

Garden Girl Skin Care



CHECK OUT: Hand It to You, a super-silky hand cream made with jojoba, aloe, shea butter, omega oil, and antioxidants; Zippity Do Dah Peppermint Foot Cream, with tea tree oils and a fresh peppermint scent; and Like Magic Serum, an anti-aging product with omega 3 and hyaluronic acid intended to tighten the skin.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2008: More anti-aging products and the launch of a men's line, with face-cleansing and moisturizing products.

GARDEN PARTIES: Miller and Garden Girl sales consultants will meet with groups at homes for a night of pampering—and selling, of course. ■

— Elizabeth Flock

WHAT: A natural skin care line, free of chemicals and paraben-based preservatives.

WHERE: gardengirlskincare.com

ABOUT THE OWNER: Kristin Miller, a 40-year-old mother of two from Needham, says she always wanted to be an entrepreneur. After earning an international MBA from the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona, Miller worked in market research for Staples for seven years before striking out on her own. While surfing business-buying Web sites, she happened upon Garden Girl, a line of chemical-free beauty products still in its infancy. Miller bought the concept, trademark name, Web site, and product ideas.

ABOUT THE BUSINESS: After researching ingredients to weed out those that were hazardous, Miller launched her own line of products under the Garden Girl name more than two years ago. "Mine are in the high 90s in terms of percent natural," she says. "There is no proven preservative for 100 percent natural products, but I am always working toward being more natural." While a Georgia manufacturer handles the chemistry behind the products, Miller researches the basic formulas. "I tell them the ingredients I want and don't want, they tell me what works and doesn't, and then they ship me the finished product."

SPECIALIZES IN: Face and body care products free of parabens, sulfates, phthalates, artificial colors, artificial fragrances, petroleum products, and other potentially hazardous chemicals. Garden Girl targets women of all ages; there is even a Garden Baby line. "I am looking to fill the space between the 'earthy' natural products and super high-end, very sleek, and stainless steel-y packaged natural products," Miller says.

SEAL OF APPROVAL: Miller uses the Environmental Working Group's cosmetic products database [www.cosmeticdatabase.com] as "my bible." It compares ingredients in 25,000 products against 50 toxicity and regulatory databases.

Soul Cookies



Snow Caps

WHAT: Home-made gourmet cookies

WHERE: soulcookies.net or e-mail info@soulcookies.net

THE OWNER: So what does one do after having been a teacher, travel agent, business manager for a CPA firm, and a scrippophilist (a dealer in antique stocks and bonds)? Bette Gosule, a 38-year resident of Needham, was brainstorming about her future one day two years ago with her mother and a close friend. To create a relaxed mood, she served cookies fresh out of the oven. "They sort of looked at each other," Gosule recalls, "and said these cookies are incredible. Why don't you do that?" A lifelong baker, she didn't require much persuasion. "I began experimenting with many

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Hot Finds

recipes, altering every one of them to fit how I wanted them to taste," Gosule says. Then she "foisted" them on friends and family for the ultimate test. "My garbage disposal has eaten many a cookie," she says.

HER INSPIRATION: Local cookies she samples on trips, books, and "ideas that pop into her head."

HER WORKFORCE: Just her. Gosule bakes all the cookies in her regular home oven (the Health Department inspects every six months), pack-



ages them, and mails them at the main post office in Needham, where she must be one of the most popular customers.

MAXIMUM DAILY OUTPUT: Three batches of eight dozen cookies each. That comes to 288 cookies—or one enormous tummy ache, if you eat them all at once.

MOST UNUSUAL: Chocolate cookies shaped like horses (complete with manes, saddles, and twinkles in their eyes) for a Kentucky Derby party for 50 people; dollar-sign-shaped cookies (mint, of course) for a bank; and house-shaped cookies for Realtors.

MOST POPULAR: Of the 10 now on the Web site, the top sellers are Peanut Butter Surprise, Coconut Euphoria, and Snow Caps (powdered-sugar chocolate mountains). Gosule will take special requests for others, such as Short Stacks (made with maple syrup) and Morning Delights (chocolate and coffee).

WHY THE NAME? "The cookies are very light, as if one's soul is being lifted up to someplace beautiful."

WHAT ABOUT CALORIES? Yes, there are those, too. But Gosule says she makes the cookies on the small side so that people can sample two or three at a time "without guilt."

PRICE: \$11 to \$13 a dozen, with an extra charge for a keepsake box. Gosule, who ships all over the country, requests seven days' notice. ■

—Steve Maas

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Elizabeth A. Foley, M.D.
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