

PROFILES



Ask an Eco Expert: Oyéta Kokoroko of Okoko Cosmétiques

by Sheri Radford / Mar 15, 2021

Who knew eco-friendly beauty products could look (and feel) so good?

Oyéta Kokoroko didn't start out making her own cosmetics, but health problems led her down the path of reading food and beauty product labels and getting curious about the ingredients. In 2016, she launched her eco-luxurious skincare line, **Okoko Cosmétiques**. It now has its first bricks-and-mortar retail space, **L'Atelier OKOKO**, which opened in January in downtown Vancouver. Recently we caught up with Oyéta Kokoroko to chat about her brand, progress in the beauty industry and more.

E911: Can you explain what it means for your beauty brand to be eco-luxurious?

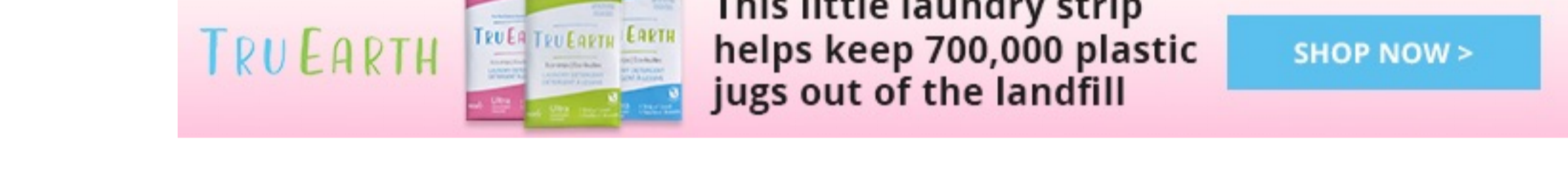
**Oyéta:** It means the products offer a luxury experience—the textures are enticing, they smell good, they perform—but they're also made naturally with ingredients that are rare and precious. Today we have a customer base of people who want to use products that they know are natural, safe, non-toxic. But I think a lot of people also enjoy indulging in that luxurious experience. That's why we decided to combine “eco” and “luxury.” It's safe for the environment, it's non-toxic, it's made with organic ingredients, but the way it feels on your skin when you apply it, it just feels luxurious

E911: Why is it so important to focus on the eco-friendly part of that?

**Oyéta:** It's always been important for me to feel that we're offering products that are safe and not toxic, for our health but also for the environment. Nowadays you see more and more brands that are handmade, that are completely natural, because we have to change our ways, when you see what's going on around the world. There's a lot of damage because of the abuse of the environment.

E911: How did you get involved in the beauty industry?

**Oyéta:** A few years ago, I had a health problem due to my lifestyle. After consulting some doctors, I started making changes: taking herbal remedies, eating more organic, connecting more with nature. I wanted to live more of a holistic life. I also started paying more attention to the labels of the products I was buying. Initially, it was just reading the labels of my food. Eventually, I started to do the same with my skincare products and beauty products. I also started researching ingredients, because I was curious: "What's in my face cream? What's in my shampoo? What's in my balm? What's that ingredient? What are parabens?" I got a wake-up call. So I started seeking more natural solutions.

