

MADE BY MARIN

# Tonic

**I**T ALL STARTED with a bar of soap. When it came to body care products, Tonic co-founder Ian Hewitt was a Dial devotee until a path of discovery revealed the dirtier side of soap, including the neurotoxins masked as antibacterial properties within it. Believing that what you put on your skin should be just as healthy as what you eat, Hewitt and his wife, Mill Valley native Kristina Ruud-Hewitt, began to look at the process of soapmaking and started developing recipes. While pursuing full-time corporate careers, they

⦿ **Dioxins, found in many soaps, are neurotoxins that can cause cancer, nerve disorders and immune system disorders.**

⦿ **Each batch of Tonic soaps is cut and stamped, then air-cured for six to 10 weeks.**

⦿ **After curing, each bar is hand-polished and wrapped in the Hewitts' favorite decorative papers.**

⦿ **Cold process soap-making is the act of mixing fixed oils with an alkali. The result is a chemical process called saponification, a change in the composition of the oils that solidifies the mixture into a bar of soap.**

⦿ **The duo plans on opening a retail and production space in the next few years.**

founded Tonic in 2014. **PHILOSOPHY** All Tonic soaps are made by hand in small batches using a version of the cold process method. Handcrafting in small amounts allows the greatest amount of control, which is important since the raw materials are unprocessed and can change from season to season. **THE SCOOP**

The soaps are made with original recipes and incorporate fresh ingredients like locally grown cucumbers, laurel leaves wild-crafted from a tree in San Rafael, and organic avocados grown in Berkeley. The logo and labels are designed and printed by the duo as well, so that every aspect of the production is kept in-house. **BEYOND MARIN** Tonic products can be found at the San Rafael Sunday farmers' market, Garageland in Forest Knolls, Kosa Arts in Oakland, online, and at Ume Studio, which carries the Erode Summit Series soaps, collaboratively produced with Tonic. "Ume Studio came to us out of the blue and it sounded like a crazy idea, but they were very earnest and passionate," Kristina says. "The collaboration challenged our process and made us question our production, what we had to do to satisfy demand." Currently, Tonic is working on expanding the line into lotions, serums and other body care products and the Hewitts hope to be sharing the new products over the next year or so. **WHAT THEY SAY** "In the next few years we hope to trade in our 9-to-5s for 12-to-12s!" Kristina says, laughing. "But at least it'll be our 12-to-12. All of these different ways to

think about products and how we use them sprout up in Marin," she adds. "They always have — there's a nice little pocket of innovation here that spreads across the globe." [tonicnaturals.com](http://tonicnaturals.com) **KASIA PAWLOWSKA**

