

'MY LIFE IN A DAY'

Charlotte Vøhtz

The organic beauty pioneer and founder of Green People explains how it all started



I wake at 6am to dedicate an hour to myself before anyone else gets up. After a glass of warm lemon water, I walk my dog Saffie through the surrounding woodland where we regularly see deer and pheasants, using this time to plan and focus on my day ahead. Afterwards, I make fresh juices and green smoothies for the family before heading into the office. Green People employs almost 30 staff, and we're a very close-knit team. I exercise the "octopus principle", trying to oversee the smooth running of things from design and financial matters to marketing issues.



Charlotte starts the day with lemon water

Walking allows Charlotte to process her thoughts

Looking forward to a year of growth

I still love being involved in new product development, alongside our cosmetic scientist, Ian Taylor. Taking a product from an initial idea to seeing it on a store shelf is a very satisfying process.

'After qualifying as a nurse from the University Hospital in Copenhagen, I moved into pharmaceuticals where I coordinated and managed multicentre clinical trials. I also gained qualifications in PR, marketing, accounts and business management, while nurturing my passion for all things holistic by taking courses in herbal medicine and acupuncture. In 1992, my daughter, Sandra, was battling with eczema and skin allergies. With conventional steroid treatments failing to help, I turned to a natural, organic lifestyle, but was surprised that Sandra reacted to natural skin care products. I investigated the ingredients and was shocked to find out so many "natural" products were made with more than 99 per cent synthetic chemicals. This is where the idea for Green People (greenpeople.co.uk) was born.'

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

'Initially, my most challenging task was finding good quality, totally pure raw materials to make products. The next challenge was to convince retailers that truly natural and organic personal care products needed more shelf space. Back then, there was far less

awareness of the benefits of organic beauty, so I was a pioneer, going from shop to shop with my products, trying to educate health store owners that what goes on the skin is as important for good health as what you eat.

'A real career highlight was to be the first company to certify organic beauty products with the Soil Association. After two years of trying to tell them how important it was to have recognised certifications in the beauty industry, myself and Ian were invited to sit on the committee

to help the Soil Association set the standards.

'Writing my book *Naturally Gorgeous* (Ebury, £9.99) was another highlight. It

took many years to put together, but finally I made the time. My mum always talked about the importance of inner beauty and healthy eating, and, as early as five-years-old, she would take me down to the sea in early spring and rub my skin with fresh seaweed, installing in me its

'I hope my years of research help others embrace an organic life'

benefits. I hope my years of research and experimenting has helped others take steps to embrace a more organic lifestyle.

'Each day brings new challenges which I love, and, yes, I do take them home with me, very rarely switching off, but every day flies by. After work, I walk Saffie again to process my day so that, once I'm home, I can focus on my family. I love cooking while enjoying a glass of red wine as it relaxes me and gives my busy brain a rest! For downtime, I love to read cosmetic science magazines and well-researched beauty articles. I might still be working, but my passion lies in developing new products which help people to feel their best. I hope that this year, which coincides with my 60th birthday, will be one of both personal and professional growth.' ■

CHARLOTTE'S TOP TIPS

+ 'Use a body brush for two minutes every morning to improve skin tone, stimulate circulation, reduce cellulite and kick-start metabolism.'

+ 'Start the morning with a glass of warm water and a squeeze of lemon juice to boost your immune system.'

+ 'I always recycle avocado skin from my smoothie, rubbing it onto my face in the shower for an instant skin boost!'

WORDS: Joanna Ebsworth

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