



Robin's Nest: hair curls and Cannobidiols



Robin Woods chats with AhavaFelicidad, "The Holistic Hair Healer" at her Montclair studio. NEIL GRABOWSKY/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

By ROBIN WOODS
For Montclair Local



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Robin Woods is a local girl-about-town, writing about activities, stories, restaurants, and interesting people that catch her eye. She's written memoirs and personal essays as well as music and fashion columns for various New York City newspapers.

Got something you think should be in Robin's Nest? Write to us at culture@montclairlocal.news.

Your hair is your crowning glory, but a bad hair day is something to dread. I visited with AhavaFelicidad, "The Holistic Hair Healer" at her Midland Avenue shop to find out how to keep my hair looking healthy and gorgeous.

Ahava's mother, the late Mary Ann Clermont, was born in the South and lived on a farm, where everything was natural. Mrs. Clermont was raised eating fresh eggs, milk and vegetables. No chemicals were ever involved, which was important since she had many allergies. When it came to styling and caring for her hair, chemical relaxers were out of the question. Natural hair was the way to go, with a weekly press and curl done at a home salon. As early as age 5, Ahava did her hair her mother's way. As a teenager, she was very active and into sports, and her hair always "popped back" too quickly after swimming. Hair styling takes a long time, especially if it's kinky, coily, curly, wavy or very long. After training in a Vidal Sassoon salon, Ahava became a curly hair specialist. She said that "there's no need to straighten or press out curls in everyone's hair. You can cut hair dry, but without heat." With more than 100 different hair techniques in her repertoire, Ahava was well on her way.

Holistic hair practice takes into consideration the emotional, physical and mental aspects of hair, and Ahava includes consulting, hair care and styling into her business. Her face literally lights up when she talks about what she does, especially when showing her many signature products. Felicidad Hair Sugar became available

for sale in 2015 and was inspired by Montclair residents Dr. Manuel Brown and Rev. Safiya Oni Brown, who espouse natural life.

The hair sugar feels and looks like heaven, and is batched fresh in Montclair. The main ingredient is activated sugar, sometimes with aromatherapy notes of chocolate, cinnamon, nutmeg or ginger. My favorite one is called “Coconut Lemon Cake,” which smells so good, you want to eat it. In fact, that’s what it says on the label. Hair sugar is a natural exfoliant and helps to make your hair more hydrated. Ahava took me through the steps, which are to wet your hair, add conditioner, and then massage the sugar granules until dissolved. Dead skin cells are removed, and Ahava said it “helps with hair growth, as the massage stimulates blood flow into the scalp. You’ve got to scrub to grow.”

I’ve never seen black soap before, and Ahava brought out a solid chunk of it for me to see. The soap comes from Ghana, and is brown and stone-like in dry form, but turns black when dissolved in water. She makes a shampoo out of it, and you can even use it on your body. All of her products are chemical-free, and her mission is “balancing the universe, one natural head at a time.”

Ahava’s clientele is as diverse as Montclair is known to be, and she is deeply passionate about her business.



Celeste M. Munford, “The CBD Lady” from Third Day Hemp chats with Robin Woods. NEIL GRABOWSKY/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

FROM CURLS TO CBDS

It was just a 40 yard walk from my interview with Ahava Felicidad for me to meet “The CBD Lady,” Celeste M. Munford at The Eclectic Chic Boutique, 547 Bloomfield Ave. What is a CBD? It’s a chemical compound known as cannabinoid, that is found in cannabis or marijuana plants. Cannabinoids are used as a natural remedy and do not contain THC. THC is the main psychoactive compound in marijuana, and gets you high in heavy concentration. CBDs are holistic, natural and legal in all 50 states, as long as they contain less than .3% THC.

So, why did Celeste become involved with CBDs? After years of working in the financial field, she wanted to focus on something that was “uncommon, hip and trendy.” Third Day Hemp is her brand of products, and she sources the ingredients from a distributor in Colorado. She is also into wellness and natural herbs. She invited me to dig into a large bowl of Elektra hemp for a taste. Now, remember that CBDs do not give you a euphoric high, so I wasn’t getting giddy, giggly, or having a case of the munchies. I plead the fifth about knowing about any of that, but I was once young and wild.

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Of course, it smells like what it is, and was very dry with a somewhat bitter aftertaste. I kept myself from asking for some “to go,” but it’s found in Celeste’s hemp oil, hemp flower tea, hemp flower infused extra virgin olive oil, (bet you’re thinking of cooking more now, right?) hemp flower CBD kombucha vinegar, and even a Kief cigar. That makes for a really nice birthday, anniversary, or Father’s Day gift. Much better than another tie.

On a more serious note, CBDs can be helpful with controlling pain and inflammation. Celeste said that CBDs are beneficial for people who suffer from the extreme pain of some types of cancer or Multiple Sclerosis (MS). It’s also believed to help with anxiety, but I can’t speak from my own test experience. I am interested in the calming, soothing and relaxing aspects of CBDs, as I am so high-strung I can’t even relax in an herbal bubble bath. The edible and CBD hemp pre-rolled products all have labels on them as a notice to law enforcement, so that it’s not mistaken for illegal marijuana. That’s a thoughtful, helpful touch, and much appreciated.

Celeste loves the creative process and follows basic recipes when it comes to making her products, but tweaks things after perfecting them and then makes whatever she wants. I asked whether she was planning to add baked confections, but that might be something to do in the future. I will be the first one to sit down with her over a cup of coffee, as her Beta Tester.

I was surprised that Celeste describes herself as a very straight-laced and religious woman. She added that she “looks for things that are exciting, different and uncommon.” She’s warm, friendly, effervescent and

funny, too.

Her brother refers to her as “The Hempstress,” and it’s an apt nickname.

My day was well spent with two phenomenal women who know how to make you look and feel groovy.

In this column:

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