



# ecoliving<sup>®</sup>



- **How to launch a drinks start up**  
– We spoke to innovative new drinks brands to get their advice.
- **Shaking up the way we eat at home**  
– We hear from founders of ethical food brands.
- **A good future for our young people**  
– RINGANA has been committed to sustainability since day one.

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## FOOD

Try our vegan paella recipe: full of tasty vegetables, rice and Mediterranean warmth.

## WELLNESS

UK hotel and spa group Barons Eden recently opened a new Spa Garden at Eden Hall Day Spa.

## PRODUCTS

Lavender & Lemon has been named a finalist of the Wales Final of the StartUp Awards.

## A word from the Editor

Welcome to our late summer issue.

On the front cover, we have Humber Doucy Brewery; please turn to pages 4 and 5 to read the full story. This innovative new drink brand is well worth a read.

We have an array of interesting features this issue, including food and recipes, organically grown and hand-crafted teas from The Jersey Tea Company, Beauty and Wellness, and new homes by award winning Quintain Living, showcasing their superb Repton Gardens development. We now have a book club, too.

Very dear to my heart is the feature written by Jo Handby on 'STAE' – Save the Asian Elephants. It is great news that there is now the backing of 100 leading UK animal welfare charities and influencers, which have pioneered the Bill to end the UK's sale and advertising of practices abroad where wildlife is cruelly exploited in tourism. The Bill, a world first for Britain, has attracted interest from many nations across the world, including the EU bloc, USA and Australia.

Global climate change is not a future problem. Changes to the Earth's climate, driven by increased human emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases, are already having widespread effects on the environment: glaciers and ice sheets are shrinking, river and lake ice is breaking up earlier, plant and animal geographic ranges are shifting, and plants and trees are blooming sooner.

Humans are responsible for global warming:

Climate scientists have showed that humans are responsible for virtually all global heating over the last 200 years. Human activities, like the ones mentioned above, are causing greenhouse gases – warming the world faster than at any time in at least the last two thousand years.

The average temperature of the Earth's surface is now about 1.1°C warmer than it was in the late 1800s (before the industrial revolution) and warmer than at any time in the last 100,000 years. The last decade (2011-2020) was the warmest on record, and each of the last four decades has been warmer than any previous decade, since 1850.

Many people think that climate change mainly means warmer temperatures, but temperature rise is only the beginning of the story. Because the Earth is a system where everything is connected, changes in one area can influence changes in all others.

The consequences of climate change now include, among other issues, intense droughts, water scarcity, severe fires, rising sea levels, flooding, melting polar ice, catastrophic storms and declining biodiversity.

I can't emphasise enough the fact that we all need to do our bit to help with this crisis.



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## Want to launch a drinks start-up?

**L**aunching a new drinks brand or adding a new product to an existing range is exciting but challenging. Whether you are tapping into the trend for no-low drinks, pre-mixed or establishing a new vineyard, it's essential to have a clear value proposition and USP (unique selling proposition), a defined target audience, a robust business plan and identified routes to market.

We spoke to a handful of innovative new drinks brands to get their advice and tips for new brand launches, based on their experiences.

### 1. Work out your value proposition

How does your product make customers happy? What is the value you offer? You are not going to be the first person to launch a new beer or alcohol-free spirit, but what is unique about what you do?

### 2. Start with "Why?"

When you start to talk about your brand and product, don't just focus on WHAT you do - the product details like the taste, or HOW you do it - but WHY you do it. If you can clearly communicate why you exist, what's your purpose or belief and share why anyone should care, you will stand out from the crowd and build loyalty. "If you believe in what you are doing, so will everyone else", says **Robert Breakwell**, of Suffolk-based Niche Cocktails. **Andrew Stacey**, of Herbarium, a Norfolk non-alcoholic spirits company says: "Be clear on why and what you develop - are you mimicking an alcoholic drink or creating an alternative? Be clear with the consumer what they can expect taste-wise, so you are judged accordingly."

### 3. Identify your target audience

Be as specific as you can about what type of consumer you are trying to reach - whether it's based on demographics (geography, gender, age) or their tastes, values and lifestyle. You can even create profiles of your typical customer to help build up their personality. "Really get to understand your market", says **Andrew Stacey** - a statement supported by **Robert Breakwell** who adds: "Understand your consumer and focus everything on making your promise to them sincere."

### 4. Create a business plan

You need to have a destination in mind and a plan of how to get there. Think about the time and resources you need to launch your brand or product; what are all the steps, processes and measures of success? They might be to sell a certain number of units or to launch in any number of stockists. **Alan Ridealgh**, founder and partner of Humber Doucy Brewery in Suffolk, says: "Have the best business plan you can create; think about the time and resources you need to build your business; do you need a space to create your drinks, equipment to make it, a website, packaging and marketing? Try and think of every element of your business from start to end."



Left to right: Alan Ridealgh and John Ridealgh of Humber Doucy Brewery



5. Ask for help in the right places

There is a huge amount of support out there for businesses of all sizes, whether you are starting from scratch or taking over a long-established business. Look for what's available regionally – your local Growth Hub is a good place to start, and perhaps your region has a Food Innovation Centre, like the Broadland Food Innovation which supports business in Norfolk and Suffolk. **James Robins** of drinks brand Jimmy's Limoncello, launching in Autumn 2023, explains how the advice and support he received from the Broadland Food Innovation Centre project has been invaluable: "The support I received has been crucial – as a one-person business, I have been grateful for having someone to listen to me and offer support beyond just business expertise. Above all, the project has put me in touch with local like-minded businesses with whom you can share resources and collaborate. I've felt part of a wider community."

6. Formulate a budget

What are the fixed costs or those that vary on how many units you are producing? Can you calculate a breakeven point, so you know how many units you have to sell to cover your costs? The most common reason businesses fail is because they run out cash, so don't forget your cashflow forecast. "Have defined finance in place before starting and formulate a budget. Work out how much it will be to set up, make your product and break even. How much can you charge and ensure you have the funding to ensure it survives?", continues **Alan Ridealgh**, Humber Doucy Brewery.

7. Build a memorable brand

Your brand is far more than your name, your logo and your packaging; it's about every connection that your customer has with you. Brand is what makes people remember you and why they will recommend you to their friends, so make it unique, genuine and consistent.

8. Identify your routes to market

Are you going to sell direct to your customers, through a website or at events, or are you going to seek listings with independent retailers or aim high at supermarkets? **John Hemmant** of Chet Valley Vineyards in Norfolk says: "Plan your year and the season, including opportunities, events and key selling periods. Knowing your market helps identify when and where you will be in demand. Allocate stock for these moments as best you can. Running out of stock is bad for all businesses but having too much stock can also be detrimental. At the beginning, it is hard to anticipate but try and ensure you have the right stock levels."



Left to right: Steve Brown and Andrew Stacey of Herbarium



## **Recipe: Vegan paella**

**T**his vegan paella is packed full of tasty vegetables, rice and Mediterranean warmth. If you prefer, you could add some sliced vegan sausage.

