

Which, of course, you could get at the Body Shop in a tiny, brown, cylindrical bottle with a screw-on cap.

According to Manda Heron, the daughter of one of the partners, there were only two other body product stores in the country - Kiehl's Pharmacy in New York and Caswell-Massey. The almost rash like spread of bath and body stores - Bare Essentials, Garden Botanika, Bath and Body Works, H2O, et al. hadn't even been imagined.

The Body Shop's products were unisex. There were no fancy labels. There still aren't. There was and still is a hand-built, custom feel to all of the Body Time products. The reason? Says Heron, "Jane and Peg had refillable bottles and home-made labels to keep the costs down.

The original Body Shop set the stage for environmentally-friendly finds like Origins and the modern The Body Shop, Int, companies which use recycled paper products and eschew expensively designed, paper-greedy outside packaging.

Counter "girls" were students or friends who were invited to experiment with the tiny vials of essential oils. One of them came up with Body Time's signature aroma, China Rain, a fresh green blend of muget, other white florals and China musk, and a favorite of stars like Whoopi Goldberg who used to buy from the Body Shop when she was with the Blake Street Hawkeyes.

"I've had people follow me off buses when I'm wearing it," says Heron. "One man followed me and said, 'I absolutely have to know what you're wearing. My wife would love it.'"

As the years went by, the minuscule counter in CJ's converted garage became a Telegraph Avenue store. Another boutique opened on Shattuck. One of the oldest stores, still thriving on Union Street, has the appearance of an antique apothecary. Word spread. And, as it has often been rumored (but never proven) in the body care industry, the original Body Shop was the inspiration for Anita Roddick, the Britisher who not only bought the name from the partners, Peggy Short and Jane Saunders, but opened Body Shops in every strip mall and neighborhood she could find, worldwide.

In 1991, Roddick paid \$3.5 million for the privilege and the Body Shop split in two — Short taking the retail stores and Saunders the wholesale end — and within a year, was renamed Body Time. Saunders and her daughter, Kathy, renamed their company TerraNova — this after running a fictitious name search for their first choice, Origins, which eventually went to Este Lauder. (Lauder even hired Kathy Saunders, originally, to launch their Origins line out of the Bay Area.)

Meanwhile, Body Time continued on, never losing its original focus which was always customer oriented.

Walk into a Body Time store these days, and there are 10 in the Bay Area from Palo Alto to San Anselmo (the three San Francisco stores are on Haight, Fillmore and Union streets), and you are almost forced to deal with a counter person.

There are themed displays around the stores. Samples of essential oils. A smartly stacked selection of \$5 aromatherapy/olive oil soaps. A full range of products in Body Time's signature China Rain scent. But no back stock. You have to interact with the saleswoman and actually start a conversation.

Body Time is a three-generational business these days — Peggy Short is in her 70s now and it is her daughter, Manda Heron, 49, and her daughter, Sarah Ridge, 25, who run the business. Sarah right in Berkeley and Manda, who, 20 days a month, telecommutes from her ranch in Livingston, Montana.

Today, the Body Time product lines have gone in two different directions: the original products, which use fine-grade mineral oil, walnut oil and jojoba oils as a base, and the new aromatherapy line. The originals include products such as the avocado body lotion, the China Rain line, glycerin soaps in exotic flavors like jasmine, rain, green apple and coconut, Lavender Mint Body Shampoo, Walnut Body Scrub, Jojoba Bead Body Wash & Polish (scented with lemon and lime), perfumes, incense and hair products.

The aromatherapy/botanical line, developed by Marianne Griffith of Prima Fleur in Marin, is packaged in sparkling cobalt blue bottles. While some of the products sound very old-fashioned (like the Willow Bark Deep Pore Cleanser with essential oils of ylang-ylang, lavender, lime, blood orange and fennel), many have been formulated with space-age delivery systems like liposomes, antioxidants, AHAs and BHAs.

Peg Short, her daughter and her granddaughter, Sarah, have watched the body and bath product business proliferate like a virus. They worry that the market may be over-saturated, what with every health food store, beauty salon and department store fielding its own private label goods. But they have remained small and personal on purpose. "We don't want to be Wall Street," laughs Manda Heron. I'm going to leave the business to my daughter.