

Interviews

Randi Ragan

by Stef McDonald

GreenBliss EcoSpa owner Randi Ragan brings luxury to her clients with the mobile spa business she started in 2006, which uses only natural and organic products for pampering services. She spoke to Greenopia about her work and living green in Los Angeles.

How did you get started in your business?

It was an outgrowth of wanting to learn how to live more sustainably. Driving back from a facial one day, I was stuck in traffic and I was thinking how my time was so valuable. L.A. is a spa town but no one had focused on eco-friendly services and products and then the light bulb went on for me.

Best part of your job?

It's definitely turning people on to idea of life that is sustainable and eco-conscious. Also, connecting with other people on the green path. It's an adventure and it's great to see how it's catching on.

What are some of your favorite local green restaurants?

I have always loved **Real Food Daily**. I also like **Juliano's Raw, A Votre Sante**, and **Native Foods**. For takeout, I like **Organic To Go**.

Where do you shop for organic groceries?

Usually **Whole Foods**. I go to the **Farmers' Market** a few times a month and supplement with **Whole Foods** and **Trader Joe's**, which has a good organic selection as well.

What are some of your favorite local green businesses?

I've gone to the Sherwin-Williams store for non-toxic paints. We drive veggie oil cars and got our cars converted by **Lovecraft Biofuels**. Most of my personal care products I get through work and I like to go to local sources like the **Farmers' Market** for handmade soaps.

Is there a particular environmental non-profit you support?

The **NRDC** and **Healthy Child Healthy World**. I also turn people on to the **Cosmetic Safety Database** by the Environmental Working Group.

What's your favorite thing about living in the city? Least favorite?

It's the exposure to ideas. I find it's an incubator for so many wonderful ideas. Contrary to popular myth, it's not all about a narcissistic entertainment business. I find it stimulating and amazing. I have that love-hate thing about how it's crowded and big and expensive and sometimes cold, but it's also incredibly supporting and nurturing of ideas.

What would you say is the city's undiscovered or underrated jewel?

I just discovered this beautiful little park in San Marino near Pasadena called Lacey Park. It used to be someone's estate in the '20s and it's surrounded by stately homes so it feels like you're walking in someone's backyard. There's a paved bike path, roses and spruce trees, picnic tables, and a playground. It feels very turn of the century and it's hardly used so it's quiet and contemplative. I also like the upper reaches of L.A. county going into Ventura county.

Where do you like to take out-of-town visitors?

The **Griffith Park Observatory** is amazing, especially since the renovation. It gives you a birds-eye view of L.A. and on a good day you can see from Catalina to the mountains and then turn around and see the Hollywood sign.

What's your favorite weekend outdoor activity?

Finding time to spend with my family. It's about finding a way to be away from maddening crowds and to connect. Going to a park or riding bikes and finding a place to eat and discovering ethnic restaurants. Also catching an art flick at the Laemmle Theater and taking family trips to a museum.

What's your favorite vacation destination?

We have family in Manhattan so that's always an exciting trip. We took a trip to El Capitan Canyon recently and I always love taking driving trips up the coast. For me, you can explore the California coast and never see it all or get tired of it all.

What's an eco-friendly gift you like to give?

I would have to say it comes back to personal care products. There's beautiful stuff out there: handmade soap or a lotion or moisturizer or skin care. Clothing made out of bamboo or hemp is also good.

Do you have a favorite environmental book or movie?

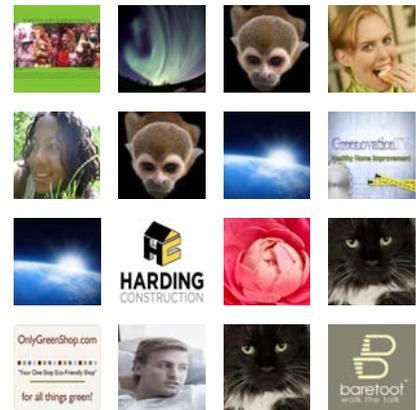
Anything written by Paul Hawken. He has a very eloquent voice.

If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?**Browse Ratings****Products**

- Automobiles
- Large Electronics
- Small Electronics
- Apparel & Jewelry
- Bath & Beauty
- Home & Garden
- Food & Beverages
- Pets
- Gifts
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Corporate

- Airlines
- Baby Foods
- Beauty
- Beer
- Candy Maker
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If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?

A mimosa tree. I grew up in the south and have childhood memories of climbing up one at my house. The tree had bean pods and these incredible pink blossoms you could climb up to a branch and feel completely hidden and comfortable like it was a secret place.

Describe your path to green: how and when you became eco-conscious.

I was a yoga teacher for about 10 years and it was a lifestyle that can start you on the path. My tipping point when I had a baby and was looking for products that were safe.