Serves: 4

Time to prepare: 10 mins

Time to cook: 20 mins

Dietary requirements: dairy-free and egg-free halal, kosher, vegan

### **Ingredients**

200g/7oz easy cook rice  
½ tsp turmeric  
1 tbsp oil (use the oil from the artichokes if included)  
1 onion, sliced  
2 garlic cloves, sliced  
150g/5oz asparagus or green beans, trimmed and sliced  
1 red pepper, sliced  
1 small jar artichokes, drained (the ones in oil)  
30g/1oz gherkins, finely chopped  
50g/1¾oz olives, sliced  
100g/3½oz sun-dried tomato paste  
75g/2½oz frozen peas  
½ tsp paprika  
1 tbsp fresh dill (use parsley, thyme or oregano, if you prefer)  
100g/3½oz cherry tomatoes, cut in half  
30g/1oz toasted almond flakes  
1 lemon, cut into wedges

### **Instructions**

1. Place the rice and turmeric into a large pan with lots of cold water. Bring to the boil and simmer for ten minutes, or until cooked. When cooked, drain thoroughly. While the rice is cooking, prepare the base.
2. In a large frying pan, gently fry the onions for five minutes, then add the garlic and asparagus. Continue to cook for another five minutes.
3. Add the peppers, artichokes, sun-dried tomatoes, gherkins, olives, half the sun-dried paste, peas, paprika and half the fresh herbs. Continue to cook for five minutes, stirring from time to time.
4. Fold in the cooked rice to the vegetables and add the cherry tomatoes. Garnish your dish with the remaining sun-dried tomato paste, herbs, almond flakes and lemon wedges.



Recipe credit: [www.vforlife.org.uk](http://www.vforlife.org.uk)



image credit: Flavour Photos

**CHEF'S TIP:** When serving the dish, either do it straight from the pan, as would be done in Spain, or place it on to a large serving plate and garnish. Chop and change the ingredients to suit what you have in or to keep it seasonal. Try butterbeans, broad beans, Quorn pieces, capers, aubergine, chillies or cashew nuts. Let your imagination run.

## Food and drink start-up case studies

**T**he last couple of years have been very difficult for many food and drink businesses but, despite this, there has been an influx of those who have taken the plunge and launched their start-up. We chat to representatives of some of the ethical food and brands that are new to the market ...

### The sisters who followed their gut instinct

When sisters Thorayya and Shifa Mears turned 40, they felt a need to pause and reflect on what they wanted to do in life. The sisters were driven to start a business that was 'sustainable and good for people'. Passionate about food, flavours and cooking, they had grown up drinking kombucha made by their mother and knew that it was delicious as well as good for your gut. They began making kombucha, a fermented tea with ingredients foraged from the Norfolk countryside and developed a brand 'Oichi Kombucha'.

They decided to launch their business following lockdown and the sisters recall that they didn't have a traditional business plan, but just followed their instincts and drew on their wide experiences. Luckily, they soon had interest from some independent retailers around Norwich and, as word got out, they found more stockists in Norfolk, and a few in London.

### A timely intervention:

At the Norfolk Show in 2022, they were approached by Nick Smith, a business advisor for the Broadland Food Innovation Centre project, who was able to offer them free business support and advice, as part of the European Development funded project which exists to support innovation and growth for food and drink businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk.

**Thorayya** says: "This help came at a timely point for us, when we desperately needed to find a larger space. Nick was instrumental in us finding our new unit at Park Farm Business Centre at Hethersett, reaching out to all his contacts. He's also been able to signpost us to different business grants and helped us to secure a capital grant for equipment. She continues: "The advice for start-up food and drink businesses through the Broadland Food Innovation Centre has been invaluable to us as we've grown from a home-based project to a fully-fledged business."

Over two years after starting Oichi Kombucha, Shifa and Thorayya were joined by their elder sister Khalila - working together on a business they all love and really believe in.

<https://oichiferments.co.uk/>

### Pukpip to the rescue

Launched in January, Pukpip founder Zara Godfrey has brought together two of the nation's favourite snacks, chocolate and banana, with just the right balance of goodness and indulgence. But her new frozen snacking brand is on a mission - not only to bring us a heavenly combination of melt-in-the-mouth chocolate and creamy frozen banana, but they are also doing their bit to halt the needless destruction of imperfect bananas. Over a billion perfectly delicious bananas were going to waste each year before Pukpip came along to rescue wonky or misshapen bananas. Instead, they freeze them at source in Ecuador when perfectly ripe, and so locking in the vitamins and minerals, before turning them into a delicious low calorie, fabulously fruity frozen treat.







**Overcoming challenges:**

Zara says: “Pukpip is still very much a start-up brand with so many exciting opportunities ahead. Our biggest challenge is proving to the grocers that consumers want and need Pukpip’s Chocolate Dipped Frozen Bananas. Luckily for us, where we are stocked, we are flying off the shelves and once consumers try us, they want to buy us. We hope it won’t be too long until the grocers take note and you can find Pukpip in a freezer near you!”

Available in a velvety-smooth Milk Chocolate, 52% Dark Chocolate, or creamy White Chocolate, in packs of three or as singles. Find them at selected independent stores in and around London. For more information or stockists, visit [www.pukpip.com](http://www.pukpip.com).

**The ‘Etsy of food’**

Claire Ladkin is the founder of unique homecook platform All About The Cooks. Still very much in its infancy, it now has 70 cooks on the platform who cook in their own homes to serve residents in the cities of both Bristol and Bath. Offering cuisines that you can’t normally find on the high street, including Sudanese and Filipino, as well as catering options for dinner parties, it’s a real one-off platform and has been termed the ‘Etsy of food’.

**Shaking up the way we eat at home:**

We asked Claire why she launched the platform in the current hospitality market – it may be a challenge for some but perhaps, it seems, not all...She said: “Eating out will always be special. There’s no doubt in my mind about that, in spite of the current challenges. It’s eating at home that needs shaking up. We know that people are interested in setting up food microbusinesses – covid only heightened a growing trend. You only need to look at Facebook or Instagram to see that. Add to this the cost-of living crisis, the age of the side-hustle is here to stay.

Whilst there is interest in the home-cook space, I don’t know of anyone taking the hyperlocal approach. We are not a delivery platform. All food is pre-ordered, usually 24 hours in advance, and collected from the cook’s home. This rather wonderful ‘doorstep interaction’ enriches the whole experience beyond measure. We whole-heartedly believe that this is the way to go. It’s too early for us to quote sustainability data or measure the impact but we pride ourselves on being a values-led innovation and are accredited as a ‘tech-for-good’ business. No nationwide deliveries wrapped in ice packs and sheep’s wool for us!”

<https://allaboutthecooks.co.uk/>



## Recipe: courgette, cumin and lime fritters

**F**or a tasty, fuss-free supper, you really can't beat a fritter. Here, cumin, coriander and lime embellish an otherwise straightforward batter; good for any grated veg but do experiment with other flavourings – basil and lemon or smoked paprika and chilli – or leave out altogether. Our heroes are courgettes this time, but they could just as easily be grated carrot, beetroot, parsnips or cauliflower, another day. After you've made them for supper, try them cold for a packed lunch, or cook them small and serve as pre-dinner nibbles. Endlessly versatile, this is a real workhorse recipe.

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Makes:** 8-10 fritters

### INGREDIENTS

60g self-raising flour  
1 tsp ground cumin  
½ tsp flaky sea salt  
1 egg  
40ml whole milk  
250g courgettes, trimmed  
3 tbsp finely chopped coriander leaves  
1 lime, zest and juice  
200ml sunflower oil, for frying  
200g natural yogurt

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 120°C/100°C fan or gas mark ½.
2. Whisk together the flour, ground cumin, measured salt and a few turns of pepper, in a large bowl.
3. Beat the egg and milk together in a jug, then pour it gradually into the dry mix, whisking as you go, to create a smooth batter.
4. Grate the courgettes on to a chopping board, using the coarse side of a box grater, then squeeze them between your hands to get rid of any excess liquid. Add the gratings to the batter with one tablespoon of the chopped coriander and the lime zest, and stir through.
5. Pour the sunflower oil into a large, non-stick frying pan so that it is, give or take, 2cm deep. Warm over a medium-high heat until a droplet of batter fizzes on contact with the oil. Spoon big tablespoon-sized dollops of the batter into the pan and fry for four to six minutes on each side. They are ready when the outside is golden, and the inside is fluffy and just cooked through. You may need to do this in batches, so transfer the cooked fritters to a plate lined with kitchen paper and pop them into the warmed oven while you do the rest.
6. Mix the yogurt with the remaining coriander leaves, the lime juice and a pinch of salt, and serve it in a bowl alongside the pile of warm fritters.

