

Jan Masters Shampoo, but not as you know it

Does the future of hair-washing come in powders, pastes and bars?



'Take two bottles into the shower?' That was the question posed by the woman in a '90s shampoo ad set in a gym changing room (POV: back of locker). She slammed the notion of using a separate shampoo and conditioner because both coexisted in Vidal Sassoon's Wash & Go. Back then, though, the sell wasn't about reducing plastic - you were simply an idiot if you didn't want nicer hair, faster. A knock-on effect was that you could no longer use the excuse 'I'm washing my hair' to get out of a date, which in days of yore had been deemed acceptable. 'Ah yes, a lengthy process. Maybe another time.'

Decades pass. Shampoo doesn't change much. It gets fancier. There are more to choose from. But it's not until recently we've seen left-field crazes, from the 'no-poo' trend (nothing to do with constipation - it's about not using shampoo at all) to co-washing, whereby you use only conditioner. Sort of condition 'n' go.

Now, the revolution centres on how to wash your hair in an eco-friendlier manner, using less plastic and recycling more - in the UK alone, we throw away around 520 million shampoo bottles a year. This is why many brands are creating shampoos that contain less or no water - on average, traditional shampoos are 80 per cent H₂O, requiring more packaging.

In the past, I've been guilty of viewing alternatives as country house gift-shop fodder, stocked alongside candles, cookies and coasters. But now I've finally been getting to grips with solid bars, powder-to-foams and cremes (followed by my usual conditioner).

Some people love shampoo bars. Some don't. Some shrug about their performance. To be honest, finding one that suits your hair comes down to self-

trial. According to zerowasted.co.uk, you should seek out those that are specifically pH balanced for hair. If a bar is largely made up of oils such as olive or castor oils that have been 'saponified' (ie combined with sodium hydroxide), essentially, it's a cold-process soap, which is too alkaline, lifting the cuticle - and if your water is hard, leaving residue.

Fear not, there are plenty of reliable hair-specific formulations out there, including those of Ethique, Eco Warrior, EarthKind, KinKind and mainstream player Garnier. Most directions suggest sliding the bar over wet hair several times from root to tip in one direction (although I also lathered between my hands). Do keep the bar in a dish with drainage so it doesn't go mushy.

Another water-free format I tried - and preferred - is powder-to-foam shampoo. I rated The Powder Shampoo's range, especially Thyme & Bergamot for thinning and ageing hair (£24.50, thepowdershampoo.com). In a refillable aluminium bottle, it's flagged as being good for 100 washes. You can sprinkle directly on to wet hair - but if you're hanging your head over the bath it's all a little Shake n' Vac, so I tapped the powder into my palm first. The end result was soft, clean hair with weightless lift.

A relatively new concept is the shampoo paste and UpCircle's Shampoo Crème (£12.99, upcirclebeauty.com) is a revelation. Housed in a small 60ml glass jar, the concentrated formula delivers three times the washes of a liquid. Made with upcycled pink berry

extracts, I swear my blow-dry lasted longer after use. It's easy to pack as well

- handy, as I'm off on a cruise to chase the Northern Lights. Take two bottles into the Arctic? No way: just one jar - and brought back to recycle.



This week I am mostly...



Impressed by Prof Dr Steinkraus products (steinkraus.com), formulated by an eminent German professor of dermatology, who has used his in-depth clinical knowledge to create a sleek line focused on optimising the function of skin.



Inspired by make-up brands catering for the 50-plus age group such as Look Fabulous Forever, which Tricia Cusdan launched in 2013, aged 65. Great colours and textures for mature skins.



Interested in Ayurvedic skincare via Forest Essentials (forestessentials.co.uk), a dreamy range that draws on India's ancient understanding of natural ingredients to balance the skin. The authentic scents remind me of happy times in Rajasthan and Darjeeling.

Above: UpCircle Shampoo Crème. Left: The Powder Shampoo Thyme & Bergamot; EarthKind Tea Tree & Eucalyptus Shampoo Bar