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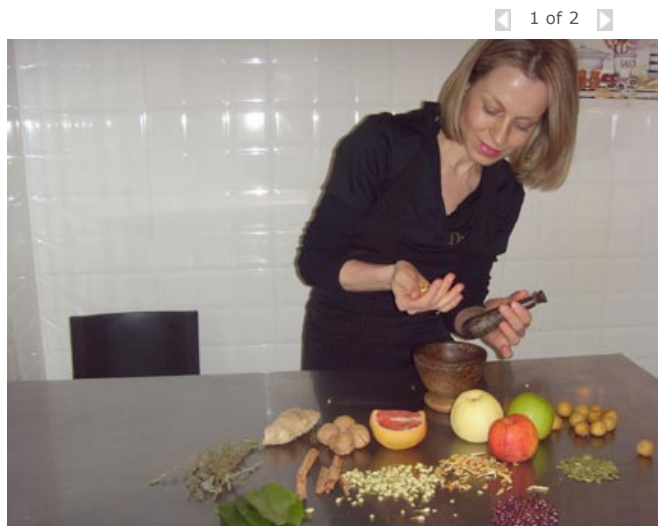
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Olya Eastman prepares facials with natural ingredients.

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You want to boost your business in China?



THERE are lots of skin stressers in Shanghai - dirt, noise pollution and oily food. So Russian Canadian Olya Eastman gives soothing facials with homemade natural products, some based on generations-old herbal remedies. Nancy Zhang reports.

Growing up in the harsh winters of far eastern Russia, Olya Eastman learned to make use of whatever natural products were on hand to protect her skin. After living in Tokyo, Canada and now Shanghai, she is surrounded by every kind of cosmetics possible. But, she says, natural, fresh, organic ingredients are still the best and she is spreading her knowledge to the women of Shanghai.

"There is a trend everywhere for people to want to eat and use on their skin products that are as natural as possible," says Eastman. "People are tired of complicated ingredients, they want to go back to their roots, to something earthy that can be understood. Life is already complicated, people want to know what they are putting in or on their bodies."

With Delicious!, her natural facials company, Eastman gives facials at customers' homes, with ingredients strictly made of natural fruits, herbs and oils. She is also partnering with spas in hotels. The business was set up last August, 10 years after she arrived in Shanghai, and after a lifetime of experimenting with herbs and oils.

Eastman's great-great-grandmother was a herbal healer and midwife who lived near St Petersburg. She worked out her own concoctions of medicinal herbs and fruits and gained some repute in her area, traveling from village to village to help the ailing.

Interest in experimenting with botanicals was passed down through her family, with her mother planting herbs all year round and having a homegrown solution to virtually every medical problem.

Five generations later, Eastman remembers this knowledge.

"At the time in Russia the economy had collapsed and it was hard to get any product at all, so we had to be inventive," she says of her childhood. "Winters in Vladivostok were brutal - minus 30 degrees Celsius - and everyone's skin would go red and crack. I remember when olive oil came on the market we decided to use that as a face moisturizer because it was natural and pure. It wasn't perfect but it

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worked."

The vast lands of Russia from west to east contain a wealth of flora and fauna, roots, herbs and berries. In Vladivostok where Eastman grew up there was the rare schizandra berry, which only grows there and in northern China. With five flavors, it is a natural tonic for detox. Another is sea-buckthorn full of beta-carotene and used to treat internal healing.

Eastman's hometown, being so close to China and the Korean Peninsula, also has an Asian population, from Russified Koreans who had immigrated there during the 19th century to Chinese business people who started arriving during the 1990s.

Eastman became interested in Asian culture, studied Japanese language at university, and went on to an exchange program in Tokyo. But on graduation she followed her husband, a Canadian navy officer, to Canada. After a few years there, she felt the Asian bug again so she did an MBA in Asia Pacific management. That course included a work placement in China with a British executive search firm.

Persuading her husband to travel across the world to live in China, Eastman arrived in Shanghai in the late 1990s. She lived in Pudong, which was very different then. Jin Mao Tower was just being built, and drinking coffee was a treat because there were very few coffee shops.

"I thought I'd be here for three years, I never imagined it would be 11. Now it's indefinite as I think there is an opportunity for the well-being industry in China."



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