



True Stories

From Peru's biodiversity to the world: meet Mishki Peru

Valérie Barbier, General Manager of Mishki Peru

Valérie mainly worked within the pharmaceutical sector before starting the company. After obtaining an MBA in Brussels, Valérie Barbier went to Peru for two months to assist an NGO. There, she fell in love with the food, country and people, so in October 2004 she returned for a sabbatical year. Mishki originated in December of 2004 in Huancayo (Peru) during a workshop on the Solanum tuberosum species, one of some 300 potatoes cultivated in Peru. Then, started investigating plants from the purple potato to the tara...and Mishki was born!



NATRUE: When and why was Mishki Peru created? What does 'Mishki' means?

Valérie: In 2004, we started with the project and one year later we opened the company, that took a couple of years to get to natural products and to be in the Peruvian market. Our main goal was to help producers with their local production. However, health was also important, as cancer is quite often triggered by chemicals.

When I had to decide the name of the brand, I discussed it with my friends. In the beginning, we liked 'Yana', which means 'black' in Quechua, because this is the colour of the potato we are using for our cosmetics. However, we had a problem with this name, and we renamed the brand. In Quechua, 'Mishki' means 'sweet', 'rich', 'loving yourself.'

NATRUE: What makes Peru special? Which fruits and other ingredients can be found?

Valérie: The biodiversity in Peru is very rich: Peru has the coast, the Amazonia and the highlands, i.e.: different lands, climates, and obviously fruits, plants and vegetables. For example, Peru has fruits such as lucuma, chirimoya and mango; and amazing vegetables like mashua, maca, and quinoa. It is a very good country!

NATRUE: How are you adapting to new trends and consumer demands? What are your next steps?

Valérie: I just follow the flow. I have always been very pro-environment, very careful with my food and obviously with my skin. I try to transpose those values into my brand; consequently, we try to recycle the packaging for making containers for rubbish or blankets, for example.

In terms of the next steps, we are going to launch two shampoos and one oil based on macadamia nuts. Why macadamia nuts? Because we want to help communities, so we are using raw materials that can help small producers. As you can imagine, we don't work with big companies.

NATRUE: As a Latin American brand, how do you see the European market compared to Latin America's one?

Valérie: The European market is more mature and very competitive. In contrast, the Latin America and the Americas are less aware of the organic-natural market. Today it seems like 'everything' is natural as long as you put an extract...but we know that is far from true. Currently, brands have an important challenge, since we must face a lot of disloyal competition. In any case, I think both markets are complicated and difficult but not impossible.



NATRUE: Why did you choose NATRUE? What is the value of the NATRUE Label for Mishki?

Valérie: I chose NATRUE because that was the safest and most demanding one, regarding the ingredients, formulas and, the environment - for example, in terms of palm oil. I think an organic and natural product has to respect those criteria not only for business but for ethics.



For more information about Mishki Peru, visit <http://mishkiperu.com>