Recipe credit: From the Veg Patch, by Kathy Slack £25, [www.kathyslack.com](http://www.kathyslack.com).

**Kathy Slack** is a cook, veg grower and writer who worked in advertising agencies in London for more than a decade, before burnout and depression took hold and she escaped to the Oxfordshire countryside, finding solace, and a new career, in the veg patch. After learning the ropes at Daylesford Organic Farm, she became a full-time writer and recipe developer, hosting supper clubs and cookery demonstrations with harvests from her garden, as well as food styling and developing recipes for various brands and publications. She is a proud supporter of sustainable farming and a mental health advocate.



Recipe credit: Kathy Slack

**SUPERFOOD IN A BOTTLE**

The new range of Coconutea drinks have been developed by a master tea sommelier, carefully blending water from the King Coconut, together with natural fruit flavours and premium green tea. The drink is packed with a range of organic nutrients and minerals and it's a rich source of B-complex vitamins, sodium, potassium, and other essential electrolytes. All in all, it's one of the most rehydrating liquids the planet naturally produces. It comes in a choice of six delicious flavours: lemon, peach, pineapple, passion fruit, strawberry and soursop. It retails at £19.99 for six bottles. [www.coconutea.com](http://www.coconutea.com)



**CHOCOLATE FIT FOR A KING**



FATSO dark chocolate, the 100% sustainable and fully-recyclable packaged dark chocolate brand, have added a new flavour to their range. The King's Ransom is a vegan chocolate bar that is as delicious as it is regal – enrobing the majesty of whole pistachios, crunchy cocoa nibs and a hint of mint, all set in the finest Colombian dark chocolate (60% cacao). It is available nationwide, or visit [www.sofatso.com](http://www.sofatso.com) to buy online (RRP £6.50 per 150g bar).



**SUMMER SIPPING**

Try perfectly imperfect fruity vodka! Enjoy Sapling Spirits' new wonky Raspberry & Hibiscus Vodka that uses rejected raspberries that have been bumped, crushed, squashed or broken, but are just as fruity and delicious as their 'perfect' counterparts. When combined with delicate hibiscus and Sapling's British wheat-based vodka, it creates a unique blend with a deliciously fruity and refreshing taste. Available in John Lewis, £36.



**NEW RECIPE IDEAS FROM JAPAN**

Try something different from this new vegetarian cookbook, which features over 400 authentic Japanese recipes for the home cook, from bestselling author Nancy Singleton Hachisu. The iconic and regional traditions of Japan are organised by course and contain insightful notes alongside the recipes. The dishes – soups, noodles, rices, pickles, onepots, sweets, and vegetables – are simple and elegant. Japan: The Vegetarian Cookbook is available in hardback from Phaidon Press, £39.95



**BEAT THE HEAT**

Introducing The Fermentation Station's exciting new summer range! Feel refreshed with their new Kombucha flavours.

- 1) Mango My Days – floral green Rooibos tea blended with real mango pieces!
- 2) Summer Peach – sweet garden tea with a bold peach finish.
- 3) Strawberries and Cream – delicious strawberry Rooibos tea with sweet cream flavour.

Pair these cool Kombuchas with their tangy Latin American-style sauerkraut, Curtido, for the ultimate summer feast – tacos anyone?

Available to order direct from <https://www.thefermentation-station.co.uk/> and from all good delis and farm shops across the UK.



**WHEN DID YOU LAST BAKE FROM SCRATCH?**

**Danielle Maupertuis**, the UK's leading vegan pastry dessert chef says: "We are losing the art of baking". Having asked her clients, and attendees of her vegan dessert cooking demos, when they last cooked from scratch, or with little ones in attendance, the answers were disappointing. She is now on a mission to change this and to help make things easier for budding bakers. Her new online vegan dessert courses give you step-by-step guidance. Learn how to make iconic English desserts that are gluten-free, and will be enjoyed by vegans and non-vegans alike.

Visit <https://vegandesserts.thinkific.com>.



  
THE  
JERSEY TEA  
COMPANY

~ HANDCRAFTED LOOSE LEAF TEA ~

~ SPRING GREEN ~

INSPIRED BY THE SEA

# *The Jersey Tea Company – organically grown and handcrafted teas*

**T**he Jersey Tea Company was established in 2016 by four friends (Katherine and Terry Boucher, and Michelle and Cardin Pasturel), who are organically growing and handcrafting a range of premium teas on the island of Jersey. They explain ...

Our tea fields are maintained using eco-friendly methods to encourage not only healthy plant growth, but also wildlife and bio-diversity. Water conservation free of pesticides is a key initiative, as is leaving the edges of the fields unmanicured to act as pollinator patches for bees, butterflies and other insects. We utilise regenerative farming techniques to improve the quality of the land – for example, using green waste as compost and sowing clover between the plants to fix nitrogen into the soil. Our tea is organically grown, with no artificial fertilisers, and no herbicides or pesticides. What you get in your teacup is just tea!

The finest and freshest top two leaves with the bud are handpicked and handcrafted to make our whole leaf tea. Each step of our artisan process maintains the quality of our leaves, ensuring that they remain unbroken, and thus avoiding a bitter tasting brew.

Currently, we are producing Green and Black Tea, with three varieties of each based on the time the tea is picked (spring, summer and autumn). The spring teas are picked from the first flush and are often the more fresh, pure and light teas. The teas picked later in the season tend to have more complexities and depth to them.

Our Green Tea has been described by a UK tea connoisseur as: “easy on the palate and sweet. It’s got gentle hints of buttered spring greens but without the bitterness. Really nice – no astringency, no bitterness, just a lovely uplifting smooth green character”.

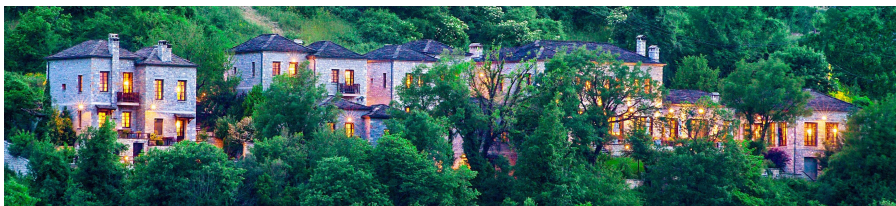
She went on to describe our Black Tea as: “The leaves are so pretty, lovely and black and twisty – really attractive. The aroma of the liquor is sweet with hints of roast squash or sweet potato. The liquor is rounded and full of flavour, without being bitter. There’s a lovely richness on the after notes. It’s got good strength but no astringency. Really good.”