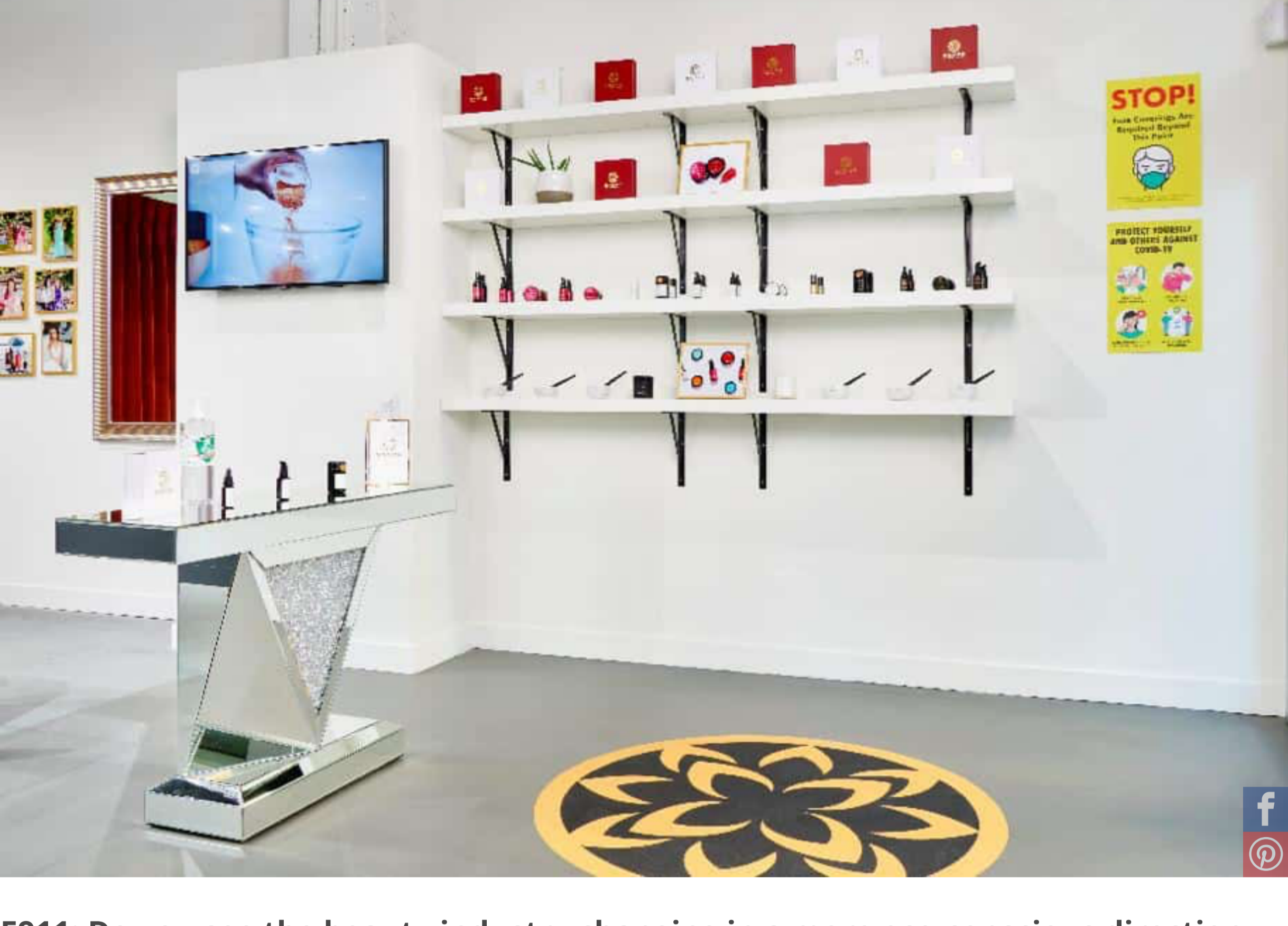


I bought a few books and started making stuff at home, with simple, natural ingredients. I made my own herbal remedies, then soaps, then lotions and facial masks. I took a professional formulation program to learn how to create natural skincare in a professional way. And after that I decided to get creative and really build my product line. I love the eco aspect, but also I wanted the innovation part that sometimes the natural beauty industry can lack. We have a lipstick that is blue, and it's natural. We have a balm that is orange, and it's natural. Typically when you think organic products, you don't always see those colours.



E911: What makes your new retail space different from other stores that sell beauty products?

**Oyéta:** It's focused on organic natural products, so we don't sell mainstream products. Also, it's a wellness hub, meaning that we focus a lot on education. Customers can book a one-on-one consultation with myself or one of my team members. We will help you build a routine, whether you're looking for beauty products or complementary health products to achieve beautiful skin from the inside out. We're also going to be doing workshops, in person or virtually. Something else that is interesting is we have a mini artisan lab where we do our research and development for new products, so people can see where the products are made. It's beautiful. It's like an apothecary. It's not like a regular store where you go in and you buy and you leave.



E911: Do you see the beauty industry changing in a more eco-conscious direction overall?

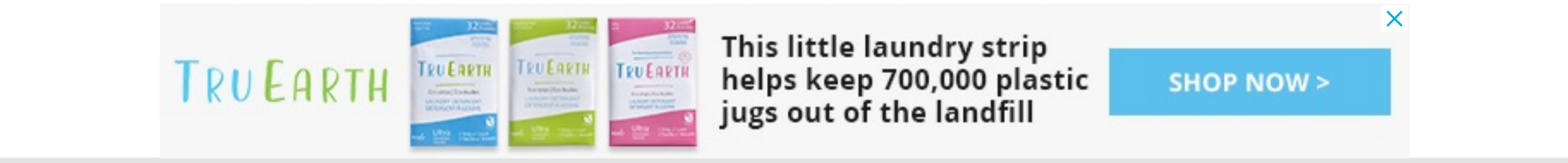
**Oyéta:** Yes, for sure. More and more people are seeking products that are more natural and organic and sustainable and environmental. I don't think it's just a trend. It started decades ago. Consumers are getting smarter—they want to live a healthier life, they're asking questions a lot more. And I think this is driving more interest in the natural industry. Even mainstream brands are now launching natural lines and removing certain ingredients.

