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Yael Alkalay

The founder of the all-natural beauty line Red Flower shares her grooming secrets

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Descended from Turkish rabbis, Bulgarian dermatologists and Argentinian cowboys and raised in Massachusetts, Yael Alkalay has a global heritage and lifelong fascination with health regimens. In 1999, she launched her all-natural beauty company, Red Flower.



Columbia University Press

Yael Alkalay

Since opening her Manhattan store, which initially sold only petal-topped candles and flower teas, she's developed more than 100 products, ranging from perfumes to skin serums, inspired by her frequent travels and containing meticulously sourced ingredients such as reiki mushroom extract and Finnish berry oils.

Ms. Alkalay's products are also used in luxury spas like Miraval and Canyon Ranch. This summer, she opens her first West Coast outpost, a Red Flower boutique next to clothing designer Maria Cornejo's Los Angeles shop.

Ms. Alkalay, 42, lives in Tribeca with her husband, architect Scott Adams Kruger, and

their 8-year-old daughter, Iona. She spoke with us about the simple things you can do to turn your home into a spa, the power of acupressure, her obsession with wheatgrass shots and the restorative powers of a hot bath.



F. Martin Ramin for The Wall Street Journal

Deva Curl's No Poo, \$19, mydevacurl.com

An essential, multifaceted product I have at all times is lip balm. You can use it as a cuticle cream, on your lips and to hydrate under your eyes. I love Weleda's Everon version.

The most important item in my medicine cabinet is a pair of wonderful specialty scissors from the oldest scissor factory in Japan, which dates back to the late 1700s. Quality tools are so important to enhancing the basic experience of taking care of yourself.

The scent I feel most seductive in is one I created called Guaiac, which is known as the "tree of life" in South America. It's a combination of frankincense, grapefruit and guaiac itself. It's smoky and woody with a pop of grapefruit. Under a cashmere scarf it almost blends with the smell of the wool.

I can't live without Kevyn Aucoin's brow pencil in brunette, eyelash curler and volume mascara.

To relax without going to a spa, make a really good cup of green or lemon verbena tea, draw a very hot bath with incredible bath salts, light a candle, plunge in and soak.

Every day I need to have a shot of wheatgrass. That intense dose of highly concentrated antioxidants really does the trick.

Even if it's an urban myth, I think you should change your hair products every three months. I like Philip B's amber goop—it does something magical to your hair. I also like Devachan No-Poo, which has no lather.


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F. Martin Ramin for The Wall Street Journal

Russian Amber Imperial Shampoo, \$140 for 12 oz. bottle, philipb.com

The most unusual treatment I ever had was when someone performed Tibetan yoga on top of me at the Hotel Valley Ho in Scottsdale, Ariz. If you want a crazy, life-changing two hours, this is the place to go. It's more of a stretch than a massage but afterwards, your body feels like it grew 3 inches.

A well-designed vanity area must have a really high-quality mirror and good natural light so you don't walk out of the house looking like you shouldn't.

The quickest trick to looking good is acupressure on the face. The best tools you have are your 10 fingertips. There are 11 pulse points on the face and by pressing them you're stimulating circulation. You can also do a handstand or knee forward for blood flow to your face. If you don't have time for that, a little lip gloss goes a long way.

—Edited from an interview by Jackie Cooperman