

WELLNESS

Returning to Earth's true sense of well being

Wild Earth - Himalayan Herbals

With clients ranging from Shangri-la Hotels & Resorts, Trump Hotels to The Body Shop, it is no wonder why Wild Earth has garnered so much attention from those who seek beyond the artificial preservatives, synthetic colours and petrochemicals in their body products. Our Ujwol Shrestha visits the production house of the much talked-about Wild Earth

Away from the noise and the pollution of Kathmandu, located in the northern suburb of the valley, there exists an oasis of natural goodness called Wild Earth. An ideal place for those who yearn for the finest herbal care products and spa treatment, Wild Earth products are based on indigenous Himalayan healing traditions gathered from ancient Ayurvedic, Tibetan and traditional healing practices. Founded in 1999 by Carroll Dunham, Wild Earth has been a great success story of Nepal's herbal industry. As I arrived at their premises (in a rainy afternoon), I was immediately overtaken by the peace and the serenity of the place. A delicious aroma of hot essence oils infused with herbs and fresh flowers wafted through the hallways. I climbed the stairs to the first floor where I was to meet Carroll Dunham, the graceful, blue-eyed American anthropologist who has been living in Nepal for the last 25 years and Anne Waterman, the creative director of Wild Earth. The rain had stopped and Carroll suggested that we settle outside amidst the soft wet green grass.

Wild Earth has been inspired by Anita Roddick (the founder of the world renowned cosmetic chain, The Body Shop) with whom Carroll had worked closely in the past. "While travelling around the world with Anita, we discovered varieties of healing herbs and practices unknown to the West. Nepal's Himalayas are exceptionally rich in medicinal herbs and remedies renowned since the ancient times." As an anthropologist, Carroll highlighted the deep significance of plants and herbs in human evolution. "Our nature-worshipping ancestors possessed intuitive understanding of the plants; "language of plants" (as she calls it) is based on traditional knowledge."



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CARROLL DUNHAM



ANNE WATERMAN

...in so many girls like charismatic and enlightened individuals, immense knowledge of powerful plants, and I am not saying this to please anyone," confesses Carroll. And just like The Body Shop, Carroll promotes natural beauty care products, and trace by emphasising direct trade with the farmers for herbs and supports ban... by approaching volunteers for Wild Earth's products. The core principle of Wild Earth is upholding the traditional healing practices, preserving the wild herbs, sustainable farming, and developing the rural living conditions through women's movement in forming co-operatives and packaging. Carroll believes enhancing women's economic condition directly improves their children's access to health and education.

Anne educates me about Wild Earth's Jampeche treatment centre which offers Tibetan massages like 'Yab-Yam'(ying-yang), T-sampa and full body massages. "The spa relaxes tired bodies, soothes tensions, detoxifies the body and unblocks the flow of 'chi' throughout the body leaving you with a harmonious balance of mind, body and spirit," Anne says. "Every herb has an interesting story behind it. For instance, Amalaki, the nurse, is believed to be the essence of the universe which represents all five elements and is also the richest source of Vitamin C, perfect for damaged hair," informs Anne. The production rooms of Wild Earth are very clean and hygienic. There are no tanks of chemicals or masked workers. Rather homely ambience, the unique charm of the place and the pleasant smell of spices can take you back in time.

Body care products like soaps, massage oils, zodiac pillows, incense and essential oils are also available. The most popular items are Yogi-Yogini and Himalayan natural and Tibetan hot spring soaps, along with Himalayan natural and Tibetan hot spring soaps. Research and Development head Reena Shrestha says, "Many new items like body cleansers, baby soaps, trekking range and Newari range are coming up. We are also planning to start door-to-door home delivery to provide fresh products."



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With a total of about 500 different body care products to choose from—including over forty varieties of soaps and oil blends—Wild Earth is both about quantity and quality. Their focus on sustainable farming of herbs and traditional practices is exemplary. None of the products use any chemical preservatives. Wild Earth uses natural preservatives like Lye, Rosemary, Grape seed and Citrus seed extracts for preparing herbal soaps and massage oils. The amiable staff members carefully prepare the products concentrating on the right quantity in order to avoid damage or expiration and slipping them into cute, handy packages or bottles. None of the 23 staff members at Wild Earth are formally trained, but they have perfected the skills through a series of trial and error. Today, their hands produce some of the finest herbal products that are seen in the luxury hotels. Wild Earth has managed to create a niche of its own and is a truly special place where one experiences the good things Mother Nature has to offer.



Step 1 Precise amount of natural preservatives like lye (sodium hydroxide) are used.



Step 2 Distilled water is applied.



Step 3 Essence oils like palm, sandalwood, olive are infused with herbs and made into blend.



Step 4 The blend is poured into a tray for solidification.



Step 5 Solid soap bars are cut to ideal sizes for packaging.



Step 6 Soaps being packaged by Krishna Bahadur Thapa Magar

