

Atelier

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REVIEW



Natural Beauty

I'm a bit of a stickler for using natural based products on my hair and skin in an effort to reduce the number of chemicals that are absorbed into the bloodstream, which is why I love Aveda products and frequently go to Aveda hair salons. So when I heard that a new salon called Atelier had opened in Clifton Village that was championing a new range of products made from natural ingredients – primarily milk and fruit – by an innovative Italian company called Milk_Shake, I was eager to try it out.

The Milk_Shake range, I discovered in my consultation with Atelier owner and director, Ella, is paraben, petrochemical and ammonia free, but still high performance. The colour, she said, “creates a luminosity like no other.” How it works is by protecting the cuticles of the hair and infusing each strand with milk proteins so the colour lasts longer.

Ella opened Atelier in the heart of Clifton Village, on Regent Street, just over two months ago, after 14 years in the industry, including hairdressing in various salons around Bristol. It had always been her dream to open her own salon in her own unique style, so when the opportunity presented itself, she jumped at the chance and transformed an old salon space into this industrial-inspired, luxurious, boutique salon. The cool and trendy décor, with wooden flooring, up-cycled pieces of furniture, dark leather sofas, deep purple walls, patterned wallpaper and striking Moroccan lampshades all reflect Ella's style and creative flair perfectly. She even has plans to open a spa with a number of treatments rooms below the hair salon by the end of the year – staying with the ethos of natural beauty.

At the consultation we discussed cut and colour. Being blonde, I normally just have the same colour highlights every three months. But Ella could sense that I was bored with this and instead suggested breaking up the colour with some different tones, including a pinky rose gold. I was horrified at this thought but after showing me some samples and pictures of how it can really emphasise more vibrant blonde highlights as well as complement fairer skins, I felt safe with Ella's knowledge and expertise, and excited at the prospect of trying something new. Ella's enthusiasm shines through with everything she says and it is obvious that she is very passionate about hairdressing and customer service and knows exactly what will suit someone's colouring and

face shape to create a fabulous image.

In terms of the cut, I explained that I was fed up with having shapeless, bulky hair so Ella suggested cutting a little bit off the length, taking out some of the weight on the sides and softening my fringe and shape around the face. Ella and her team of stylists are all experts when it comes to hair and are happy to offer inspiration if you are stuck for ideas.

A week later I turned up for my appointment and as soon as I entered the salon, I felt I could switch off and enjoy being pampered. The atmosphere is tranquil, with comfortable seats, a large selection of refreshments, warmth, soothing aromas, gentle music and a complimentary hand massage all adding to the relaxing experience – an oasis of calm in the heart of a bustling city.

After the highlights had been put in and set, I was taken over to the basin to one of the massage chairs and laid back as my hair was washed. The best thing about the Milk_Shake products is the smell – sweet and beautiful, and it lingers for a day or so, making your hair feel fresh and clean. Goodbye chemical whiff and stinging on the scalp!

Ella used colour enhancing shampoo and conditioner, followed by a Milk_Shake Colour Boost Active Yoghurt Mask. This intensive moisture treatment is rich in Vitamin E and can be customised with a specific colour to refresh tone and radiance. As well as the head massage and hot towel, the treatment was made even more special with a glass of Champagne (complimentary with every treatment) that I sipped in my blissful state of relaxation. Other treatments on offer include the popular Lab Therapy Label M Shots, from the salon's other product range, which are specifically targeted to help damaged hair, replenish colour or soothe a dry and itchy scalp.

Ella finished with a cut and blow-dry, explaining techniques that I could use at home to recreate the look. I was amazed how much more lustrous, shiny and healthy my hair was when I left – the colour was intense and vibrant and the condition hydrated, smoother and a lot more manageable. It was the first time I'd really seen a difference after having a colour, so in my books, Milk_Shake performs even better than Aveda. I'll be back again for sure. ■ SC

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