

Bienvenidos a Natural Chica!

Welcome to Natural Chica!

On this site, you will find the stories of many women who have transitioned to natural hair, and who are excited to share their experiences, tips and encouragement. You'll also find special features of Natural Chicas who are **artistas (Artista Spotlight)**, have their own businesses (**Empresa[Business] Spotlight**), are proud to rock their short natural do's (**FAB Teeny Weeny Afros [FAB TWAs]**), willing to share their unique natural hair stories (**Háblame=Talk to Me**), and even exclusive interviews with other blogger and vlogger naturalistas (**Blogger/Vlogger Naturalistas**) and so many other exciting features!

Thanks for stopping by! :) - **Mae**, Founder (naturalchicablog@gmail.com)

Natural Chica



Mae

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Empresa Spotlight: Jane Carter Solution

I had the pleasure of interviewing Jane Carter from Jane Carter Solution, which is a natural-based hair care system. When it was confirmed that I'd be able to interview Ms. Carter regarding the company, I was too thrilled! I had always seen her product line during my numerous visits to Whole Foods Market and so I was anxious to learn more about the Jane Carter Solution company.

If you've never heard of Jane Carter Solution, here's a small excerpt from the company to give you some background before you read the interview:

"Jane Carter, a stylist and salon owner, began developing Jane Carter Solution over 10 years ago in response to an allergic reaction caused by the chemicals in traditional hair care products. Frustrated by the lack of non-chemical choices, Jane decided to formulate her own hair care line using simple, natural ingredients that would work on every hair type and texture regardless of ethnicity. Most recently featured in Essence (Nov 09) and Ebony (Sep 09), Jane is a well-recognized authority on hair care and is a frequent guest at industry, charitable and entertainment events. A staunch supporter of grassroots initiatives, she is committed to the protection, growth and development of global communities in need."

Since the interview was over the phone, the following will be my description of Ms. Carter's responses to the stated questions.



When was the Jane Carter Solution system developed and what was the inspiration for its creation?

Well, Ms. Carter's background is very interesting and it is important to explain what steps she went through to even create Jane Carter Solution. Ms. Carter has been a hair stylist for over 20 years and has maintained a very diverse client base. However, several years ago, she noticed that she had begun to develop allergies to the products that she was exposed to all day long in the salon. She mentioned to me that some of the adverse responses included asthmatic conditions and dermatitis.

It was when she started reading product labels that she began to understand the harmful effects of some of the ingredients, and from that point, she actually started throwing out all of the products in the salon! After that revelation, she took matters into her own hands by educating herself in areas like aromatherapy and herbology. Having this background gave her the understanding to the numerous beneficial effects of natural ingredients, which led her to develop her first product - a hair nourishing serum that is still offered today by the company.

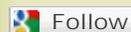
She started off by using the product in her salon and there was a domino effect soon after. Clients would ask her how they could purchase the product, which led Ms. Carter to start thinking seriously about mass producing and marketing her creation. During a training program she was giving at Clairol on establishing a multicultural client base, she was able to discuss her wishes to establish her product line with one of Clairol's leading chemists. One of the first questions the chemist asked her was how much it cost for her to make the product. When she told him that it would cost \$6, he informed her that she would not be successful and that to really be successful in the business, she would need to market a product that cost like \$0.99 to make and sell it for \$12.00 (Crazy, I know!!).

Well Ms. Carter did NOT take his advice and actually went on to see if she could develop 2 or 3 more products for her line to market. To do so, she sought the help of three other chemists who were knowledgeable and practicing in the hair care industry. She stressed to them that she wanted her market to remain diverse and she didn't want her products to be "categorized". You know, like the "ethnic" and "all others" sections we see all too often in ANY store that sells hair products. Well, when the chemists returned their formulation plans to Ms. Carter, she quickly noticed that they contained the ingredients that all the mainstream products already contained, which were the ingredients she was trying to stay away from (ie. silicones). Once again, Ms. Carter took things into her own hands and decided to take 2 semesters of a formulations course so she could have a deeper understanding of how to combine different ingredients for her hair care line.

Ms. Carter informed me that during her years as a hair stylist, she has encountered many people who have had scalp problems. She said many of these people included those with relaxers or those with locs but who refused to wash their hair for weeks at a time in some cases. This is one of the reasons why the next product she developed was the 100% scalp renew. It has both antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties, and did help a lot of her clients who exhibited scalp conditions.

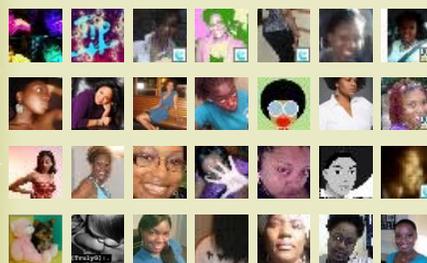
Since then, her product line has expanded and her products can be found all over the nation in stores and select hair salons, as well as online. One of the largest well-known markets where her products can be found are at my favorite store (in the whole wide world! Lol) Whole Foods Market. When asked why she chose to market her products there, she explained it was because Whole Foods Market matched her company's philosophies. As many of you know, Whole Foods Market prides themselves on providing natural and organic-based products, which matched the mission of

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Jane Carter Solutions in providing a hair care line that not only works, but has ingredients that over time will actually improve the health of your hair.

