



Head Masters

When John Masters started styling hair just out of high school in 1975, the health

risks posed by inhaling and handling harsh salon chemicals were barely a passing concern. After embracing organic foods, he began investigating the dangers of chemicals such as ammonia and sulfates, staples in most hair dyes and highlighting treatments.

“I believe synthetics have a place in this world, but not in or on the body,” says the 44-year-old Niagara Falls, New York, native. His credo found, Masters moved his salon into his Manhattan apartment, stopped giving perms, and started dabbling in alchemy.

Using nontoxic bases, Masters developed his own line of hair-care blends from essential oils, plant extracts, and health-food staples—organic apple-cider vinegar formed the basis of his original hair rinse. “For my first wholesale order at

Barneys New York, I filled every bottle by hand with a funnel,” he recalls. By 1994, he had launched his salon just off the SoHo grid, and today his line includes skin-care products and doggie wash.

Though he no longer mixes by hand, Masters spends months developing his products with chemists and herbalists. He also imports most of his ammonia-free, clay-based hair dyes from Italy because they aren't distributed in the United States. Recently, Masters doubled the size of his woody, low-tech salon, where cucumber slices for the eyes and a shiatsu scalp massage come with each hair wash. Anne Heche and Sarah Jessica Parker are regulars.

Though now chemical-free, Masters still faces another inevitable job risk: his scissors. “They're the most dangerous things I work with. I'm always cutting my fingers.” *

► For more on Masters' salon, call 800-599-2450 or visit www.organicstyle.com.

Part basement alchemist, part organic innovator, John Masters is on the cutting edge of hair care.