

Juju Salon has the style of natural beauty

By Patty-Pat Kozlowski

Aretha sings it best. *“Cause you make me feel like a natural woman....”* But a new salon in Philadelphia is taking the Queen of Soul’s words to heart and styling with all natural products.

Literally a hop, skip and jump from the hustle, bustle and trying to be an outrageous originality of it all of South Street sits an oasis and utopia that instantly seals you off from the traffic, cheesesteaks, draught beers, body piercing, tattoos, and crassly worded t-shirts with simply a cup of tea and Ray Charles tickling the ivories.

Juju Salon sits in the middle of 4th Street among Fabric Row, but once you pass through Julie Ebner’s doors, the loud car stereos, greasy French fries and \$5 martinis become just a memory and it’s all about you and making you not only feel good but look good too.

Juju is one of the only salons in Philadelphia that uses all natural materials and products specializing in organic hair care. Ebner will preach, but her pulpit speeches given behind the stylist chair are worth repeating: “You paint your house, you polish your nails. You dye Easter eggs, you color your hair. You scrub your garage floor with ammonia, why would you put that on your head?”

““My clients don’t have to worry about where their hair care products come from, I do all the research and make sure they are as nature as possible,”” said Ebner, who was exposed to the benefits of an organic lifestyle through her practice of yoga, vegetarianism and affinity for Eastern philosophy. Her commitment to an all natural lifestyle deepened when she and her husband Craig, a musician and teacher, started a family five years ago that produced two daughters, Frannie and Lucie.

They reside in the Spring Garden section of the City .“I want to help others take the same approach by doing business with cruelty-free, charitable manufacturers who are responsible to our communities and our planet.”

At first, it was small changes like buying her girls organic grapes to snack on. She then cleared out all the cleaning solutions under her sink and opted to buy all natural cleaners. “Americans are the consumers, we have the buying power,”” she explained. “Why wouldn’t you want to buy something that doesn’t hurt the environment and makes a difference? I guarantee the price isn’t that much difference either. You do good, help the environment and your kitchen still gets clean!”

Ebner carries products from Biolage, Simply Organic, Max Green Alchemy, Herb UK Color Line among others. She doesn't do permanent waves or chemical straightening (sorry curly headed girls, take our word for it-keep the curls!).

What's with the name?

Juju? Juju? Isn't that a candy you get at the movies? Nope. The origin of juju comes from West Africa and it's a medicinal holistic charm that heals from within.

The salon right away envelopes you in the vibe with only a return to sender when you are ready to leave. A long comfy couch against the front picture window that invites you to sit, have some tea from the House of Tea next door and go ahead, put your feet up on that antique looking table she scored from the Craig's List website.

Most of the furniture in the salon is a Craig's List find, or orphaned furniture that Ebner adopted and gave it a chic new home. See the mint green wire rack holding lotions? "It was on the curb on trash day," Ebner quips. "'It's mine now and look at the good job it's doing."

Photographs by Nancy No and art by Rachael Bliss of the Snyderman Gallery hang on the walls.

Look good, feel good

Ebner was a punk rocker in high school, she remembers the best ever hair cut she ever got was in Amsterdam and she knows that when someone in her chair exclaims after a hair cut, "I love the way you made me look!" to not take credit for it. "I didn't make you look that way," she said. "It was always there." She never tells her customers how they should look, she asks them what they want, what they feel.

Graduating *magna cum laude* from Temple University with a degree in religious studies and philosophy, Ebner found herself becoming a paralegal for the steady paycheck and benefits. But an unhappy paralegal was she. With a background in design, (the salon décor is all her) and a dream to always own her own salon she vowed to accomplish it.

Going to school at Aveda Concepts and Jean Madeline, Ebner worked her way up to a small book of steady clients and took the plunge to open her own shop this month.

Ebner goes to great lengths for not making her clients feel rushed or pressured. She serves them tea, plays a jukebox worthy rendition of jazz, blues and calming tunes to get them in a mood for feeling good and looking at their natural beauty.

“You have to admit, it’s a wonderful feeling getting your hair cut, it’s a metamorphosis you go through,” she said. “I wanted my salon to be an enjoyable experience for people, comfort and relaxation is key, walking into a salon should not be intimidating.”

Juju is at 716 S. 4th Street , 215-238-6080 or on the web at www.jujusalon.com