

SKIN Prep

By Kelsey Ogletree

If you've purchased beauty products anywhere recently—whether from CVS or Saks Fifth Avenue—you've likely noticed an increase in the number of items labeled as natural or organic. The natural and organic beauty industry is projected to reach nearly \$22 billion by 2024, up from \$11 billion in 2016. Nowhere is that more evident than in the progressive city of Nashville, which lays claim to an impressive number of homegrown natural beauty brands that all support each other.

"It's kind of like a club of people who are trying to do good things with skin care," says Jen Auerbach, founder of the small-batch organic beauty brand Clary Collection. "I don't think there are many other markets where you'd promote a company that does the same thing as you—Nike doesn't promote Reebok."

They're more than cheerleaders for each other; they're helping to build a community around natural skin care. At locally owned shop Lemon Laine, for example,

hosting a few evening health talks has turned into an almost weekly event, where anywhere from twenty to forty people gather to learn about such topics as hormonal balance, stress management, skin care regimens, and makeup application.

Here are the stories behind these locally owned businesses and their incredible products. The next time you're in Music City, check them out.



Clary Collection

Jen Auerbach owes credit to a Nashville institution for helping her get her natural beauty business off the ground. If it hadn't been for the Lane Motor Museum agreeing to house her husband's vintage Harley-Davidson collection (in the form of an exhibition, no less), she and her business partner, Adriel Denae, would never have been able to move their DIY apothecary into the barn in her Nashville backyard. Of course, it helped that her husband happens to be Dan Auerbach, the Grammy-winning guitarist and vocalist for the Black Keys.

"We started as witches in the kitchens making oils with newborns strapped to us," explains Auerbach, mother to young son Early. Driven to produce a line of organic, healthy skin care made with truly clean products, she began to develop infusions, steeping herbs from her garden in oils to draw in the medicinal properties of the plants—and Clary Collection was formed.

Now the barn is where the magic happens. Their best-selling product is the oil-based Clary All Purpose Balm (\$17), meant to treat burns, eczema, psoriasis, or any other dry skin condition. Made with calendula flowers, chamomile, lavender, plantain leaves, olive oil, and beeswax, the focus for Auerbach is what it doesn't contain: petroleum. "We want to be the new Vaseline," she says.

ClaryCollection.com

Photos courtesy of
Clary Collection



Photos courtesy of AILA

AILA Cosmetics

In 2013, Dr. Cary Gannon was overwhelmed. Going through a divorce, dealing with a cancer scare, and being diagnosed with a thyroid condition, the managing partner and physician at University Foot and Ankle Centers and mother of two had reached a tipping point. “Everything in my life was toxic,” she says.

A friend came to her rescue. “She said to me, ‘You’ve been taking care of everyone else and making no time to care for yourself, and you’re going to start right now,’” Dr. Gannon recalls. That day, over shots of wheatgrass at Whole Foods, she decided to eliminate toxicity from her life. Her new goal: to find ways to nourish her body, not only with healthy foods but also with healthy beauty products. That led to the launching of AILA Cosmetics.

The first item AILA focused on was waterless nail polish. Water harbors bacteria, says Dr. Gannon, so polish made with it must also contain many preservatives to prevent microbe growth; many water-based polishes also contain acrylics, which can be very damaging to the nail.

“You hear a lot of companies saying [their polishes] are ‘free’ of certain chemicals, but they’re chemicals the beauty industry hasn’t used in decades anyway,” says Dr. Gannon. Another myth, she says, is that all chemicals are bad for you—but that’s not necessarily true. “Man-made chemicals can be healthier in some instances,” she says.

AILA’s top-selling nail lacquers, which retail for \$14 each and come in forty colors (including the spring green, Wheatgrass!), are made without parabens, sulfates, formaldehyde, and other toxic chemicals while still being chip resistant, super shiny, and long-lasting.

LoveAILA.com



Photos courtesy of Lemon Laine

Lemon Laine

After experiencing issues with her skin during college, working as a makeup artist, and being part of the first natural beauty buying team for Walmart, Nashvillian Laura Lemon began to realize that her calling in life was beauty. When she learned that 60 percent of what you put on your skin absorbs into your body, a lightbulb went off. “I couldn’t unlearn that information,” she says, “so I became a sponge to everything natural in terms of beauty and wellness.”

That was twelve years ago, and she’s since ventured out on her own to launch not one, but two successful

natural beauty shops (in Nashville and Houston) called Lemon Laine. The stores lure in passersby with Palm Beach–style decor; the aesthetics play second fiddle to the products, however, which are all carefully curated by Lemon.

“It’s a little bit of art and science,” she says. “The first question is, ‘Is it clean?’ Then it goes through a filter of who’s behind the brand, and the packaging—is it beautiful? I want someone to walk in and say, ‘This is the most amazing beauty store, and it happens to be natural.’”

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There’s also Lemon Laine’s custom oil bar, which is “the heart and soul of what we do,” says Lemon. Make an appointment for a skin consultation, and an “oil barista” will work with you to create a custom facial oil for your unique skin.

LemonLaine.com



Photos courtesy of
Little Seed Farm

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Little Seed Farm

When Eileen and James Ray decided to leave New York and plant their family’s roots in rural Tennessee, they took a leap of faith. She was a fashion designer and he an investment analyst; they had no family in the area nor any experience with farming. It had always been their dream to build a farm based on sustainability, and that’s precisely what they’ve done the last seven years.

Their eighty-four-acre Little Seed Farm is home to a herd of forty organic, 100 percent grass-fed goats, which produce milk that goes into items like natural and organic moisturizer, deodorant, and liquid and bar soap. They also source olive, hazelnut, and coconut oils from organic farms around the world to make serums and body oils. “Where you get those products is very important, so you know farming practices are sustainable,” says James.



Deodorant cream is their top-selling product. Free of aluminum, baking soda, gluten, parabens, and GMOs, it’s a natural deodorant that actually works, and it comes in delicious scents like grapefruit lemon and rosemary patchouli (\$14 each). To encourage people to give natural deodorant a try, they offer free samples on their website.

“When you find a deodorant that works, you don’t switch,” says James. “For us to have a different format (applying with your finger), it can be an awkward thing.” Though they ship the samples at a loss, they’ve found success in converting people once they’ve tried it. ▮

LittleSeedFarm.com