### **At The Jersey Tea Company, we have three main aspirations:**

1. For the individual: To provide to our clients a high quality, wonderfully tasting tea that is grown ethically to give the client an experience of mindful healthy tea drinking that is a positive experience for their body and mind.
2. For the community: Being a Jersey business that is successful and positively representing the island, and also being part of the tea community where we are learning together from other farmers.
3. For the land: We are very passionate about trying to improve the quality of land and farming in Jersey. This includes: biodiversity (pollinator patches; rewilding); improving water quality (no leaching of chemicals as we do not use herbicides, pesticides, or artificial fertilisers on our crops); carbon sequestration via the tea plants; plastic free (our packaging is plastic free and compostable); and sustainability (minimal electric use; reusing materials).







## A new Greek open-air spa experience

Aristi Mountain Resort and Villas generates a unique and unforgettable experience for guests who are seeking rejuvenation and beauty in nature. Located in the Zagori region, which is currently under consideration for the UNESCO World Heritage List, the property was built in the traditional way of constructing buildings in the area with stone and wood, and great care was given to the hotel's form so as not to affect the precious environment of the area. The team has made commitments to protect the environment, conserve the delicate ecosystems and preserve the 4,500-year-old culture for which the region is known.

Set in the upper part of Aristi village in Epirus Region, Aristi Mountain Resort and Villas features spectacular panoramic views over the Vikos Gorge, the Towers of Papingo and the Astraka mountain peak. Their new open-air spa experience invites guests to encounter the ultimate form of relaxation and tranquility within the luscious grounds of this enchanting Greek resort. The result is a wonderful open-air face or body treatment with a perfect amalgamation between total relaxation and the luscious landscape that surrounds the unspoiled village of Aristi.

With Aristi's extensive spa menu, guests can choose from a Revitalizing Eye Treatment or Mediterranean Skin Therapy, as well as Thai and Balinese massages and reflexology. In addition to an open-air spa experience, Aristi Mountain Resort and Villas offers a sauna and a sanctuary of peace and tranquillity inside the spa area. Take a moment to enjoy the calm waters of the pool in a light and airy atmosphere, with views out across the woodlands. [www.aristi.eu/en](http://www.aristi.eu/en)



## Outdoor sanctuary opens at Eden Hall Day Spa

UK hotel and spa group Barons Eden recently opened a new £4m Spa Garden at its Nottinghamshire property, Eden Hall Day Spa. Featuring all-year-round therapeutic facilities, guests can enjoy a Reflect and Relax room, multiple chill-out areas, an outdoor sauna and fire pit, as well as four standing therapy stations, air loungers with headrests and 16 benches that offer a variety of relaxation options, such as back and calf jets.

The new outdoor sanctuary is also home to a stainless steel hydrotherapy pool, designed to harness the latest technology and provide safe and hygienic bathing conditions with minimal impact on the environment. Featuring infinity edges, large walk-in steps and underwater jets to aid total body massage, the pool is heated to an average water temperature of 39°C by a sustainable heating source, meaning that guests can enjoy a soak even during the cooler months.

The launch of the garden has also introduced a new sun-lit botanical Brasserie – called The Vinery – situated at the heart of the Spa Garden. With an axial design, the garden utilises both native and non-native trees, including Acer Japonicum and Laurus Nobilis, to provide height, structure and a biodiverse habitat for local wildlife to thrive.

Nestled in 15 acres of manicured grounds, the 25-treatment-room spa is already home to an indoor swimming pool, outdoor hot tubs, a rose-infused steam room, saunas and tropical showers. Guests are offered a selection of traditional spa treatments provided by Elemis and Irish beauty brand VOYA. <https://baronseden.com/eden-hall>



## Relaxation and wellbeing in the rainforest

The Datai Langkawi is located in an ancient rainforest rich in wildlife, overlooking the tranquil Datai Bay – named by National Geographic as one of the top ten beaches worldwide. Awarded 'Sustainable Spa of the Year' at last year's World Spa & Wellness Awards, The Spa at The Datai Langkawi offers immersive treatments in the heart of the rainforest, to induce a sensory journey of overall well-being. Enveloped by the tranquil sights, meditative sounds and subtle scents of the jungle, each secluded spa villa features indoor and outdoor showers, with a spacious river-view soaking bath. Treatments are based on Malaysian Ramuan healing traditions, and each commences with a healing mangrove-based foot bath and ends with a cleansing tea.

The resort recently launched Akar, an all-natural, all-organic plant-based spa line created exclusively for The Datai Langkawi to provide the massage oils, potions and poultices used in its Ramuan treatments. Meaning 'roots' in Malay, Akar's formulations are based on Ramuan's practice of using plant-based ingredients to detoxify, rejuvenate and regenerate. The range comprises three lines, each drawn from one of The Datai Langkawi's three biomes or habitats – The Rainforest, The Mangrove and The Sea – each with distinct properties.

Balancing the inspiration of age-old local healing traditions with contemporary innovations, The Spa at The Datai Langkawi also recently introduced a revolutionary range of certified, results-driven facial and body treatments, using wild, sustainably hand-harvested seaweed by Irish brand VOYA Organic Beauty.

Discover The Spa: <https://www.thedatai.com/>

## Sound Healing Therapy

**T**he use of sound healing is as old as medicine itself. Dating back thousands of years, cultures across the world, such as Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and many more, have drawn upon the healing power of sound frequencies to treat a wide range of ailments. Gongs have been used as shamanic healing tools, celebratory instruments and as a method of communication for thousands of years.

One of the most recent trends for healing yourself is 'sound healing'. Everything we encounter in life has a particular frequency, and these frequencies may impact our mood. This is one of the major foundations of sound healing, now part of major wellness routines such as mindfulness. Indeed, it's easier than ever to find a gong bath practice in a group setting, or to book a one-to-one sound therapy session with a specialised practitioner.

### Healing on all levels

We spoke to **Britta Hochkeppel**, who has been offering sound healing for many years. She said: "The deeply healing vibrations of the sound bath therapy are perfect for restoring balance on the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels." Common conditions that her clients present with include:

- Depression
- Chronic pain
- Anxiety
- General stress
- Emotional imbalances
- Weight imbalances
- Adrenal fatigue
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Auto immune diseases such as ME
- Insomnia
- Hormonal dysfunction

### What is sound healing?

Sound healing is the practice of using sound frequencies to treat physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual illnesses. Sound therapy uses vibrational frequencies to promote relaxation and relieve stress in your body and mind. In essence, sound healing uses tonal and rhythmic mixes of voice and instruments. In the instrumental area, you mainly encounter crystal singing bowls, tuning forks, gongs, and others. On the other hand, you can expect toning, mantras, or over-toning.

