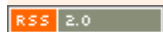


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Indulge in California Luxury from Sonoma

by Leslie S. Lee

The birthplace of the California wine industry, the Sonoma Valley conjures images of natural luxury, of sun-soaked afternoons among the vineyards and rolling fields. The Sonoma Soap Company hopes to capture just that feeling of freshness and indulgence with their new line of all-natural body care products. And after sampling some of their products myself, I think they have succeeded!

Sonoma products—which include shampoos, conditioners, liquid soaps, bath and shower gels, shaving creams and body lotions—are all under \$10. Each is made from a blend of certified organic ingredients, including lavender, citrus, wildflowers, cedarwood, oatmeal, and maple, reflecting the company's motto, "Made With Ingredients That Call Sonoma



Home." In addition to a line of bar soaps and unscented products, Sonoma offers three fragrance lines: Lavender Reserve, Citrus Medley and my favorite, First Crush.

I tried the Lavender Reserve Natural Bubble Bath, and the Lavender Reserve Hand & Body Lotion. This line is made with certified organic Lavender flower, olive leaf and grape seed extracts. Lavender has never been a personal favorite of mine, but combined with the frothy bubbles and rich, creamy lotion, the crisp scent made me feel like I was being pampered at a spa, rather than in my own bathroom. I especially liked that the lotion absorbed quickly and left no oily residue, only moisturized skin.

The next products I tested were from the Citrus Medley line. I now have the Natural Foaming Hand Soap sitting next to my sink, having thrown out my old soap in favor of this yummy and refreshing hand cleanser. The fluffy soap foam leaves your hands clean but soft. The Citrus Medley Bath & Shower Gel felt refreshing and hydrating, and left my skin much better moisturized than other shower gels I have tried. The scent of Citrus Medley is interesting—unlike other citrus scented products, this line is not overly sweet or lemony. Made with pink grapefruit, sweet orange, green tangerine, spearmint, buchu and certified organic extracts, Citrus Medley has the aroma of a Sonoma citrus grove; you can smell not only the fruit but the green grass and leaves as well.

My favorite products, however, were the First Crush Shampoo and Conditioner. After the heat and humidity of summer, my hair needed some serious help getting back into shape for fall, and so I was a little nervous about turning to a new product to get the work done. I was very pleasantly surprised! I have been using the Sonoma Shampoo and Conditioner for about two weeks now, and my hair is smooth and shiny. But the most noticeable difference is that my hair is the softest I can ever remember!

The shampoo, which has a consistency more liquid than gel, turns into a thick lather that leaves my hair squeaky clean after rinsing. The conditioner is also surprisingly light, but hydrated my hair so that it is silky and soft. First Crush is made with certified organic grape seed, red raspberry and green apple extracts, and it smells delicious! Fresh and light—like strolling through an apple orchard. These Sonoma products are all between 99% and 99.7% natural, 100% vegetarian, paraben and phthalate free, and the colors and fragrances are 100% pure, with no artificial aromas. Even better, their products are never tested on animals. The collection is now available online, as well as at a variety of independent health food stores throughout the country.

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