

Imagine food-grade skincare
that is so pure you can eat it!

SKINCARE WITH A CONSCIENCE

writer **Judy Chapman**

HEAL YOUR SKIN – AND HUMANITY AT THE SAME TIME

The next generation of spa and skin care brands will be carbon-footprint free, edible and ethical. Labels of the future will not only indicate the nutritional content but how every ingredient has been sourced and harvested. Sustainable skincare is our only future.

Who would have predicted just a few years ago that the global natural cosmetic industry would be worth a staggering US\$7billion by the end of 2008? Predictions are that these figures will rise to US\$10billion by 2010, driven by the growing consumer demand for green products and the mainstream distribution of natural cosmetics into supermarkets, pharmacies and drugstores. Insiders report that in the not too distant future several natural product brands will be taken off the shelves with only those that are truly pure and ethical remaining.

“Proper documentation of ‘ecological footprinting’, ‘ingredient-miles’, ‘carbon offsetting’, ‘indigenous intellectual property rights’, and ‘corporate social responsibility programs’ allow consumers to make informed decisions and understand the ingredient miles associated with their purchase,” reports Mark Wuttke, Principal of the Wuttke Group in the US, a global business development group with a focus on luxury spa, boutique retail, organic luxury and the emerging category of eco-chic. He adds that in a rapidly changing marketplace, skincare companies now need to recognise the positive changes brought about by a healthy lifestyle and increasing consumer awareness of the effects of climate change, social inequities and chemical use. “Additionally, offering a percentage of revenue to a fund, research or program is another important way to demonstrate commitment to a regenerative lifestyle and allow consumers to be a part of a larger philanthropic movement.”

FAIR TRADE

Fair trade, already popular in the fashion and food industry, has opened up into the skincare industry. Once a cult movement, it is now a growth area. Recent statistics reveal that global sales of fair trade products increased by 40% to 1.6 billion Euros in 2006/07, benefiting 1.4 million producers and workers.

Purchase any fair trade products and consumers are reassured that they are sweatshop and slave labour-free. Last September, Virgin Atlantic announced that the five million cups of tea and seven million cups of coffee (2006 numbers) served on their airlines would be fair trade – a significant boost for farmers supplying the fair trade market.

It is clear that the power of change is within our hands. The creators of US skincare range Anti-Body (www.anti-body.com), buy all their raw ingredients like unrefined shea butter and virgin coconut oils from fair trade farmers in developing countries. According to co-founder Tamara Johnston McMahon, people are more conscious than ever before where products come from. “Fair trade is not just an alternative way of living, it’s the choice to live fairly, and what is so exciting is that the consumer decides. I believe that this will

only be more prominent the more we become aware of the global fair trade movement.”

The new green, in fact, the new organic is fair trade. But, “Those skincare companies who wish to label themselves ‘green’, ‘natural’, ‘organic’ and/or ‘fair trade’ need to behave transparently and ethically, and demonstrate clear ingredient tractability and fair labeling practices,” adds Wuttke.

More recently, spas have started to introduce anti-oppression brands and treatments on their menus. Soon to be launched is Amala, a luxury spa brand that is made entirely from ingredients grown on organic farms. They have collaborated with organic farmers who are committed to sustainable farming, biodiversity, water saving and wildlife preservation. “When it comes to skincare you shouldn’t have to sacrifice results for responsibility,” says founder Ute Leube.

Fair trade is also about establishing long-term and healthy relationships. At Lime Spas in the Maldives they have collaborated with a small family business to produce local virgin coconut oil for their treatments. This move has been inspired not only as a way to give back to the locals but also to bestow on guests the opportunity

to experience first hand the raw beauty of island culture. A percentage of every bottle of the oil sold from their retail store is donated to their Social Responsibility Fund, funding local environmental and sustainable initiatives.

OPENING PAGE: *Growing myrtle for Amala products.*

Switch to brands with the fair trade stamp
and you’re not only healing your skin and body
but the lives of others

Your visit to a spa can help reduce the amount of green house gases produced and be ecologically footprint free

CARBON FOOTPRINT FREE

It is reported that the average household carbon footprint from products and services outweighs the combined carbon from electricity use and driving. Ethically minded consumers are reducing their carbon footprint by purchasing locally grown and made organic foods and skincare.

Certainly in the organic food industry there's been significant steps forward. Last year the Soil Association in the UK announced that soon food air-freighted into Britain will only bear an organic label in the future if it can be shown it was produced to Fairtrade and high environmental standards. This move is in response to organic inspectors concerned about the climate change impact of importing food from long distances and will make organic food producers accountable in terms of supporting communities and guaranteeing wages and working conditions.

According to Peter Melchett, the Soil Associations policy director, their long-term aim is to minimise airfreight. "We think there will come a time when air transport becomes a thing of the past because of the cost of carbon emissions."