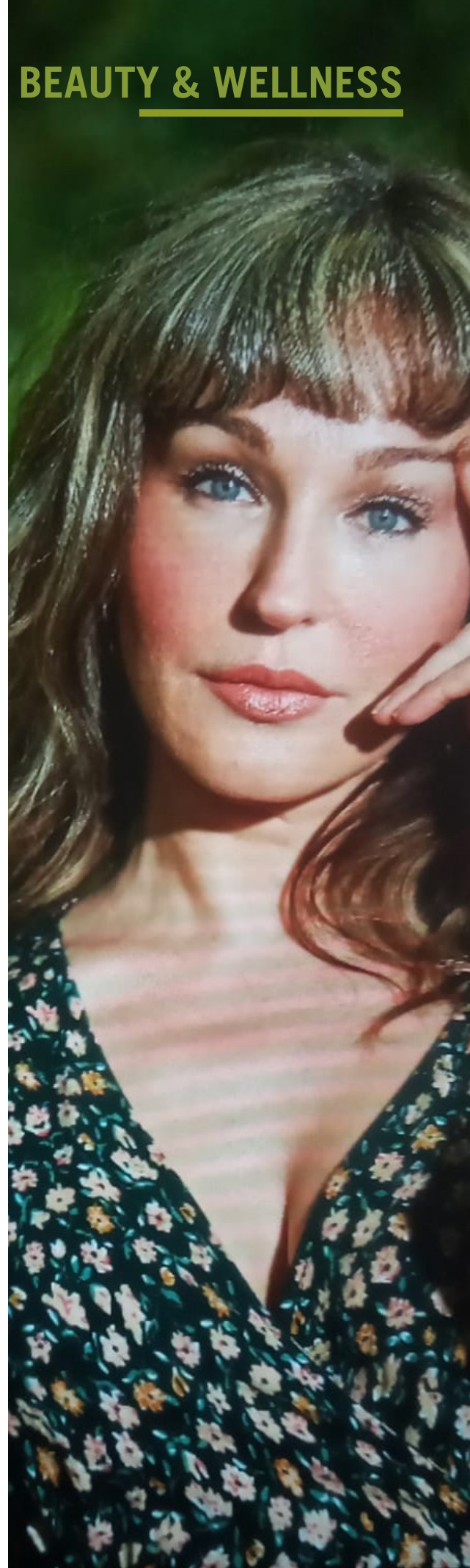
### How does sound healing work?

In the growing field of "energy medicine", it is well known that our universe is created through patterns of frequency. Science is now documenting what mystics have known for thousands of years. Everything that exists in the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual world does so on a vibratory basis. Everything is made of electrical energy. Our organs and neurotransmitters that we experience as emotions or thoughts are electric frequencies.

These frequencies can become stagnant anywhere in our four-body system (ie the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels) or create an overflow as a result of experiencing trauma, self-limiting beliefs and negative thought patterns as we grow from childhood into adulthood. Any imbalances can result in diseases of the body and mind, including autoimmune diseases.

### Some common sound healing techniques include:

- **Tuning fork therapy:** In tuning fork therapy, the practitioner calibrates metal tuning forks with particular sound vibrations; once they're done, the forks are placed directly on the person. As the tuning forks start producing their frequencies, the person's body gets stimulated. This therapy type does a great job of reducing tension in the body.





- **Music:** Depending on the sounds, music can also be used as therapy. In the case of sound healing practices, some popular ways to use music for healing include NordoffRobbins' neurologic music therapy, and singing bowl therapy.

- **Binaural beats:** Here, the person receives two different sound tones at the same time. Depending on the hertz levels of these sounds, the person can experience deep relaxation states, sleepiness, more focus, better mood, etc.

#### **What are the benefits of sound healing?**

Sound healing is a non-invasive way to treat many conditions.

**Britta** says: "As a sound healer, I can help you enter a deep meditative state and re-align your body's natural rhythms. During a sound healing treatment, the brain waves change into alpha and theta brainwaves, which can only occur when we release tension and reach a deep state of meditation." One of the most remarkable aspects of sound healing is that not all sessions use the same instruments. You may experience different sounds in each session, keeping the experience fresh for you each time.

#### **What is a sound bath?**

The most popular sound healing method is the "sound bath." In sound baths, you lie down and are exposed to different healing sound vibrations. These are often held in groups or at workshops.

#### **The rise in popularity of gong baths**

A gong bath is a form of sound healing meditation. It is referred to as a bath due to participants being immersed in the vibrations of these instruments during a session. The gong works on the level of entrainment, which means a stronger frequency overpowering a weaker frequency.

The sound of a gong helps the brain reach deep relaxation, by activating the parasympathetic nervous system and one can experience delta and theta brain waves, which are the slowest brain waves in humans. Your brain will find it challenging to follow the many sounds of the gong so you will enter a deep meditative state during the session. According to expert practitioners such as Britta, sound healing may help restore the regular vibratory frequencies of our brain cells, allowing for a deeper state of relaxation.

"Gongs are very useful in resolving emotional and physical dissonance. The gong is a psycho-acoustic gateway to heighten states of awareness and consciousness. It is an amazing healing tool because the frequencies surpass the intellectual part of the brain, but travel to the core of the cellular system where the healing qualities are fully absorbed by the entire system. It is an ideal tool for stress reduction, stimulation of the glandular system and to breakup emotional blockages."

#### **Sound therapy – the bottom line**

With many healing benefits for mind and body, Britta finds individuals will be filled with new-found energy and creativity and can experience heightened awareness, all having a huge positive impact on their day-to-day life. She maintains: "I see the gong as a unique healing tool which allows us to reconnect with the source, the elements and our core. The absolute recalibration for the mind and body."

Britta Hochkeppel  
Author, Naturopath, Intuitive Healer and Holistic Therapist  
[www.vitaserena.co.uk](http://www.vitaserena.co.uk)



## A good future for our young people - RINGANA

### International Youth Day (12 August)

What began at the United Nations' General Assembly in 1965 has since become an annual event, in the shape of International Youth Day. Focusing on tweens and teens, and their place in society, it is a chance to include them in the development of communities around the world and to embrace the future in new directions when it comes to sustainability. This year's event, on 12 August, was celebrated with the theme of "Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World."

Founded in 1996, Austrian vegan skincare brand RINGANA has been committed to sustainability since day one: all their products are manufactured freshly, in a way that conserves energy, and are free of artificial preservatives. They strive to conserve natural resources and to keep pollution as low as possible, so that we can get a step closer to the great overarching goal: to leave a livable world for the coming generations.

### RINGANA's tips for radiant, youthful skin:

#### Sun protection

The effects of UV rays can include sunburn or pigment abnormality. Regular sun protection is crucial when it comes to taking care of your skin properly. It should, therefore, be integrated as the final step of your daily beauty routine. The Cosmos Organic-certified FRESH sunscreen face SPF 15, with zinc oxide and cotton extract, protects your facial skin in a natural way. The light emulsion is easy to apply and leaves your skin feeling moisturised and with a matt look.

#### Diet

Our diet plays a hugely important role when it comes to beautiful skin. Skin impurities can be the result of stress, an unhealthy diet or harmful environmental factors, so take CAPS Beauty & Hair to support skin regeneration. Skin impurities don't stand a chance, particularly thanks to the sod from melon extract in the capsules.

#### Natural radiance

Lots of young people use make-up to conceal flaws, but what many of them forget is that the skin is an organ that breathes. With a thick layer of make-up, the skin's metabolism is inhibited. If you're looking for an alternative, try FRESH tinted moisturiser, because it gives the skin an ultra even, radiant look. Mineral pigments provide a delicate tint, and small flaws are corrected.

#### A good skincare routine starts early

Based on a broad spectrum of sustainably manufactured products, RINGANA fresh skin care offers a five-step skincare routine that is ideal for youthful skin, and is best repeated twice a day.

## BEAUTY & WELLNESS



### 1. Cleansing

FRESH cleanser removes dirt particles and make-up gently yet thoroughly, and it's certified to Cosmos organic and natural cosmetic standard.

### 2. Toning

FRESH tonic pure clarifies oily skin that tends to impurities, and it hydrates. It regulates sebum production, thus preventing undesirable shine.

### 3. Moisturisation and special care

FRESH hydro serum delivers maximum hydration because it can absorb water molecules from the environment and make them available to the skin. It can be mixed with one pump of FRESH ADDS repair as a care booster for irritated skin, as needed.

### 4. Last but not least

FRESH cream light is a light moisturiser which was specially designed to help skin that tends to shine and has impurities. It clarifies the complexion, giving it an even look.

All products available at [www.ringana.com](http://www.ringana.com). RINGANA ships from Austria to 34 international countries.

