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PRIDE
MAGAZINES

NATURAL SKIN CARE

From Austria to Lincolnshire

The South Holland landscape is rather different to the mountainous Austrian region from which Gerlinde Seeley originates. Gerlinde has lived in Lincolnshire for three months now, and in return for introducing her to the vast landscape and big skies of South Holland, the skin care formulator is introducing her range of all-natural vegan skincare products to new friends in Lincolnshire... *Words: Sandra Smith.*

"It's a little flatter." says Gerlinde Seeley, comparing Lincolnshire's South Holland fenland to her native Austria. Gerlinde has lived in the UK since 2004, but moved to the county just three months ago.

Instantly, Gerlinde has fallen for the county's warmth, its friendly locals and our respect for fresh ingredients used in our cooking. It's a philosophy which allies to Gerlinde's own hobby-turned-business, producing all natural skincare products. Since 2012 Gerlinde has been producing her vegan, organic, cruelty-free range of freshly made products for face and body, hands and feet.

A Love of nature infused Gerlinde's family in Braunau, Austria, where, amid a haven of curiosity, her father keenly passed on his horticultural wisdom and both parents encouraged their youngest daughter to share their passion for reading and acquiring knowledge.

With two older sisters following careers in homoeopathy, Gerlinde's innate enthusiasm for plants blossomed. Using information from her siblings along with practise and

laborious research, she began experimentation, creating her own skin products.

"I was in my mid twenties when I first produced balms," Gerlinde recalls. "To start with I focused on sensitive skin which I have myself. That was my benchmark. If I wouldn't use it, no one else can. As a hobby, I made products at the weekends or in my spare time which were tested by family and friends. I used a lot of extracts from plants and flowers such as rosemary, chamomile

and dealt with all manner of legislation, before she turned a hobby into a profession by establishing Gerlinde Naturals.

"I wanted to do something with my knowledge and was very self motivated, so I set up the company in 2012." With no marketing guidance and a limited budget, Gerlinde was equally amazed and delighted to witness the rapid growth of her business.

"When Gerlinde moved to Moulton Chapel last year she inherited a garden ideal for plants such as marigolds and lavender she intends to use..."

and lavender, all of which have benefits. But some herbs you can't use on your skin. Parsley or chives, for instance, wouldn't bring any benefit. They are not toxic but could cause a reaction."

The growing popularity of her increasing range extended throughout her circle of acquaintances. But it was a decade after moving to England, having attended courses

When Gerlinde moved to Moulton Chapel last year she inherited a garden with soft soil, ideal for plants such as marigolds and lavender she intends to use in her products.

From a dedicated room above the garage - which she likens to a laboratory - the softly spoken 52 year old explains the production process.



“Plant matter should always be as dry as possible. With marigolds I chop the petals as fine as possible in order to extract as much oil as possible. In a beaker they are covered in oil – I usually use almond oil because it is light and absorbent, and skin doesn’t react to it. The beaker is placed in a sunny place and every couple of days I change the plant matter so it doesn’t go mouldy.”

“After about six weeks I run the maceration three times through paper filters to ensure no sediment remains in the oil which is used when creating face serum or creams. Accuracy in measuring is important and I add Vitamin E emulsions and stabilisers. I make everything from scratch; I never use pre-made bases.”

The range of products Gerlinde creates is extensive. Moisturisers and serums are aimed at women over the age of 45, though younger skin, I’m assured, benefits from cleansers.

But surely one of the most impressive aspects of all her lotions is that each is freshly made to order. This must be time consuming so why is it so important?

“When you buy skin care products on the High Street they may have up to a five year life – that’s scary!”

“I want my customers to benefit from a fresh product. Making to order is my biggest selling point and one of which I am proud. It means I can’t sell via the High Street but customers buy from my website. And I’m also exploring opportunities in Lincolnshire such as boutique hotels, spas or beauty salons keen to stock Gerlinde Naturals.”

An additional passion, which Gerlinde encompasses in her business, is recycled packaging. Orders nestle in shredded coloured paper within beautifully crafted boxes to which the owner adds a personalised gift tag, generating a sense of care



behind each order. Not surprisingly, the success of these skin care lotions and balms has resulted in awards. “Awards are an ultimate reward of all the hard work I have put in over the years. They give the business a great boost and confirm I’m on the right path.”

“I want my customers to benefit from a fresh product. Making to order is a big selling point...”

There’s no better advertising, of course, than a flawless complexion. Gerlinde’s unblemished skin radiates health, confirming the quality of her products which she has tested and used for decades. Yet she is

engagingly modest about her success, saving her enthusiasm for a relocation which has brought her to the South Holland district.

“It is stunning here, very laid back and the people are so nice and friendly. We are in a cul de sac with lovely neighbours.”

There may be some distance between Lincolnshire and her home country, but Gerlinde’s roots, and her thriving business, are now firmly embedded in Lincolnshire.



Above: Gerlinde’s ranges include cleansers, toners, moisturising creams, lip balms, they’re priced from £7-£15/moisturising cream, £10-£25/cleaning products, £7-£14/hand creams.

For more information on Gerlinde’s ranges, see www.gerlindenaturals.com

