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**Nails Naturally**

I gave Nails Naturally owner LaShaun Brown-Glenn a major challenge. When I arrived for my From the Earth Pedicure my feet were in sad shape. Since my last pedicure, I'd trekked four days in Peru, run at least 50 miles and walked another 30. There were blisters, there were calluses, cracked nails, chipped polish - it was ugly.

But LaShaun, a 17-year industry veteran, gamely welcomed me into her cozy, friendly salon. Compact and perpetually upbeat, LaShaun was smiling for the entire hour I was with her. Her eight-year-old "hand and foot spa" is a wonderful reflection of her energy.

Tucked into the fourth floor of the Loop's historic Pittsfield building, Nails Naturally is not a place you'd randomly happen upon. Yet, it's located in a secret beauty corridor of sorts - LaShaun reports there are 36 salons in the building.

Nails Naturally uses its space well. Two pedicure chairs, four nail stations and a tiny front desk fit comfortably into the long, narrow space made airy by beige walls and lots of lighting. Candles scent the room and a slew of products line the walls.

There is no music piping overhead, but it's never quiet. LaShaun's casual energy and friendliness invite camaraderie among clients. In my 60-minute stay, I met four women and chatted about work, apartment hunting and upcoming travel plans. Think old-fashioned female-friendly barbershop. LaShaun is everywhere - greeting clients, fixing chipped polish, answering the phone, commenting on her favorite color for spring toes. The personalized attention from a salon owner is unprecedented.

My pedicure began with a ten-minute soak in foot clean, one of several Rawearth items used in the From the Earth pedicure, which LaShaun calls a "facial for the feet from the earth" because it uses entirely earth-based products.

After the soak, LaShaun clipped and filed my nails then spent a good ten minutes buffing and scrubbing, paying special attention to calluses and blisters. Next we moved onto a gentle sugar scrub exfoliation applied to remove any dead skin. Then LaShaun painted on a volcanic clay mask to hydrate and soften my legs and feet. A fabulous five-minute massage followed. I was almost sad to see the polishing begin. But ten sparkling ruby-red toes cheered me up.

I danced out of Nails Naturally, blisters and cracked nails a distant memory.

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