

its own laundering to ensure the detergent used is natural.

Faipoux says going green in no way diminishes the indulgent experience one expects when visiting a salon or spa.

"Some people may think that the two things are mutually exclusive" he says. "But I have been here 11 years and I know what Hong Kong people like. The salon I've created is a fusion between a place of luxury and an eco-conscious, environmentally friendly atmosphere."

Stepping into the wood-toned and mirrored interior of Emmanuel F., it's easy to see what he means. Here, faux is the new beau. Bamboo walls are made to look like light wood, while the fake leather chairs and footrests allow customers to sit back comfortably without having to feel guilty about unfortunate bovines. Each private station is outfitted with a television offering a selection of movies and channels. Two VIP rooms are also available, with a private area for washing hair, and the separator between the two rooms can be pulled back for couples who book treatments together.

In addition to hair care, Emmanuel F. also offers facials, body treatments and make-up services. The salon is connected to the spa where each room is fitted with its own shower and again, two rooms can be merged for a couple's treatments. The beauty station located at the front of the salon is brightly lit and lined with rows of natural beauty and skincare products. Customers are put in beauty manager H el ene Foucher's capable hands, and the service is ideal for those who have somewhere to go after a facial, or who simply want a more appropriate look to match their new hair colour.

The price for a basic shampoo, cut and dry is HK\$350 for men and HK\$450 for women, and compared to other salons with a similar price range, Emmanuel F. feels like an upgrade to first class.

So, if it is possible to blend luxury and environmental awareness without raising prices or lowering quality, why aren't more salon and spa venues offering the same service?

While Emmanuel F. is the first salon and spa to employ green processes and products for hair and beauty treatments, some salons, such as Green



Some of the environmentally friendly products at Emmanuel F. salon. Photos: Sam Tsang

Green Salon Top Pick

Green Touch Salon

Green Touch Salon is partnered with Simply Organic, a Minnesota-based brand which supplies it with natural and organic hair care products. The brand uses organic ingredients in their plant-based products whenever possible, and the peroxide content in the hair-colouring treatments is kept at below 2 per cent.

Green Spa Top Pick

Spa L'Occitane

L'Occitane is known for its natural, eco-friendly philosophy, and customers at Spa L'Occitane can enjoy its range of face and body treatments that exclusively use the brand's products. L'Occitane uses either certified organic or natural products which do not contain animal products or by-products, are not tested on animals, and are free of parabens and silicones whenever possible.

Touch Salon, promote a green concept, as do some spas such as Spa L'Occitane - but there are few of them. Faipoux says that it comes down to habit.

"Many hairdressers don't like change. They would have to learn how to do something new, with new and unfamiliar products, and they worry about losing clients through their lack of confidence."

Faipoux says that he is confident that this will change soon, as Hongkongers are becoming increasingly eco-conscious.

"It will take time," he says. "But every day we are trying to educate the public on healthier alternatives to their beauty routine."

Faipoux's clientele used to be predominantly Westerners, but he is now getting a mix of both expats and locals. His customers are "either looking for a healthier way to live, or wanting to do their part for the environment, or both".

Even the hairdressers benefit from the philosophy, Faipoux says, citing research that hairdressers exposed to salon chemicals over a long period of time were proven to be at a greater chance of developing cancer.

"However you look at it, this salon is a great solution for the customer, the environment and the hairdresser. This way, everyone is a winner."