Over in the US, Wal-Mart apparently favours suppliers that are cutting down on greenhouse emissions, while in Australia, Woolworth's supermarket reports that 97% of its fresh produce is now grown domestically.

Back to spas and skincare, Six Senses' core philosophy has long been based on 'sustainable purchasing' where they don't buy materials based on the cheapest quote but also consider the environmental impacts during production, distribution and waste-management. At their Soneva Fushi resort, for instance, fair trade products include certified timbers, eco-friendly soaps and chemicals, locally grown organic coffee and food sourced locally including seafood, fruit and vegetables thus reducing the food miles. Imagine that your visit to a spa can help reduce the amount of green house gases produced and be ecologically footprint free.

One can't talk about fair trade in the skincare industry without tribute to the late Anita Roddick from The Body Shop. As far back as the eighties she was creating partnerships in developing countries to create sustainable skincare. Aveda is another international brand that have set benchmarks when it comes to ethical skincare. All their uniforms are made from organic cotton and in 2003 they joined forces with 'Himalayan Bio Trade' in Nepal, to promote responsible business in natural products.

Dr. Hauschka Skin Care has also long been a leader in humanitarian skincare. Founder Dr. Rudolph Hauschka formed relationships with local communities around the world to establish fair trade organic and biodynamic cooperatives. Their entire manufacturing process is based on ecologically sound methods of growing and sourcing raw ingredients from sustainable biodynamic and fair trade farmers. Purchase a Dr. Hauschka kit and know that profits are being donated to 'Heifer International', an organisation dedicated to ending world hunger.



FOOD-GRADE SKINCARE

The next trend in skincare, set to happen over the next five to ten years, will be an acid test that will examine the edibility of a product's purity: imagine food-grade skincare that is so pure you can eat it!

"People are starting to realise that the skin is the body's largest organ and needs to be treated accordingly," explains Wuttke. "Aggressive quick-fixes and 'cover ups' that over promise and under deliver will be replaced with truly nutritious 'skin food' that nurtures and protects this vital organ. After all, if you wouldn't eat it, why would you put it on your skin?" At Six Senses Earth Spa in Hua Hin many ingredients for their treatments are grown on-site inclusive of rice, coconut, avocado, papaya, lime, aloe vera, cucumber, pandan leaf, lemongrass, ginger, galangal, candlenut and turmeric.

OPPOSITE PAGE: *Creating the earth and community gentle products of Anti-Body; in the fields of Nepal picking ingredients for Wild Earth products.* THIS PAGE: *Checking in on a distillation for Amala.*

SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS BRANDS

Consumers are increasingly choosing some brands over others because of their reputation in supporting charities. This year, Rancho La Puerta in Mexico will launch their own private label of skincare where all proceeds will go directly to their 'Foundation La Puerta' (www.fundacionlapuerta.org), the spa's not-for-profit organisation that benefits local environmental, social, and educational projects in Tecate and the bordering area.

However the bigger brands are doing good too. Estée Lauder (who own Bobbi Brown, M.A.C. and Clinique) has reportedly helped raise US\$117 million for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation established by Evelyn Lauder herself. Avon products too, have raised and donated more than US\$400 million for breast cancer medical research as well as US\$7 million for families and children of those lost in the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001.

Owners of the natural Dr. Hauschka skincare brand take the concept of sustainable skincare a step further. In an unprecedented move last year, Clifford Kurz and Susan West Kurz legally eliminated ownership of the company and placed it in a nonprofit 'trust fund' company that makes it difficult to be gobbled up by big conglomerates in the event they pass away. In the December/January issue of *Fast Company* Susan said that "Every action that is taken in this business, every intersection between the earth and end user, has a proactive healing impulse behind it."

In contrast, Burt's Bees, a pure brand of soaps, hair and bodycare, was recently sold for just short of US\$1billion (approximately five times the company annual revenue) to bleach manufacturer, Clorox. This while the owner of Lush Fresh Made Cosmetics, Mr. Constantine has just announced that they will resist any buy-out from a large chemical company. He says deals like these known as 'green-washing' have a negative impact in the industry. "If all [natural-based companies] ever do is sell out to a large multiples, it gets very confusing, and in the end ethical consumption as a concept will just disappear." He cites an informal survey on treehugger.com that found that 48% of customers would abandon an ethical brand if they were brought out by a multinational.

In 2006 L'Oréal reportedly purchased The Body Shop for US\$1.1billion while Estée Lauder purchased Aveda in 1997 for an undisclosed amount and Kiehl's was bought for \$300 million. "The danger of global harmonisation is that they can sometimes lead to the dilution of quality standards in an attempt to gain broad acceptance and inclusion," says Wuttke. Nonetheless there are positives to be found here, including instant education to the mainstream about the benefits of natural and organic, while several natural skincare brands that have been acquired by multinationals have reported huge growth in sales.

