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## Chemical free ... naturally

### *Organic skin-care products make the leap from a Vegas kitchen to the shelves of Whole Foods Market*

BY SARA CURETON

When she was studying to be an aesthetician, Lynn Johnson first dreamed, or daydreamed, about finding beauty products that didn't contain chemicals.

"A lot of products try to emulate the good that sugar can do for your skin," Johnson says. "So why not use natural sugar?"

Founded by Johnson in 2005, Natural Beauty of Las Vegas makes a handcrafted line of soaps, scrubs, lotion and milk bath using all-natural products ranging from olive oil and shea butter to organic sugars and salts.

The wheels began turning on this dream when Johnson moved to Las Vegas from Portland, Ore., to manage a salon. "It was very corporate and stressful, and it took away time with my family," she recalls.

When her father died, in 2005, Johnson decided it was time to push her hobby to the limit. She started manufacturing her line of natural body-care products in her kitchen, sometimes working 12 to 16 hours a day, perfecting her methods and recipes. The first products from Natural Beauty of Las Vegas were sold at the Las Vegas Farmers Market.

Early successes at the Farmers Market inspired her to aim toward bigger target. "I went to my local Whole Foods Market," says Johnson, "and asked the team leader if they carried local products."

After being received with an enthusiastic green light, the Natural Beauty line met all of the requisite quality

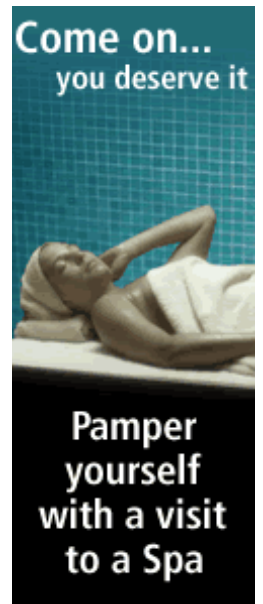


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Lynn Johnson, seated, is the founder and creator of Natural Beauty of Las Vegas, a line of at-home spa products handcrafted from natural ingredients. Her partners are Carolyn Johnson (left) and Francine Thomas. They pose with their product line at Whole Foods Market, at the District in Green Valley.



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standards. It is offered on the shelf at both Whole Foods Market locations in the Las Vegas Valley.

Johnson found fast business partners in some of her longtime friends. Carolyn Johnson, who is no relation, created the company's eye-catching mermaid logo. Francine Thomas aids in formulating such distinctive scents as tangerine vanilla, honey almond coconut, lavender citrus and green tea mango, all of which are exclusive to the Natural Beauty line.

While they are currently working to fill orders, the tight-knit staff of three produces an average of 75 to 100 bars of soap in a single day. "We all have the same work ethic and we want to push the company as far as it can go," Johnson explains. "We don't have a lot sitting in back stock because we like to make sure it is fresh for the consumer."

Johnson can be found offering in-store demonstrations of the products, a practice which helps sales and also allows her to hear customer feedback. "I've had people come up to me during a demonstration and tell me how addicted they are to the products," Johnson says. "It's great."

One of Johnson's newest creations is a 20 percent shea butter lotion which is paraben-free. Parabens, a group of chemicals used as ingredients, created concern when they were found to be present in one scientific study's sampling of breast tumors.

"The consumers these days are more aware, more educated, and they are reading labels," Johnson notes. "It is just as important to be careful about what you put on your skin as it is to be careful about the food you eat."

Her products are receiving rave reviews and the demand is growing. Natural Beauty of Las Vegas will soon grow into other markets: Whole Foods Market has approved the line to be carried in their stores throughout the Southwest region.

"Once you get in with Whole Foods with a high quality product," Johnson declares, "it will sell itself."

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Natural Beauty's product line sports a distinctive mermaid logo, designed by Carolyn Johnson.

