

THE CUT

This Organic Facialist Thinks We Need to Demand Less of Our Skin



Photo: Courtesy of Tammy Fender

Tammy Fender has the most soothing voice. With her delicate smile and dressed in a shade of white, you feel that you will be okay when you're on her treatment table.

Fender might not necessarily consider it a calling, but she has always felt a relationship with nature. “I’ve always felt a connection to the energies of natural plant medicine, and even as a child, I felt drawn to the spiritual world and felt a deep concern for other people’s happiness. So my curiosity drew me into studying holistic healing and wellness.”

Fender majored in psychology in college. After that, she studied with an aesthetician in France and took every course she could find in natural healing — iridology, aromatherapy, botany, and thalassotherapy. Then her husband got a job offer in the Bahamas. There were no doctors on the remote outer island where they lived, so Fender began implementing her newly honed plant remedies.

“I’d see that geranium could actually help stop bleeding, and that dill was a good cure for constipation. I brought the practice to life.” When they returned to Florida, Tammy became an aesthetician at a local day spa, then started her own in Palm Beach in 2003. Products soon followed.

“I searched high and low for organic botanically based products I could use on my clients’ skin but there really weren’t any out there,” she explains. “I wanted something that offered purity, and integrity. With all the research I’d done on plant medicines, traditional healing and medicinal chemistry, I began making my own formulas in my kitchen.”

Her eponymous line has made her one of the first organic, “natural” brands the world over, but all Fender really wants to do is make us happy through achieving better complexions.

“I work through the skin, but I love to support transformation by helping each client make the lifestyle shifts that bring harmony on many levels,” says Fender. Fender spoke with the Cut about her homemade tonic for colds, how hanging out is underrated, and why she’ll always have pickle juice close at hand.

Bath or shower?

Bath, with my Trés Rose Bath Gel.

Most relied on hairstyling product and/or tool:

Argan Oil and Baby Bliss hair-dryer.

Scent of choice:

I wear different essential oils layered and blended, depending on the day. Sandalwood is a current and perennial favorite.

Favorite scented candle:

Cire Trudon, Abd El Kadar Moroccan Mint.

What shade, if any, is usually on your toes and/or hands?

No polish. I like to go au naturale and let the beach sand keep my feet buffed soft.

What beauty look do you struggle with achieving?

Full-face make up.

What beauty look do you just not get?

Lip filler.

Work shoe of choice:

A ballet type of slipper. It has to be a quiet shoe for the spa.

Netflix and chill outfit:

Silk pajama set.

Earrings of choice:

My husband gave me diamond posts for our anniversary last year and they're all I wear.

Top item currently at the top of your fashion wish list:

I love the handmade, Bohemian-type clothing at Figue here in Palm Beach — anything that has a romantic, vintage, and artisanal look.

What is your classic uniform?

White tunics, romantic white dresses, flowing white skirts.

What do you have too many of?

Books.

What do you splurge on?

Family vacations and beautiful things that are handmade.

What do you scrimp on?

Makeup. I don't wear much of it.

Favorite travel destination:

Ireland.

What phrase or word are you known for saying?

"Oh my goodness!" "Oh, my!" or "Oh, dear!"

What tests your patience?

Big egos and listening to constant negativity.

Last great book you read:

The Surrender Experiment by Michael Singer.

What do you do or take when you can't sleep?

Meditation.

Jet lag cure:

Stretching and sleep.

Cold cure:

I've been growing a lot of turmeric and ginger. I created this tonic with cloves, honey (I'm also a bee keeper) and lemon. I seep it like a tea, then drink it throughout the day.

Headache cure:

Peppermint oil, and reflexology pressure points.

Hiccups cure:

A little sip of pickle juice. My mother turned me on to it, so I've been doing this since I was a child.

Favorite smell:

Orange blossom.

Least favorite smell:

Gasoline and diesel. They give me an instant headache.

Most listened to playlist:

Sacred Earth. It's grounding and relaxing.

What stresses you out when you're running low on it?

When there's not enough calm around me. Chaos stresses me out.

What room in your home are you most often found in, and why?

Our gardens outside. I cherish my time in connection with nature. Also, my library — my curiosity is insatiable.

Where do you go when you need quiet?

The Bahamas, to an outer island where there isn't any connection to technology.

Name a few elements that your favorite day would involve:

A treatment in my spa. An inspirational call with my small intimate creative team. Sharing a meal and playing outside with my children, and an hour to pray and mediate.

Name a trait or talent you possess that few know about:

I can ballroom dance.

Comfort music:

Snatam Kaur.

What are you over?

Digital overindulgence. I'm guilty because I'm always trying to keep up and doing everything timely, but I'm much more comfortable just being in the moment and not having to feel so responsive.

What could we use more of?

Downtime. Relaxing and doing nothing. Deep breathing and not always doing and thinking ahead. Hanging out.

What is always in your fridge?

Fresh squeezed Florida orange juice.

What do you still hope to invent?

I'd like to create something that would put the body in a naturally relaxed state.

Where are you when the best ideas come to you?

I usually get up between 4 and 6 in the morning, and I write most ideas down then. Also, because I work in silence, things come to me as well. I always have a leather journal nearby and it's filled with my ideas.

Who would be your friend if only you two met?

Roger Federer.

What or who in your formative years altered the path you were on?

My colleague and master healer Helya Burgon. We met over 25 years ago, and we've been working together since. I learn from her every day.

What do you foresee as the top beauty trends in 2019?

Simplification, allowing skin to have downtime, and to de-stress. We've added so much to every daily routine, it's time to ask our skin to do less, to make fewer demands on the skin.

What product in your company's domain is misunderstood and should be a best seller?

Clarifying Derma gel. It's a healing spot treatment that I formulated for women over 30 who were having hormonal breakouts but didn't want to use the harsh, drying treatments. It's made of thyme and tea tree and myrhh. Myrhh preserves the tissue, but it's anti-bacterial so it's very healing.

If you won the Power Ball tomorrow, what are the first five things you would do? (after, of course, donating the majority of it to your top charities...)

Travel around the world with my family, spend a year here and a year there, indulging in various cultures (in the Scandinavian countries, Thailand, South America) and really submerging into the history. I'd build a special retreat center focused on children.