E911: What things do you do to live a more sustainable lifestyle?

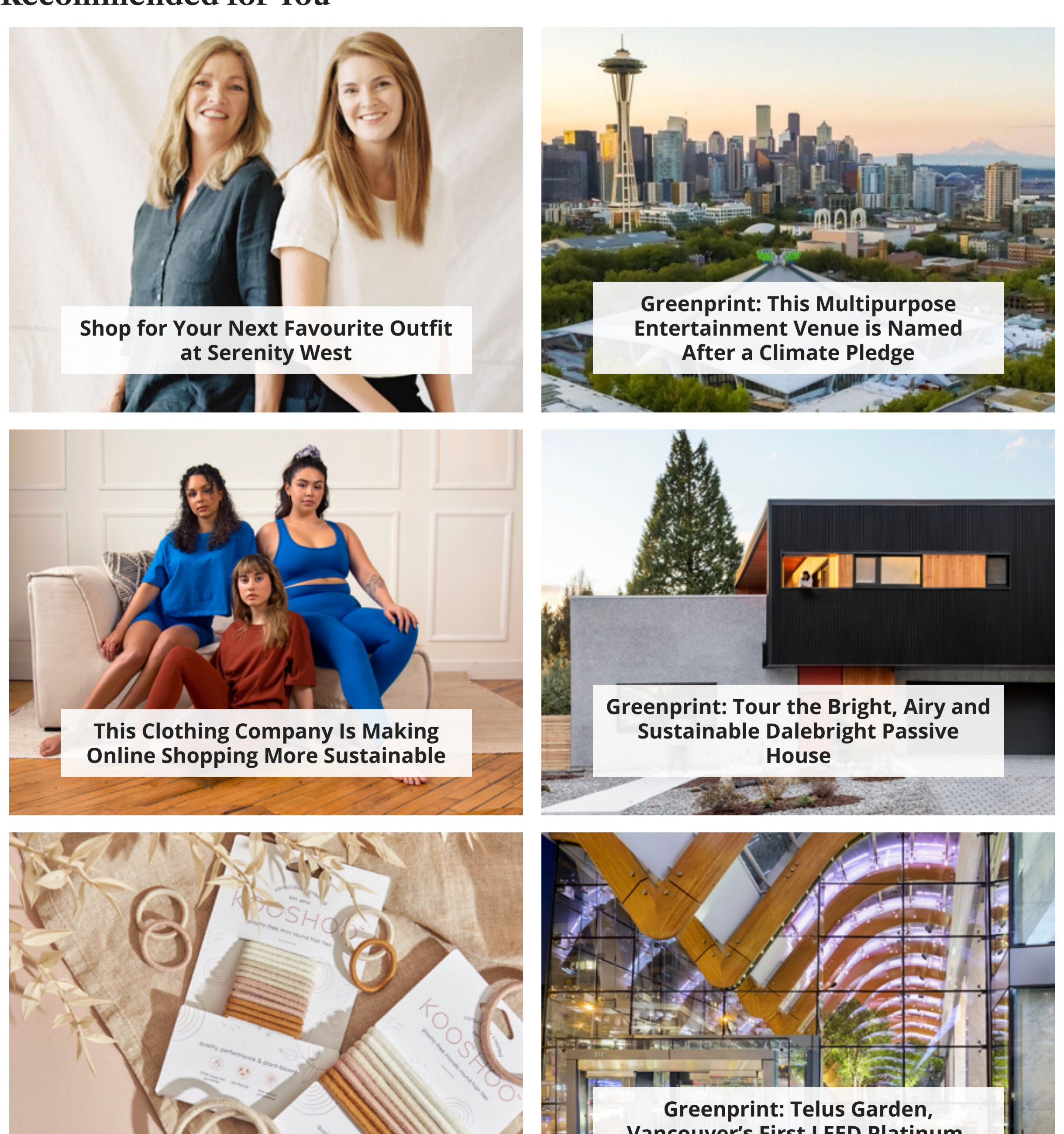
**Oyéta:** I try as much as I can to minimize waste, whether it's at home or at work. We try to reuse as much as possible. We use shipping boxes that are recyclable. Our packaging is also recyclable, it's not made of plastic. The gloves that we use are biodegradable. We compost as well. Very soon we're going to start a recycling program where local customers can return their bottles or jars to us, and we will give them a discount.

E911: Do you think people are taking the time to pamper themselves at home more because of the pandemic?

**Oyéta:** Yes. It has created uncertainty in people's lives. A lot of people, emotionally and mentally, are in a place that is hard to manage, therefore they will seek ways to decompress and unwind. Adding more self-care into our lives is a great way to cope with current events.



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