



## BEYOND ORGANIC

**Denise Leicester**, Founder of ila-spa, reveals why working in harmony with nature is key to the company's philosophy



While the 'developing world' has tried to master nature, demanding year-round harvests, mass production and profit-driven growing patterns, many of the world's people still depend on working organically, using ancient practices and knowledge to support the land they have depended on for thousands of years.

Here in the West, 'farming organically' is as much of a marketing tool as a commitment to nature. But for many communities across the world it is a necessity, a matter of principal, following the rhythms of nature and accepting bounty as grace rather than a given right. There is a relationship of respect, which many of us in the 'developed world' have sadly lost.

ila's rainforest range is produced by directly working with rainforest communities. We believe that the environment of any place is an indication of its spiritual health, in which the deeper issues of culture, values, politics and the economic and social outlook of a community all play a part. Not only are the Kayapu people in the Amazon Rainforest among the most positive I have ever met, but the Brazil nut oil and Babassu Oil we source from them is quite extraordinary in its quality with powerful cellular regenerative qualities.

And it's not just in the rainforests we are supporting local habitats and their communities.

In Morocco we work directly with the women of an ancient Berber tribe, traditionally the keepers of the sacred Argan forests. Argan oil is naturally rich in essential fatty acids that deeply nourish the skin, and the antioxidant vitamin E that helps protect the skin against free radical damage caused by pollution, cigarette smoke and the sun's radiation. Nourishing wild oil has been used for centuries by the Berber people to treat sensitive skin.

Here we work with Nadia, a local woman, dedicated to ►►

When I first ventured into the field of organic ingredients for the ila product range, it was primarily because I was determined to create a business which was ethical and sustainable from 'petal to product'. I chose to work directly with farmers and growers so my knowledge was grounded in truth and experience.

What I hadn't realised was the journey this would take me on. The extraordinary tribes and indigenous communities I have met over the years simply and honestly 'hold the world in their hands' for us all.



preserving her community and culture through sustainable business – sustainable both for the community and the earth. She works with the Berber women who traditionally harvest the Argan nuts, but provides an infrastructure that maintains the delicate balance of a thriving and healthy community based on family values.

In India we work with Pawan whose work supports a co-operative of farmers to carry on in their Vedic traditions of farming which are all about living in harmony with Mother Earth. Distillation of rose oil, which we use in many of our products, but most notably in our Rose Face Oil for Glowing Radiance takes place on site; there is no electricity, no cars and no pollution.

Fuel used in distillation is made from cow dung, which is considered sacred in this part of the world. Distilled essential oils are cooled naturally by being submerged under water – the water being from the monsoon and drawn up by a solar panel donated by the government. Rose petals used in our products are pressed for their oil and then dried and fed to the cows. The cycle is continuous and harmonious; giving, taking and always giving back.

Ila is the Sanskrit word for earth, and the name of the Hindu goddess associated with earth, flow, refreshment, and the source of well-being. Ila's vocation is to bring purity, energy and balance into everyday life by creating luxurious skincare products, completely free from synthetic chemicals using the finest ingredients sourced directly from local producers who cultivate and harvest them. Harmony with nature.

For Ila, everything begins and ends with purity. We seek it in every ingredient, every process and every blend. We believe that 'giving back to nature' is key to ensuring purity of heart and ultimately purity of body. ▶▶

*ila treatments are now available at Chewton Glen Spa, Telephone: 01425 277674*

*More information about Ila is available at [www.ila-spa.com](http://www.ila-spa.com)*



**Ila insider**

Chewton Glen Treatments Manager **Jo Farrow** says: "I'd been searching for some time for a holistic range for the Spa and Ila ticked all the boxes. Not only are the products completely natural and chemical-free, but the company has great integrity in the way in which the ingredients are sourced. My favourite Ila treatment is the Kundalini Massage – a deeply relaxing, healing and balancing treatment which works on the nervous system using essential oils and hot poultices. The combination of this and Chakra healing makes it a very powerful treatment. It's great for relieving stress whilst leaving you feeling re-energized".