

The Times-Picayune

TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2008



Terralina skin care products founder Patricia Bazan Garrubbo grew up in Argentina, attended high school and college in New Orleans and lives in New York.

Natural progression

Tulane grad co-founds award-winning skin care line

By Susan Langenhennig
Fashion writer

Like many expectant mothers, Patricia Bazan Garrubbo monitored everything she ate, drank and put on her skin during her pregnancies.

Suddenly the familiar lotions and creams she'd grab from the bathroom cabinet seemed as potentially menacing as household chemicals kept under the kitchen sink. Eight years ago, while pregnant with her

first child, she began dissecting the labels of skin care products and cosmetics.

"I became obsessed with what I was doing to my body and my baby," said Bazan Garrubbo, who grew up in Argentina, lived in New Orleans as a teenager and young adult, and now resides in New York.

"I learned that skin care is something you really need to pay attention to. Some commonly used products aren't necessarily safe during pregnancy, so I really started to seek out natural ones."

That quest became a passion and eventually a profession years after she'd given birth to her two children, Sabastian, now 8, and Veronica, 5.

Bazan Garrubbo, a lawyer by training, joined with Gina Garrubbo, her cousin by marriage, to found Terralina, a small, natural skin care line.

Its moisturizer, body lotion, cleanser and facial toner are made with natural ingredients — white

See **GARRUBBO, C-5**

Skin care line a natural progression

GARRUBBO, from C-1

tea, shea butter, sandalwood, olive leaf, oat and bark extracts, sugar cane, algae and aloe, among others — and minimally packaged in post-consumer recycled plastic in a conscious effort to make the products green from the inside out. The company even includes a votive candle with its moisturizer to encourage the reuse of the jar.

Some of the ingredients are organically derived, and all of the formulas are manufactured in small batches in New Jersey. The company is considering applying for certification from the Natural Products Association, a nonprofit organization which now offers its seal of approval to qualifying beauty products.

Such practices thrust Terralina into one of the fastest growing segments of the beauty industry. Sales of natural and organic cosmetics and toiletries were projected to approach \$7 billion globally in 2007, according to Organic Monitor, a London-based research firm. (Those figures have yet to be tallied.)

Big retailers, from Wal-Mart to Rouses, now sell nature-based personal care lines such as Tom's of Maine and Burt's Bees, bringing such goods out of the niche market.

But even among such swelling competition, Terralina has been getting high-profile notice. Last month, Elle magazine awarded the company a "Green Star" for best natural facial wash, and Golf for Women magazine's May issue gave Terralina one of its 2008 "Best of Beauty Awards" for its facial moisturizer.

The products stand out, Bazan Garrubbo said, because they're not oily or watery. In other words, she wanted Terralina to feel as pleasurable on the skin as its more conventionally produced competition.

"There were a lot of natural products that we were familiar with, but we found that they weren't so pleasurable to use," she said. "It took us three years to develop our first products to stay within the parameters we set."

Owning a skin care line is the latest turn in a curvy career path for Bazan Garrubbo. She spent her childhood in Bahia Blanca, Argentina, near Buenos Aires. Her family moved in the 1980s to New Orleans, where both of her parents, Drs. Nicolas and Haydee Bazan, are professors at Louisiana State University Medical School.

Bazan Garrubbo graduated from Ursuline Academy and Tulane University. After college came a dream job in Paris in marketing for a pharmaceutical company. That's where she first fell in love with natural cosmetics.

"I became fascinated with the French approach to beauty," she said. "Great natural products were everywhere."

Bazan Garrubbo eventually moved back to New Orleans, graduated from Tulane Law School, briefly practiced law, but also managed a jazz band. She got married, moved to West Chester, Pa., and opened an art gallery. Two years ago, she moved to New York.

A conversation at a family gathering planted the seed that would sprout into Terralina. Bazan Garrubbo and Gina Garrubbo were chatting about their experiences trying to find natural cosmetics to use.

"We started talking about it," Bazan Garrubbo said, "and we realized there are many women who want a healthy, natural skin care regimen even when they aren't pregnant. It was just a good idea."

Susan Langenhennig can be reached at slangenhennig@timespicayune.com or at (504) 826-3379.