

Seaflora Turning Seaweed Into Organic Skincare Products

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Adam Butcher and wife and partner Chantelle Line with armloads of Seaflora Skincare Inc. products

Made In Sooke Merchandise Popular In Asia And Vancouver Island Spas

SOOKE – In the 1990’s, **Diane Bernard** began harvesting wild seaweed from the ocean to supply some of British Columbia’s finest restaurants.

“The Seaweed Lady” could “sea” a business opportunity, but it grew in another direction.

Two decades later, has become **Seaflora Skincare Inc.**, a second generation company producing and selling organic skincare products throughout the world.

“In 2000-2001 she was introduced to skincare, specifically skincare featuring seaweed from Europe,” recalls her son, **Adam Butcher**, CEO of the company he owns with his wife and partner **Chantelle Line**. “I say ‘featuring’ as the seaweed was in the marketing and product names, yet when she looked

closer at the ingredients in these products she found there was in-fact very little seaweed in them at all.

“There was nothing available in terms of organic non-toxic seaweed skincare. . .my mother saw a niche in one of the most saturated and competitive industries on earth that hadn’t been filled yet. She saw an opportunity to create a wholesome, organic, wild-harvested seaweed skincare brand.”

Bernard envisioned a line of products where seaweed was the main ingredient, the active ingredient in a skincare brand that captured the nutritional value of raw, organic seaweeds from Vancouver Island’s West Coast for local and international markets.

Seaflorea has since become the first company in the history of the United States Department of Agriculture to certify seaweeds as “organic”, and Bernard has been credited with starting a whole new “sea change” in the health and wellness industry by introducing certified organic seaweed skincare to spas across the country.

Butcher works out of Seaflorea’s head office and manufacturing facility in Sooke, where all products in the brand are formulated from raw ingredients into ready-for-market sales. When Bernard started out, Butcher was a teenager and one of his summer jobs was harvesting seaweed and getting it to Executive Chefs. He has worked full-time in the business since 2012.

Butcher states that seaweed is superior to land plants.

“Seaweeds are not only different from land plants, they are better,” he notes. ”Seaweeds are ‘macrophytic’, which means they are plant-like organisms that live exclusively in the ocean along our continental coastlines. Although, some look similar to land plants, seaweeds are unique life forms.”

Because of that, seaweeds are beneficial ingredients for the whole body and in particular, for the body’s largest organ, the skin.

“Seaweeds are among the richest natural sources of novel bioactive compounds known to be beneficial to human skin as well as being incredibly rich in vitamins, seaweed protein is a source of all amino acids and their mineral content is higher than that of all land plants,” he observes.

Butcher says that applied topically, seaweeds aid in moisture retention, enhance skin elasticity, provide anti-inflammatory effects, improve blood and lymph circulation, stimulate healthy cellular metabolism.

Bernard created skincare formulas 20 years ago that are still found in Seaflorea products, including Seaweed Body Gel, Wild Sea Kelp Body Lotion, Ocean Botanical Iridaea Exfoliator, Sea Foam Cleansing Concentrate, Potent Seaweed Serum and Sea Splash Toner.

Seaflorea products are used at the **Drift Spa** in Ucluelet’s **Black Rock Oceanfront Resort**, **Ancient Cedars Spa** at the **Wickaninnish Inn** in Tofino, **Island Currents Spa** at **Sonora Resort**, **Willow Stream Spa** at the **Fairmont Empress Hotel** in Victoria, and in the **CHI Spa** at **Shangri-la Hotel Vancouver**.

The company has grown substantially over the years, and was poised to smash their growth goals this year until the pandemic struck.

“COVID-19 has dampened some of that early optimism as retail and spas were forced to shut down across North America,” notes Butcher. “However, our decision several years ago to invest in our website, online and social media presences has been critical to our survival during these uncertain times. Online sales in April increased 88 per cent and we are optimistically looking forward to the rest of 2020 and beyond.”

Born and raised in Sooke, Butcher says his parents instilled the importance of environmentalism and a love for the beauty of Vancouver Island at an early age.

“With that in mind I prefer to support environmental non-profits and organizations that are doing real work in conservation, awareness and protection right here where we live,” he states, adding that Seaflora actively regularly supports such as the **Ancient Forest Alliance**, **Living Oceans Society**, **David Suzuki Foundation** and **Wilderness Committee**.

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