In a nutshell, global awareness is rapidly changing the landscape of skincare that only serves to benefit many – from the local farmer to the consumer and corporate sector. "Those who genuinely rise to meet the demands of this increasingly educated consumer will be the future leaders of the industry," says Wuttke.



carbon labelling, new certifications and standards

It's all happening in the UK right now with British supermarkets looking at adding food miles stickers to their products. Tesco, the UK's largest supermarket chain, recently announced their intention to add an airplane symbol to all air freighted items. Their pilot project will label 30 products in its own brand range, indicating the carbon emissions factor for that product.

The Carbon Trust in the UK found that 66% of British consumers would like to know the carbon footprint of the products they buy and they have introduced a voluntary carbon label that shows the grams of carbon dioxide (CO₂) generated through its lifecycle inclusive of growing the ingredients, processing, packaging and transportation.

In November, Aveda announced the formation of a new trade organisation. Organic and Sustainable Industry Standards (OASIS) for health and beauty products is an organisation dedicated to verifiable standards that support and promote organic and sustainable production for health and beauty products. Ultimately, the goal of OASIS will be to create certification standards and strive to coordinate international organisations to come up with international standards.

Dr. Hauschka has joined with five other leading European natural brands including Weleda to form NaTrue, a regulatory group to ensure consumer protection with internationally recognised labeling, which includes high quality fair trade materials and no animal testing.

statistics

A study by Organic Monitor in the UK into consumer behaviour towards natural and organic personal care products found that health factors and ethical consideration are the primary motivators for 71% of buyers of natural and organic personal care products, while the presence of pure ingredients is the main reason for a further 17% of purchases. The study found that the typical buyer is female, young to middle-aged, well educated and in the higher social bands.

products

AMALA

According to the creators of AMALA, when it comes to skincare one shouldn't have to choose between results and responsibility. Translated as 'most pure' in Sanskrit, the entire range is certified organic with wildcrafted ingredients sourced ethically and products organically preserved. Essential oils as well are of therapeutic-grade, meaning the highest quality on the market. Core values include social responsibility where healthy relationships with farmers are maintained. Authenticity describes their all-organic approach while environmental regeneration ensures the longevity of our earth. Indeed the key to AMALA is a time-honoured approach. As the creators say: "There are no shortcuts to perfection."

www.amala.com

SOURCE

'Source: High Altitude' is a new organic sustainable range that will soon be available at selected spas around the world. Made from high altitude plants harvested at the 'source' above 4,000m in the wild of Bhutan and Tibet, creator Adria Lake spent several months with the Nomads 5,000 m above sea level researching the range. "Not only do we follow the principles of fair trade and are carbon footprint free, but we are also making sure that our products bring social and economic benefits to the communities that produce the ingredients for us," says Lake.

www.beasource.com

KUUSH

KuuSh, a high-end certified Australian organic skin and spa Range, is also the world's first NoCO2 range, which means zero carbon footprint upon the earth. Certified by the Carbon Reduction Institute in Australia, KuuSh is also water-free with all raw materials purchased from fair trade suppliers.

"Our company has gone to great lengths to gain this certification with reviews conducted quarterly," says founder Catherine Griss. "Any carbon usage is offset by the planting of trees and other community programs by the Carbon Reduction Institute (RCI)." The range will be launched at ThoSona and Lilianfels spas in Australia as well as Desert Palm in Dubai to name a few."

www.kuush.com.au

WILD EARTH

As the name suggests, Wild Earth products are all about being as close to our earth as possible. This means, every step of the way, the products are based on organic, sustainable and ethical principles. Founded by Anthropologist Carroll Dunham, an advocate for fair trade living, the herbal range of soaps, oils and scrubs are all handcrafted and handmade. She spent several years in the rural Humla region learning first hand about plants and herbs from the locals.

For Carroll, the range is a way for these communities to make a sustainable income. With the landscape of the Himalayas said to be the world's largest herb garden, the products also honour the Himalayan traditions, a combination of Ayurvedic, Tibetan and local mountain wisdom. www.wildearthnepal.com



Certified Natural Cosmetics www.bdih.co.uk
 Environmental Working Group www.ewg.org
 Biodynamics www.biodynamics.com
 Eco Central www.ecocentral.com
 Farm Aid www.farmaid.org
 Heifer www.heifer.org
 LOHAS www.lohas.com
 NaTRue www.natrue.de
 Organic Monitor www.organicmonitor.com
 Rudolf Steiner Foundation www.rsfoundation.org
 Soil Association (UK) www.soilassociation.org

THIS PAGE: Farmers harvest ingredients for Anti-Body; Amala products walk the sustainable talk.