**VEGAN SKINCARE FOR BABIES**

Award-winning Austrian vegan skincare brand RINGANA have introduced their FRESH baby product range into the UK. Specifically developed for babies and children under four years of age, and like all RINGANA's skincare products, the FRESH baby range uses only the freshest ingredients. The products even have a short shelflife, as proof of their absolute freshness. The four fresh, natural vegan care products were developed with the greatest care and are of the highest certified organic and pharmaceutical quality: FRESH baby body & wash, FRESH baby bum cream, FRESH baby bum foam and FRESH baby are available from [www.ringana.com](http://www.ringana.com).



**PROTECTION FOR YOUR EYES**

Bold Vision is a sustainable summer essential supplement designed specifically to protect your eyes and vision from the damaging effects of the sun. Containing two special nutrients, lutein and zeaxanthin, that are not produced naturally by the body, these can act like internal sunglasses for your eyes, to filter and absorb the sun's high-energy blue light that can damage your eyes.

The Bold Vision supplements are produced by Wiley's Finest – the only brand in the world to have a full product line certified sustainable by the Marine Conservation Society (or the Vegetarian Society for its vegan range).

£39.50 for 60 softgel capsules (one month's supply), with free delivery. [www.wileysfinest.co.uk](http://www.wileysfinest.co.uk)



**TOOTHPASTE IN POTS**

Fresh handmade cosmetics company Lush has created an innovative new fluoride toothpaste. In true Lush style, the toothpaste has been tested by an independent laboratory to assess its whitening ability, using in-vitro tests with absolutely no animal involvement – instead, using specimens of human dentine and enamel. All of Lush's toothpastes, toothpaste tabs and toothpaste jellies were found to produce whitening results of at least 0.8 shades higher after the equivalent of one-week's brushing.

Lush's new Cool with Fluoride toothpaste (£6.50 / €9.50 for 60g) is now in stores and is housed in one of Lush's recycled and recyclable pots, providing an alternative to traditional toothpaste tubes. Return them to a store to be recycled and get a 50p discount on purchase.



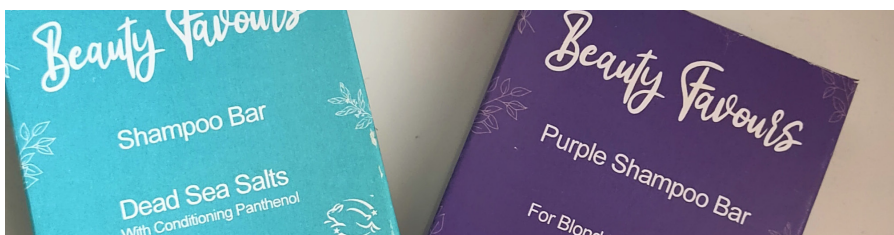
**NEUTRAL NAILS**

Check out the new Spring/Summer Earthy Tones Collection from Earthy Nail Polish, which has the perfect neutral shades for all skin tones. The collection includes Pearls Of Wisdom, Sand Dune, Flamingo Pink and a brand-new shade, Cloud 9 – perfect for the sleek milky white mani that is so popular with celebrities right now. Certified vegan and cruelty free, the plant-based formula includes calcium and magnesium to help strengthen and condition nails with continued use. We like that the brand offers a Recycle Reuse Programme to customers, where all empties can be sent back. Earthy Tones Collection: £24.95; [www.earthynailpolish.com/](http://www.earthynailpolish.com/).



**NEW MULTI-PURPOSE COLOUR BALM**

Counter Culture, the sustainable new e-tailer that champions sustainable, ethical, and female-founded products, has just launched their collaboration with vegan makeup brand Seeds of Colour. Sitting amongst four existing shades within the Seeds of Colour range, the new 'Gigi Red' limited edition shade can be used on cheeks, lips and eyes, and will offer the same award-winning natural pigment that has impressed the beauty industry so far.



**FOR HEALTHY HAIR**

Beauty Favours is launching two new vegan friendly shampoo bars to add to their leaping bunny certified range. Firstly, they will be launching a Dead Sea Salts Shampoo Bar which is rich in minerals and suitable for all hair types. Secondly, look out for their Purple Shampoo Bar, which contains moisturising castor oil and beetroot extract designed to combat brassiness in blonde and silver hair, for just £9.95 each. [www.beautyfavours.com](http://www.beautyfavours.com)

Representatives of both the fashion and beauty industries working together chose this shade of red thanks to its timeless, versatile and evergreen status; plus, 15% of each sale will be donated to the women's Fashion Impact Fund charity. RRP £23, available from [www.counterculturestore.co.uk](http://www.counterculturestore.co.uk).

## Relax With Reiki

**E**motional wellbeing is crucial, but finding time and space for relaxation can be difficult. What if you could find relaxation from dedicating just 30 minutes a week to yourself, without visiting a therapist? We talk to a reiki teacher to find out about distant reiki ...

Reiki (pronounced ray-key) is a Japanese word meaning “universal life energy”. Reiki is a relaxing holistic experience that supports the body and mind in times of stress, on a physical and/or emotional level. During the non-invasive healing process, energy is channelled through the hands of the practitioner to the client. The UK Reiki Federation says: “Scientific research findings may help us to understand how reiki healing works. When giving reiki, practitioners have been shown to emit electromagnetic or bio-magnetic energy from their hands. The frequencies of the energy emitted vary from one moment to the next, but many appear to correspond to those that medical researchers have identified as being the optimum frequencies for stimulating the healing process in tissues, bones and other body parts so far investigated.”

### Does a therapist need to be present?

**Jo Hanby**, a Reiki Master Practitioner and Teacher, says that she has found receiving reiki via a distant session can be more intense than receiving it in-person. “Having discussed with my students how they felt during the receiving of their distant versus their in-person reiki, their feedback was that, frequently, sensations were in fact stronger from the distant reiki.”

Jo adds: “My regular in-person clients tell me they feel different sensations, and varying strengths and depth of sensations, in their sessions from week to week, month to month. The body changes on a cellular level on a regular basis and it also reacts differently to changing emotions, too. So, it makes sense that, whether a client has a live or distant session, it can be different as well; it can be more or less intense than a previous or future session. It doesn’t matter whether the practitioner is present or not, the reiki is still being received.”

- Reiki works when a reiki practitioner sets an intention for the person to be able to receive the reiki – it doesn’t matter where, when or how they receive it.
- What is important is that the intention is set and that the client is happy to receive the reiki.

### Benefits

Regular reiki can promote a better sleeping pattern, ease aches and pains, lessen feelings of stress and anxiety, increase overall well-being and accelerate the body’s natural healing process.

After a session, you may immediately feel calmer, more relaxed, less anxious and maybe sleepy – or perhaps alert and revitalised; everyone is different. Usually within 24 hours you will notice positive changes, perhaps on a physical level and/or within your emotional state.

The effects of reiki are cumulative, so the effects will be maintained for longer if you have regular sessions initially. Jo comments: “Generally for new clients, or those who are presenting with emotional issues such as stress and anxiety, I recommend a weekly session for two to three weeks, then, as the effects last longer, the sessions can reduce to fortnightly and then monthly, for general well-being and maintenance.”

### What do I need to know before having distant reiki?

Therapists should do a client consultation before the session and also get permission to send the distant reiki.

Give thought to when you are having the distant reiki. Jo says that her clients particularly enjoy a session early on a Friday and Sunday evening, as it sets them up for the weekend or week ahead.