What makes the Jane Carter solution unique when compared to other natural-based hair care products?

Jane Carter's background really helps her company have a unique standing in the natural-based hair care product community. First off, she is a stylist, has taken courses (aromatherapy, herbology, formulations) that have helped her to rationally design her products, and also holds an M.B.A. degree. She says one of her pet peeves is the fact that many people hold the idea that there are certain hair products just for "ethnic" groups and then there is the rest, and that you have to market your products in that manner. Jane Carter Solutions prides itself in making hair care products that span every hair type and texture. Ms. Carter stated that she doesn't want to "perpetuate hair type segregation" and that its crazy that consumers still buy into thinking that they have to use products that are specifically titled to these groups.

What inspires the selection of some of the natural ingredients you use in your products? (Kokum Butter, Illippe Butter,)

First off, let me mention the fact that Ms. Carter is the sole chemist for her company! I thought for sure that she had a team of chemists that brainstorm together to devise the formulations for the line but she does this on her own (can we say impressed!). She states that she choose these ingredients for their amazing healing qualities. Most of the natural butters she uses come from West Africa and are very nourishing to skin and scalp. She says the selection of her ingredients allow her products not to work as a "band-aid" (simply masking hair damage) but really work to improve the integrity, elasticity and strength of the hair.

She also quickly pointed out some of her other favorite ingredients to use like avocado oil (really great for hair and skin), citrus (works as an antibacterial and since its acidic, works to seal the cuticle) and lavender (soothing qualities).

What have been some of the challenges in developing hair care products for a wide variety of hair types?

Ms. Carter says she really doesn't see it as a challenge. She went on to explain that the biggest challenge is knowing the market and knowing the needs of the market. Marketing for her products has been successful in whole food stores, however more commercial markets (i.e. beauty stores) try to categorize the hair products in to either the General market (90%) or Ethnic (10%) [Note: Think of the hair care section in Target for example, Ethnic products get not even half of one side of one aisle at times]. "Society has trained us to think that one product can't be for everybody."

Where would you like to see your company in the next 10 years?

Ms. Carter relayed that she would love to be just a resource for information. She is working on doing a pilot show that covers topics such as beauty, products and also trends in the beauty industry. She really wants to push this sharing of information since a sad, but true fact is that some of us do not receive sound information from our stylists on healthy hair care and definitely not the



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beauty supply store in most instances. She is also working on doing a series on blogtalkradio that will promote a conversation on the hair-care industry between the professionals and the consumers.

On a side note, when I asked why is it that most stylists don't really know much about how certain ingredients in the products affect your hair, she explained to me that there is very little product knowledge that is dispersed during training. She then went on to say that there is little to no discourse between stylists and product developers (I personally found that shocking!). This really made sense to me though, because not once had I heard one of my stylists (and I've had many during my relaxed years!) mention the dangers of chemicals found in relaxers, sulfate-based products, the clogging characteristics of mineral oil and petrolatum to name a few! (All of which are found in most mainstream hair care products!).

[Sidenote: Learned from Ms. Carter that it is more profitable to be a product developer than a hair stylist. Profit margin for hair stylists on average (~12%), for product developers (~50%).

To someone who is new to your hair care product system, what products would you recommend for them to try first?

Nourish and shine-#1 selling product

Revitalizing Leave-in conditioner (Can be used to refresh your hair in the morning since it's water-based)

Any tips for maintaining healthy natural hair in the winter months?

Ms. Carter explained that the biggest misconception is that hair needs oil for moisture. Hair needs nourishment (butters) and moisture from water-based products.

Where can Jane Carter Solutions products be purchased?

For all of the locations where Jane Carter Solutions can be found, visit this [LINK](#).

Note: Jane Carter Solutions also has a YouTube channel and Ms. Carter also shared with me that they will be selling their products in select Target stores (250 locations) in February!

After this interview, it was clear to me that Jane Carter is an impressive and knowledgeable woman in her field (I learned so much from this one interview!). She has a diverse background, which has really given her the tools to be successful in creating natural-based hair care products for a diverse clientele. She is passionate about making hair care products that not only make the hair look great, but nourish and strengthen it as well.

Thank you Jane Carter for taking the time to share with the Natural Chica Readers!

(Note: Jane Carter Solutions sent me a trial-size of their Revitalizing Leave-in Conditioner, Wrap & Roll, and their Nourish & Shine. I'll be sure to write a review of how those worked for me!)

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