has been featured in magazines like Details,

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Patchouli's

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Town and County and In Style. Jack Black unscented sunscreen is used on the PGA Tour and Boswell swears by it.

Patchouli's also offers unique ways to waft a fragrance around the house.

Antica Farmacista from Tuscan, Italy makes ambiance sticks dipped in fragrant oils. Flip them over and the oiled dowel creates enough smell for the entire room. One stick is great for a freshener on the go, Boswell said.

The Archipelago candles are made from 100 percent soy oil and wax.

When it melts, it doesn't burn and is great for cuticles and even a mini-pedicure, Ginny Kiningham said.

Kiningham has worked for Boswell at patchouli's for the past 10 years.

Boswell has seen the young woman, who is one in a long-time staff of only two, grow from a high schooler to a college graduate.

"She is like my daughter now," Boswell said as she slung her arm over Kiningham's shoulder.

When Boswell landed in South Walton 13 years ago from Los Angeles the lack of "good bath and body for skin" prompted her to open patchouli's. The name came from the hippy-centric earthy scent a model friend wore.

"Patchouli - it's so whimsical," Boswell said about the name and feel inside her store.

She hopes that every patchouli customer feels relaxed and peaceful in mind, body and spirit while browsing the store.

"The best compliment we get is when people walk in here and say, 'I just wanted a break and needed to take a walk,'"

Boswell said.

While the store did well in its original Seaside location and continues to have a loyal following in Santa Rosa Beach, the business doesn't stop there. Patchouli's offers mail and Internet orders.

It doesn't stop there, expansion is in the future for patchouli's.

Starting small, Boswell plans to turn a back room into a mini spa with manicures and pedicures for two.

"It will be like Havana," Boswell said. "With the real tropical spa feel."

Boswell expanded in 1999, with Blush, in Destin. The store was inside The Buzz and was a teenybopper version of patchouli's. But after three years in business Boswell didn't renew the lease at Blush.

And while patchouli's has been successful, Boswell said there are many things a mother of two gives up when running



Pasha Carroll/The Sun

Ginny Kiningham, left, has worked at patchouli's, a unique bath, body and home store in Gulf Place, for the past 10 years with owner Linda Boswell.

a business.

"It has been hard for

many years," Boswell said. "It has been a day-to-day struggle as far as priorities."

While her two sons, ages 17 and 10, are her first priority, Boswell said, "It's not always possible to be at every soccer game; you can't just close the store."

But the hours are short; patchouli's is open from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. in the winter and until 7 p.m. in the summer. Boswell does bookkeeping and ordering at home and trusts her small winter staff of two with the store when she's not there.

"I am so blessed that they stay and keep coming back," Boswell said of her customers.

Likewise, Lois Maxwell, a snowbird from New York always goes back to patchouli's.

"I have been coming for seven years," she said. "I have always enjoyed everything I bought."

What are your thoughts on the matter? Your questions and comments are always welcome at **The Sun.**

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