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### Preparing for a distant healing session

- About ten minutes before the start, put on relaxing music, dim the lights or light candles.
- Make yourself comfortable (lying down is usually best) and ensure you won't be disturbed.
- Get into a relaxed or meditative state.
- Set the intention to receive distant reiki (ask your reiki practitioner if you would like guided wording around this).

### During the session

- You may feel cold or hot, or feel pressure/heaviness or changes within your body. This is the energy shifting. It is not always the same feeling and can be different for everybody.
- If your mind wanders, accept that it is wondering and bring it back into a relaxed state.
- Don't worry if you fall asleep – the energy will still be received.
- Sessions are usually around 30 to 40 minutes. You will probably notice once it has stopped.

### Afterwards

- Drink lots of water and avoid a heavy meal. It is advisable to have an early night. You may feel tired or any existing aches and pains could increase for a short time – this is all temporary whilst the energy shifts and the body rebalances. Contact your therapist if you have any queries.
- Get plenty of rest, take light exercise, walk in nature and eat healthy meals. Jo also recommends that clients journal and practice meditation either side of a session.

Jo Hanby is a Reiki Master Practitioner / Teacher and Spiritual Life & Happiness Coach in Essex.

Visit [essexreikihealing.co.uk](http://essexreikihealing.co.uk) to find out more.



## ***New book – ‘Making A Difference: Setting Up Sustainable Community-based Projects’***

**D**o you want to make a difference in your local community? Do you have lots of ideas but don't know where to start?

If so, a new book – ‘Making A Difference: Setting Up Sustainable Community-based Projects’ by Pamela Walker – may yield a mine of useful information to get you started.

Providing a practical step-by-step guide, it aims to help anyone who wants to set up a project or introduce a service that would benefit a significant number of vulnerable or excluded people, at any age, within their local communities in England and Wales.

Author Pamela Walker draws on many years of experience within the charity sector to guide the reader through the process, explaining each stage clearly and precisely. The reader will be able to identify and develop key information about their project – why it's necessary, what it will involve and how to approach it, what challenges might be encountered and how to avoid and overcome them.

An example of a project, which runs through the whole book, enables the reader to see how each stage might apply to a real-life scenario. Packed with reassurance and useful insights into the workings of the Third Sector, this is an indispensable guide to making the world a better place and bringing about positive change.

### **What can you do to help your community?**

There are many awareness days, weeks and months dedicated to making a difference to those around us. You may find inspiration and ideas from researching any of these recent campaigns:

Mental Health Awareness Month - May 2023  
Volunteers Week - 1st-7th June  
Carers Week - 8th-14th June  
UK Clothing Poverty Awareness Day - 9th June  
World Elder Abuse Day - 15th June  
Learning Disability Week - 15th-21st June

### **Coming up soon...**

Challenge Poverty Week - 2nd-8th October  
World Homeless Day - 10th October

For more awareness days, visit [www.awarenessdays.com](http://www.awarenessdays.com).

Pamela Walker is the Development Manager for the national food charity, FoodCycle which provides free communal meals for anyone experiencing food poverty or social isolation. She began as a frontline worker, and now has over thirty years' experience of developing community-based projects and managing volunteers, benefiting vulnerable and isolated older people, pregnant teens, the nursery-age children of Travelers and Gypsy families, medically qualified refugees, Looked After children, and many others.

‘Making A Difference: Setting Up Sustainable Community-based Projects’ by Pamela Walker. RRP: £11.99, available from Amazon



**W**e've rounded up the best new releases with which to relax. All available from Amazon. Enjoy!

**The One That Got Away By JD Kirk**  
RRP: £9.99 / £2.99 Kindle

When a fifteen-year-old girl fails to make it home after school, DI Heather Filson believes she's dealing with just another teenage runaway. The girl's grandfather, a notorious Glasgow gangster, disagrees. Convinced one of his underworld enemies has grabbed her, he's prepared to bathe the city in blood in order to bring his princess home.

But, as the days pass and the evidence mounts, Heather starts to fear that they're both wrong, and that a brutal killer from the past has returned.

A killer that DI Heather Filson is uniquely familiar with...



**Dating Little Miss Perfect by Cassandra O'Leary**  
RRP: £13.99 / £3.99 Kindle

On an anonymous online dating app, LittleMissPerfect meets HotAussie007 and it's love at first click. In real life, research scientist Dr Eden, meets a laid-back Aussie marketing manager, Finn, at the big pharma company where they both work in California. They're forced to compete for special projects funding, and both their jobs are on the line.

When they realise the truth about their online alter egos, dating is off the table. Can they ignore their inconvenient attraction, and work together to take down their unethical boss?

**This Child of Mine by Emma-Claire Wilson**  
RRP: £8.79 / £1.99 Kindle

When Stephanie is told she's pregnant and that she is sick on the same day, she faces an impossible choice...

"After trying for a baby for so long, finding out I was pregnant was supposed to be the happiest day of my life. But in the same breath as the news I had been waiting years to hear, the doctor told me I was seriously ill. If I carry my baby to term, I will almost certainly die. If I proceed with treatment, my baby will not live.

My husband – the father of this child – is telling me to save myself. But with all the secrets I know he is keeping from me, I can't trust him anymore." What would you do?



**The Beach Party by Nikki Smith**  
RRP: £8.99 / Kindle £3.99

Six friends. The holiday of their dreams. One night that changed it all . . .

1989: The tunes are loud and the clothes are louder when a group of friends arrives in Mallorca for a post-graduation holiday of decadence and debauchery at a luxury villa.

A beach party marks the pinnacle of their fun, until it isn't fun any longer, because, amidst the wild partying - sand flying from dancing feet and revellers leaping from yachts - an accident happens. Suddenly, the night of a lifetime becomes a living nightmare.

Now: The truth about that summer has been collectively buried. But someone knows what happened that night. And they want the friends to pay for what they did.



**The Dive by Sara Ochs**

RRP: £14.99 (HB) / Kindle £5.99

Escape to paradise.

Scuba diving instructor Cass leads her students out for their first dive off the beautiful coast of Koh Sang, Thailand's world-famous party island. It's supposed to be a life-changing experience, but things quickly spiral out of control...

Leave your secrets behind.

By the time she gets back to the shore, one of her students is dead, another badly injured, and she knows that her idyllic life is about to be smashed to pieces on the rocks.

But don't get lost for ever...

because someone is making sure that backpackers never leave paradise - one murder at a time. And Cass has a feeling she might be next...



**Home by Caileen Steed**

RRP: £7.91 / Kindle £7.13

Someone has broken into Zoe's flat. A man she thought she'd never have to see again. They call him the Hand of God.

He knows about her job in the cafe, her life in Dublin, her ex-girlfriend, even the knife she's hidden under the mattress.

She thought she'd left him far behind, along with the cult of the children and their isolated compound home - but now he's found her, and Zoe realises she must go back with him if she's to rescue the sister who helped her escape originally.

**My Name is Sunshine Simpson by G M Linton**

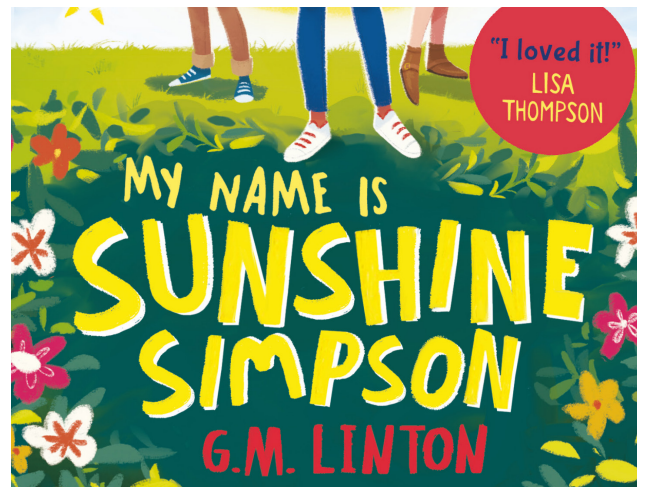
RRP: £7.99

Meet Sunshine Simpson - a brand-new best friend for 9+ readers! Perfect for fans of Jacqueline Wilson.

