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Scentimental

Journey

Michelle Bardwell's newest career path celebrates the healing power of plants.

Holly Haber | Photography by Kelsey Foster | September 27, 2012

Michelle Bardwell is typically way ahead of her time.

Moonslice, the adult dance workout studio she operated in Deep Ellum back in the '80s, foreshadowed today's trendy ballet exercise programs. In 1998, before organic was a household word, Bardwell was making organic cotton dresses and tunics in softly draped silhouettes.

Now the naturalist is pursuing another venture that's not widely accepted or even understood—clinical aromatherapy.

"I know I'm a little ahead of my time but I'm not stopping," Bardwell asserts. "It's natural medicine, which is not a really new concept. But you say 'aromatherapy,' and people think I make candles and soap. My job is to educate people on medicinal essential oils and how to use them in daily life."

Bardwell recently moved the business, called Flower Road, into a cozy rental home in Preston Hollow. In this serene space, she teaches how essential oils can be used to support physical and mental health via cooking classes and personal consultations. She also crafts organic face and body balms that are loaded with vitamins, emollients and herbs, but are free of chemicals. "You're feeding your skin," she says.

A clinical aromatherapist, Bardwell studied with a naturopathic doctor and aromatherapy professor in France, and she is a purist. There are three quality levels of essential oils, and she uses only the highest—medicinal grade.

"It doesn't matter what it smells like or if you smell it because what I'm doing is getting the essential oil into the body," she explains.

It's ancient knowledge that plants can be applied or ingested to alleviate discomforts from anxiety to digestive problems, fatigue and more, she says. Distilled plant oils are so concentrated that a single drop is often all it takes.

"People look at it as a woo-woo modality, and that's not how I work," Bardwell asserts. "When someone comes to me, it's usually because they have a health issue and want to try an alternative method first, or they've been to every doctor and they're searching for another way." By appointment, 214.987.2766, flowerroad.net (<http://flowerroad.net>)



Michelle Bardwell of Flower Road



Lavande Crème Ancien, \$44, and Renne Crème Ancien, \$68