



RIGHT: Entrepreneur Lisa Rodgers does everything from sales to soap, making Cactus & Ivy a one-woman operation. **LEFT:** The enticing scents of her massage oils, soaps, and balms attract Lisa's cat, Smokey.



Bathing Beautifully

Feel good about pampering yourself with cruelty-free beauty products, hand-made in Saluda. By **Anna Vitale**

Twist off the lid of a Cactus & Ivy body rub or unwrap a bar of Serene Soap, and you can take comfort in knowing that these beauty products differ from other boudoir basics. First of all, they're hand-made in Saluda, right here in the Palmetto State. Secondly, Lisa Rodgers makes her luxurious potions using only natural, vegan ingredients that are never tested on animals. She'll tell you that, in this realm, different is better.

Conscientious Commitment

Critters of all sorts show up on Lisa's doorstep, and her tender heart won't let her shoo them away. "I believe there's a sign in the woods that says, 'If you're hungry or need shelter, go to Lisa's house,'" she declares with a laugh. So it makes sense that this lifelong animal lover refuses to use ingredients derived from animals. She recently phased out beeswax, for example. Candelilla wax, a plant-based substitute, works even better, she says. Cactus & Ivy goods are now entirely plant-based.

"I test my products on friends and family, and they're all still alive and kicking," she says. Responsibilities of testers, or "guinea chicks," as she calls them, include trying out samples of lip balms, scrubs, and massage oils to decide which they like best and why. "I relish all feedback," she adds. Take note: It's good to be the friend of a natural beauty-product specialist.

Production Sleuth Using mineral and plant ingredients such as cranberry seed oil, shea butter, and loofah, Lisa enjoys creating Earth-, animal-, and people-friendly potions. "I put a lot of thought into what will benefit the skin in the manner that the product is used," she says. Tired feet, for instance, relax with Peppermint Tree Foot Balm, which is applied mess-free as a deodorant-like stick.

Getting from concept to cool feet takes research. Lisa consults books and the Web and then resorts to trial and error. So far, she's developed balms, scrubs, rubs, elixirs, and moisturizers in 14 categories. She opened her online store in 2007 to make Cactus & Ivy products available to everyone.

Before that, though, she specialized in custom blends that used botanicals indigenous to the area around a spa or resort. The creativity and exploration required to develop these custom products still make them Lisa's favorite orders to fill.

One client asked her to make a shaving balm with a eucalyptus scent that helps prevent and heal razor burn. That led to Eucalime Nut Shaving Balm, which uses eucalyptus oil, lime, coconut, and apricot kernel oil.

Real Change Lisa finds joy in the variety and independence of her enterprise. It's a lifestyle she never imagined when she quit a sales career more than eight years ago. Helping another woman fill orders for her soap business—and doing a good job of it—gave Lisa the gumption to branch out on her own.

Positive reaction to her products confirms Lisa's leap of faith from the corporate world to cottage industry. "I love getting up in the morning to see what the day will bring," she says. ●

Cactus & Ivy: www.cactusandivy.com. To receive a 10% discount on orders placed by April 30, mention code SL2009.

Soapmaking

Lisa enjoys each stage of creating the handmade products.



◀ Lisa pours liquid soap into a mold. She lets the soap set for 24 to 48 hours.



◀ Then she cuts the bars. These cure for four weeks. Calendula petals give each bar its amber coloring and unique texture.