

Back to the Garden

By Digby Hildreth

Salons that use Dr Hauschka and Sanctum products – do so for two main reasons. First is that the ranges are “pure” and so, by implication, more beneficial for clients’ skin, and more pleasant for the staff to work with. Second, is that the way such products are made causes less harm to the environment. And the environment, the “big picture”, is held precious by an increasing number of beauty products.



Dr Hauschka Skin Care believed this from the start: Its aim is to “foster well-being in the world by using ecologically sound methods of growing and sourcing ingredients”.

While not certified organic, it is “certified natural” by the BDIH, the Association of German Industries and Trading Firms for pharmaceuticals, health care products, food supplements and personal hygiene products.

Rudolf Hauschka believed he had discovered a method to create plant extracts that kept the vital forces of the living plant and remained stable without alcohol or artificial preservatives.

He joined with aesthetician Elisabeth Sigmund to launch the holistic range in 1967.

"We carefully choose every plant and mineral ingredient on whether it came from an ecologically and ethically sound source," the company states.

Its belief is that beauty begins in the garden, especially through Biodynamics, a form of agriculture that considers everything from the cycles of the moon and stars to the soil, plants, animals and people.

The company that manufactures the Dr Hauschka range, WALA Heilmittel, has had its own certified Biodynamic gardens for more than 60 years, and many of the botanicals used in Dr Hauschka preparations come from them.

WALA also works in developing parts of the world to encourage Biodynamic farming and economic self-sufficiency, such as the growing of Biodynamic roses in Bulgaria at Fair Trade prices; and sourcing shea butter from Biodynamic co-operatives in Burkina Faso, Africa.

In Australia, the green mantle has been picked up by several companies.

Sanctum, for example, based in northern New South Wales, has been going from strength to strength since 1992, when Greg and Jicky Milham began looking into naturally derived skincare.

Greg wanted to produce a range of products that could remain truly "natural", offering "meaningful" levels of active ingredients.

He studied natural ingredient products chemistry to source local ingredients with therapeutic levels of active herbal and plant extracts, essential oils and vitamins.

He says he still relies on his "trusted mates" in the Byron shire as the source for raw, natural ingredients.

And the quest continues to become ever more wholesome. Just recently, the company has graduated from natural to certified organic. Now every Sanctum product contains more than 70% certified organic ingredients and many are more than 95% certified organic.

Another player to have succeeded is MiEssence.

The company believes that the only way customers can be assured that they are purchasing genuinely organic products is through the certification system.

And certified organic is good for the planet, it says. "Organic systems rely on a combination of modern and scientific understanding of ecology and soil science, and traditional methods of crop rotations to ensure fertility and weed and pest control.

"We aim to reduce dependence on non-renewable resources. Organic production aims at all times towards sustainability whilst having the environment and wildlife as a priority."

Sustainability, and education, are also key to the Mukti philosophy. "We are dedicated to educating consumers on making safe, informed, and sustainable choices. "We are passionate about the precious environment, as well as creating products that do no harm," says founder Mukti Lloyd.

"By taking responsibility for what we purchase, we are taking a stance and ensuring that all life as we know it on this planet will continue for future generations."

Then there is Jurlique, which has its own farm growing herbs and flowers in South Australia. Its vision is that beauty is defined by sustainable connections – to oneself, to the community, and to the earth.

"We believe that life comes from life. The soil is alive, plants and flowers are living, and that life is in our products," the company says.

The energy from nature flows through onto the skin, the company says.

"Beauty is not made in a lab, it is grown and cultivated and cared for passionately."

MV Organic Skincare's Sharon McGlinchy has worked long and hard to achieve organic certification for her line of products, and still keep them of a high quality.

"It's easy to just add large amounts of aloe vera gel and reach the 95% organic quota that way," she says,



Mukti Antioxidant Facial Oil and Mukti Mineral Masque

but the fineness of the product can suffer, becoming thin, a bit sticky and ineffective.

The high end of the organic market is not really being tapped, she says. It's a niche that she is attempting to fill with her MV range.

She says her background as a beauty therapist means she is not prepared to sacrifice efficacy and quality to achieve the certified organic status.

As a result she has battled with some of the Australian certifiers, who will not, for example, accept the use of certain natural emulsifiers.

The Australian authorities will not embrace the difference between food and skincare, she says, and insist upon beauty products meeting the same standards as apply to food (that is, 95% certified organic ingredients).

"Europe is way ahead of us in the area," she says.

But even Britain's Soil Association insisted upon her using certified organic lavender instead of the high quality French lavender she had been using.

"The trouble is, the organic crop has a very high camphor content, and the beautiful aroma of the French lavender is lost, which would turn off my clients," she says. She refused, and the Association would not give her approval.

So Sharon turned to Ecocert, the European body.

She has a new range coming out in March/April for mothers and babies called miniOrganics which will have Ecocert certification.



It is a further step in her campaign to free organics of the "worthy but dull" stigma.

MiniOrganics is a luxury range, including nappy balm and nipple balm, in Italian high-density plastic containers (so no glass around baby, and no plastic "seepage"), and gorgeously packaged in Tiffany blue with silver embossing for the salon/gift market.

Sounds like an ideal union of soil and sophistication. **B**



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