



On the Fayce of it

A great advertisement for her own skincare products, Fay Pascoe has loved the mystery of chemistry since she was a child.

WORDS BY ALI GRIPPER. PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER SCOTT

While many women her age are devoting their time to gardening and grandchildren, Fay Pascoe is at the helm of her own little home-based business empire in Dubbo, on the western plains of New South Wales, selling skincare products to more than 200 customers around Australia via mail order.

Her company, Fayce, came about when the law changed several years ago, making it necessary for pharmaceutical companies to divulge the contents of their products. Fay, then in her mid-sixties, a pharmacist and grandmother of five, had a look at the labels of the skincare products she was using.

"I realised I could do the same thing myself — maybe even better — but at a cheaper price," she says. Her cleansing lotions cost about \$40 for a 200ml bottle.

After researching which natural oils the skin needs, particularly in Australia's harsh climate, Fay created an emulsion (or base) to which she adds oils, vitamins and natural products, such as crushed walnuts or tea tree powder. Making the products by hand means she knows exactly what goes into each batch. The jojoba oil she uses comes from Condobolin in central-west New South Wales, the macadamia nuts come from Alstonville and the essential oils come from a quality supplier in Sydney.

According to Fay, many cosmetics products claim to be free of preservatives but in fact they contain chemical preservatives that can irritate the skin. While her products are preservative-free, what she doesn't claim is that they will make you look younger. Good skincare, she says, can only improve the look of your skin.

"If you look after your skin, you'll look good no matter what age you are," she says. "Wrinkles are 90 per cent hereditary — there's not much you can do about them. You certainly can't turn back time or stop yourself from ageing; ageing is an inevitable part of life. But you can have nice, smooth wrinkles.

"It really irritates me when major brands tell you that you need an eye cream and a throat cream, a this cream and a that cream, to keep your skin healthy," she says. "You don't. You need a good cleanser, a good moisturiser and a good exfoliant — that's it."

Fay says she found her vocation early in life: at nine, all she wanted to do was tinker with her chemistry set. She left her hometown of Dubbo as a teenager and studied pharmacy at Sydney Uni, working in a Kings Cross pharmacy during the day.

"The owner was a Greek man, an exceptionally good pharmacist who also spoke about 10 languages," she recalls. "Everyone came to his pharmacy — Maltese, Greek, Spanish, South American — because he could talk to them and he had such good people skills. We knew all the prostitutes, too, and about all the corruption. Here I was, a young country girl, in the midst of it all. It was such an eye-opening experience. It makes you far less judgmental when you deal with people from all walks of life."

Fay works at a leisurely pace, working on one batch at a time. She says she enjoys the interactions with her customers. "That's the best part of this business," she says. "I love it when customers send me emails about their grandchildren or pop little notes in the mail with their order. Often, it's about how long it's been since it rained ..."

Fay certainly is a walking endorsement for her products. At 69, she looks a good 10 years younger. "I use my own skincare," she says. "And I drink lots of water."

For more about Fayce, telephone (02) 6887 7277 or visit www.countrystore.org.au and go to page two of the personal section. 🐘

Above, from left Fay Pascoe's Dubbo garden comes second to Fayce product development; the apothecary at work; the Fayce skincare range is made from all-natural ingredients.