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LIVING EDGE

April 2008

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Meet the mum from Sale whose Peachykeen home-made beauty products are turning into a thriving business

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MATTHEW STANSFIELD

The beauty business is a multi-million pound industry which relies on massive advertising budgets and big names to sell its products globally. Nicole Kidman and George Clooney are among the stars recruited to tell us we are 'worth it'.

But Jane Pusey has a very different approach to looking good.

The 38-year-old mum, who lives in Sale, has launched her own cosmetics company with an approach best described as 'small is beautiful'.

Her Peachykeen Organics range is designed for those who prefer their products to be 'natural' and devoid of chemicals and other artificial substances.

She says: 'My interest in natural beauty started when I began to have allergic reactions to mainstream products. After taking a shower my skin would be itching and burning. It got worse and worse but after reading up on the subject I realised I'd become sensitised to certain ingredients.'

The baddies, according to Jane, can include synthetic colours and fragrance and SLS (sodium laureth sulphate). The latter is a foaming agent which is used in everything from toothpaste to shower gels and shampoo. At first, she tried to find alternatives on the High Street.

'I started using more natural brands like Doctor Hauschke as well as Neal's Yard and the Body Shop. It was trial and error and I did find some really good products but then when I looked closely at the labels I would find some still had some artificial ingredients.

'It's difficult sometimes to identify them as there is no legislation around calling a product 'natural'.

The solution, she decided, was to start

A peach of an idea

making her very own products.

'I've always wanted to work for myself and started researching the industry with a view to selling other brands. When I found that the range of brands on offer didn't fulfil my quite strict criteria, I decided to try making products myself. I went through a process of lots of web and paper research and started experimenting. After lots of trial and error I created a range of products that has been thoroughly tested by friends and family.'

Jane, 38, is married with a three-year-old daughter Mary. At the moment, she fits the business in around a very hectic family life.

One of her first tasks was to find a name for her beauty range. After a fair amount of thinking, she hit on the word 'peachykeen' - an Americanism most famously used in the musical film *Grease*.

'I wanted something that wasn't standard beauty speak and it's also very 1950's and wholesome.'

Jane's experience in publishing and financial services - she has a degree in business studies - has helped her to market the business

'The philosophy behind the products is 'keep it simple' so they use no synthetic ingredients at all and only include certified organic ingredients. I also try to run the business on eco-friendly principles so we use minimum packaging and have glass jars for ease of recycling. I source some essential oils from Merseyside, which cuts down on 'beauty miles'.

Jane launched the range in October last year after a few try-outs at organic craft fairs. All the products are made by hand in small batches at her kitchen in Sale.

'I normally get going in the evening after my three-year-old daughter has gone to bed. Some of the products involve blending and some need to be heated up. Everyone chips in including my mum and my husband Tim.'

According to Jane, the time has never been better for a range of products like hers.

'There's a consumer mood out there for more natural products and we've had a really good response so far. Initially we're keeping the range small but we hope to expand it and we're developing a couple of new products with plans for a baby range. We've just got to just see how it goes but I'm really optimistic. At the moment we're selling only on-line but we've already got a real mix of people from all over the country who are coming to us for something different.'

The range includes a body exfoliator, body oil, hand smoother, face oil, and a 'calm balm' made with rose hips. Luscious natural ingredients include organic, fair trade shea butter, avocado

oil and jojoba there are two scents - chamomile or lavender and geranium - both created with organic essential oils and no synthetic perfumes.

All Jane's ingredients are Soil Association or Ecocert certified organic. Prices range from £5.50 to £22. Because no synthetics are used each product is made in batches of 10 to 30. Shelf life is between six and nine months. Jane's long-term plan is to have a proper workshop as things grow and the business takes off.

**For more details of Peachykeen visit www.peachykeenorganics.co.uk
Tel: 0845 070 7282**

