The “Lost Interview” With Spa Product Queen Jane Jane Church

Recently a major travel and lifestyle magazine interviewed me on the subject of making spa products. The interview went well, but when it came to publication my content got "bumped". Instead of letting it go to waste, I decided to share it with you…

How did you get the idea to make your own spa products and write this cool book? What was the inspiration behind it?

The Handcrafter’s Companion started with my own experiences and by talking with friends and family.

My observation was that the frenetic pace of today’s lifestyle makes the luxury of going to the spa difficult for many people. By creating your own pampering spa products, you can “bring the spa to you,” so to speak.

Carving out a bit of time for some well-deserved stress relief becomes much easier to do when you don’t need to leave home to do it. Of course, there is also the obvious cost savings involved with creating your own spa-quality products, and this makes the spa experience accessible to a much broader audience.

The Handcrafter’s Companion is intended to be a starting point – an inspiration to those who are interested in creating their own spa products – whether they are for their own use, for gifts, or for sale. A number of wonderful product producers submitted formulations for inclusion in the book, which has provided Handcrafter’s Companion readers with a wealth of resources that they can go to for supplies, services and finished products to continue to develop their own spa experiences.

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Do you consider yourself a "spa queen?" (Have you visited lots of spas?)

My own work schedule makes getting out for regular spa treatments difficult. However, I certainly relish the opportunity to visit a spa whenever I can. Among some of my favorite treatments are manicures and pedicures, facials, and massages. When I am traveling, I try to make it a point to find a local spa to see if they have new services or products that I may be unfamiliar with. It is a great way to unwind after a long flight, the conclusion of a stressful project, or even after a day of power shopping! I’ve been to a lot of spas over the years and know a lot about the formulations – so I suppose I do consider myself a “Spa Queen” of sorts!

What are some of the advantages of making your own products? Is it less expensive, more natural, more customized and personalized, etc?

The ability to create your own products offers a nearly infinite number of possibilities. You can create products in fragrances of your choice, using ingredients that you may not find in products on mainstream retailers’ shelves.

If you prefer products with organic ingredients, you have complete control over that. In short, you can certainly make them as high-end, or as basic as you wish, depending upon the ingredients you choose.

There’s also the cost factor – you can make professional-quality spa products for a fraction of the price of store-bought varieties.
How did you come up with and/or find these cool recipes? Did it take years to perfect the recipes? Can someone without a background in chemistry make this stuff without blowing up their kitchen?

Many of the formulations were submitted by the companies noted in the book. A few were submitted by friends and family, and still others were formed from my own personal archives.

As far as making formulations, it is much like following any other recipe. You can experiment and revise them to your own specifications. For example, if you prefer grape seed oil over sweet almond oil in your body scrubs, then make the substitution. There is no substitute for experience – and trial and error will give you that.

You should always test and perfect formulations before you offer them for sale. I’ve found that I never have a shortage of friends or family members who will volunteer to be product testers!

Some product processes (e.g. soapmaking and lotion making) involve multiple processes and several ingredients with which you may be unfamiliar. Soapmaking in particular has several chemical ingredients that should be handled with special care, and mishandling can create potentially disastrous or harmful results.

Soapmaking is a process that requires a bit more expertise than creating bath salts, body scrubs and some of the other products in the book. There are many wonderful soap making books available, and anyone new to the craft should always start by familiarizing themselves with the process. As you become more experienced, you can venture into more complex formulations.

For those who may not want to get that involved in the process, an alternative would be to check out one of the internet soapmaking supply companies, many of whom offer a variety of “melt and pour” soap bases. These bases can be
melted using a double-boiler, or even your own microwave. They can be customized with soap-safe colorants and additives, and still offer plenty of outlets for your creativity.

You should never attempt to create any product without first familiarizing yourself with the ingredients, any special handling requirements and the overall formulation process. It is also important to make sure you use appropriate protective gear, such as safety glasses and gloves, and in some cases, even a dust mask. You should always take special precautions to keep all of your product ingredients out of the reach of children or pets. Having said that, if you follow these simple precautions, anyone can start making their own bath and body products.

**What are 5-6 of your favorite at-home spa products and why?**

Among my favorite products are solid lotion bars, lip balms, scrubs, and bath salts. Lotion bars are handy, and, unlike traditional lotions, they don’t require a preservative.

You can infuse your base oils with herbs, allowing you to add their specific properties to your lotion bar. Lip balms are simple to create, and for those who are making products to sell, they are always a popular seller. I’ve even known some customers who have covered their entire show costs just from their lip balm sales alone! Bath scrubs and salts are both easy to create and offer plenty of skin-softening benefits.
What are some of the easier products to make for readers who have never tried to make their own spa products?

As mentioned above, products like melt-and-pour soaps are a great starting point for someone interested in trying their hand at making their own bath and body products.

Products like scrubs, bath salts, lip balms, and lotion bars are all quite simple as well – and many supply companies offer tutorial sheets to help get you started. As you experiment and become familiar with the products, you’ll find plenty of ways to customize them and make them stand out from the crowd.

Are some of the recipes better for soothing itchy, dry, sensitive skin? What about oily, acne-prone skin?

Colloidal oatmeal is a great ingredient for people with dry, itchy skin. Tea Tree Oil has been known to offer some relief to those suffering from acne. As with any product, you should consult with your own physician or alternative health professional before attempting to treat skin conditions on your own. When using essential oils, be sure to familiarize yourself with how to use them, including how to blend them with carrier oils, in order to prevent any adverse reactions or chemical sensitivity issues.
If our readers wanted to throw an "at-home spa party," how would they go about turning their living room and bathroom into an at-home spa? Any suggestions and/or caveats?

If you are hosting a home spa party in which your guests will be creating products, it may be best to have the necessary ingredients for each project already measured out, and placed into “kits,” along with a complete instruction sheet.

Be sure to identify if any of your guests have any known allergies to any of the ingredients you plan to use. You don’t want to ruin the fun by having one of your guests becoming ill! Following all the precautionary notes in my previous answers will help to ensure all of your guests enjoy a fun and safe spa experience.

What products and scents would you recommend for de-stressing?

Lavender and Chamomile essential oils are both known for their calming properties.

What products and scents would you recommend for energizing?

Citrus oils including orange, lemon, lime, or grapefruit essential oils are known to have uplifting properties. You can also create blends of any of these oils with others, such as peppermint. Please refer to my prior comments on special handling of essential oils, as well as mixing them into a proper carrier oil before using them in any applications that will involve direct contact with the skin.
If you had any suggestions as to what would work best for a girlfriendy gift based on your product creations, what would you suggest?

The great thing about giving your own product creations as gifts is that you’re only limited by your imagination. I love putting together little “gift packs” for friends with a couple of fragrant fizzy bath bombs a lotion bar and a jar of body scrub. If you make four of five different items, you can easily put them together in different combinations for friends. This makes a fun gift that your friends will really appreciate – and it’s economical as well!

Want to get started the fast, easy way? Order The Handcrafter’s Companion Ultimate Guide to making bath and body products at home, and get $61 worth of FREE bonuses. Click here to find out more...