Sunshine Simpson's larger-than-life Grandad is always telling her to get out and find her own adventures, but unfortunately BAD LUCK has a habit of coming her way.

Her new friend Evie is fast becoming a FRENEMY, her home haircut is a DISASTER, and the school showcase is so STRESSFUL! Everything seems to be going wrong, especially with Grandad getting older every week.

Sunshine needs to find her voice, but can she break through the clouds to stand tall, stand proud, and show the world she can shine?



**Have You Seen The New Forest Unicorn? by Carole Smith**

RRP: £9.99 / £4.99

A brilliant children's fiction book set in The New Forest, featuring gorgeous illustrations.

You may be lucky enough to see the Unicorn, it may be hiding behind the Gorse by the Stone Water Trough at Wootton. Maybe Willow was right... it may go to Setley Pond for a drink! It could even be visiting the Trolls that live under Wootton Bridge.

Perhaps the Unicorn did visit Hincheslea, and saw the hot air balloon? And on a walk at Wilverley Plain or Longslade, you may be lucky enough to see the New Forest ponies grazing or playing: Drummer, Merlin, Peewee, Riley, Willow and Juliet.

But on a dark clear night if you look up, the Unicorn may appear among the stars in the sky over The New Forest. Drummer, Merlin, Peewee, Riley, Juliet and Willow will keep looking - will you join them?



## *New sustainability-focused homes to rent in Wembley Park*

**R**epton Gardens has opened its doors to new residents in London's Wembley Park. The homes, which sit across three new buildings, are leased and operated by Quintain Living, the award-winning management company now overseeing the rental of more than 3,650 apartments in London's most exciting new neighbourhood.

The apartments have been designed with families and sharers in mind, with the building featuring a range of spacious three- and four-bedroom apartments, as well as studios and one- and two-bedroom homes in a range of layouts. Altogether, Repton Gardens offers 396 rental homes, spread across 40 different layouts, with the varying apartment designs encompassing features such as half bedrooms for guests, work-from-home studies, recessed shelving, breakfast bars, a choice of U-shaped and L-shaped kitchens, studios with bedrooms separated by doors, and more.

Quintain Living's most sustainable homes to date, the design concept for Repton Gardens has focused on natural, earthy colours and the use of natural products. Botanical living brings the outside in, with plants delivering enhanced air quality and a connection with nature throughout the building. In the podium garden, mounded groundworks have allowed for the planting of large, mature trees and shrubs, to support biodiversity. The tree species in the gardens (cherry, birch and aspen) mirror the buildings' names.

At Repton Gardens, Cherry House is home to the main entrance lobby. It also houses ten work-from-home offices and a meeting room. Other on-site amenities include a club room with pool table, soft seating, TV area and a bar with beer tap and wine. There's a 1,150 square feet gym overlooking the podium garden, while the garden itself includes four covered, hireable BBQ areas, two play areas and a lawn area. Cherry House and Birch House also feature roof terraces, including paved areas, artificial grass, sun loungers and seating.

Individual apartments are furnished in one of two palettes: garden and natural. They feature a mix of natural materials and shades of green, deep blue, grey, brown and stone. John Lewis & Partners has curated a special sustainable collection of furniture, including 'sustainability hero' products. These items, which include sofas, coffee tables, beds, bar stools, dining chairs and mattresses, were selected following a stringent review of characteristics such as origin of manufacture, material construction and recycling potential. The resulting selections are predominantly sourced from the UK or Europe using sustainable fabrics and/or processes.

Floors in all apartments are cedar plank effect Amtico in kitchens and living areas, with grey ceramic tiles in bathrooms. Walls are neutral throughout each home, with a feature wall to add colour and depth. Kitchens feature natural oak laminate worktops with cabinets, all in green in the natural palette homes, and in green and grey in the garden palette apartments.

The design of the apartments creates a strong sense of bringing the outside inside. It also serves, along with the layout of the three buildings, to build a sense of the podium garden being the epicentre of the community.



## The biggest animal welfare bill to date gains traction...

**F**riday July 14th, 2023 was a big day in the history of animal welfare. The Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Bill had its Second Reading in the House of Lords. One of the most important animal-related bills ever in the UK, it aims at protecting millions of endangered animals worldwide. A crucial step towards saving many highly endangered iconic species across the world, the Bill passed the Second Reading stage and will now go forward to the Committee after summer recess.

### What is the role of STAE?

Save The Asian Elephants (“STAE”) ([www.stae.org.uk](http://www.stae.org.uk)), with the backing of 100 leading UK animal welfare charities and influencers, has pioneered the Bill to end the UK’s sale and advertising of practices abroad where wildlife is cruelly exploited in tourism. The Bill, a world-first for Britain, has attracted interest from many nations across the world, including the EU bloc, USA and Australia.

The Bill has passed all stages in the House of Commons without opposition. STAE’s goal is for the Bill to pass into law with huge public backing, so keeping the Government’s focus on implementing it most robustly.

By prohibiting the UK advertising and sale of access to activities abroad which involve cruelty to animals, the Bill will steer the market towards ethical and safe venues.

This will throw a lifeline to numerous endangered species and enable their observation in natural surroundings from a respectful distance, and without transmission of highly infectious and deadly TB. It will also protect tourists from species such as elephants, which often attack when provoked by torture.

### STAE’s CEO, Duncan McNair, said:

“STAE has pioneered such measures because of the brutal treatment of numerous species in modern tourism, so much generated in the UK. Such law will curb promotion of ruthless practices upon many species in favour of genuine sanctuaries and wildlife reserves.

STAE has built a vast database of evidence of appalling abuse of animals at tourist facilities vigorously promoted by UK-based travel companies. Abused species such as Asian elephants, when provoked, often attack tourists, sometimes fatally. Unethical conditions also encourage the transmission of deadly zoonotic diseases like TB.”

### Targeting tourism activities abroad

The UK market lacks any effective regulation. Law is needed to prevent such brutality to vulnerable and endangered species. The market is huge and growing. In Thailand, captive elephants gave 13 million rides in 2016 and yet only 2,800 tourist elephants survive there, many worked to death. In 2018/19, two million UK tourists visited India and Thailand; 32% of those visiting Thailand reported riding an elephant or wishing to. The Asia-Pacific tourist market is the fastest growing in the world.

To date, STAE has identified over 1,200 UK-based travel companies advertising nearly 300 brutal overseas elephant venues alone.





**Tourism atrocities happening now to Asian elephants:** isolation, daily beating, stabbing, malnourishment and overwork.

To elephants and numerous other species:

- snatching from the wild, which harms them, local wildlife populations and local people;
- mothers killed, injured or harmed to capture infants;
- breeding mothers kept in and forced to raise their young in cruel facilities;
- infants taken from their mothers too young;
- a high mortality of animals in transit and trade;
- animals kept in unnatural and harmful forms of captivity, particularly damaging to long-lived species and those accustomed to a large range in the wild;
- animals forced to perform unnatural behaviours;
- the use of fear, pain or drugs or the threat of their use to control and 'train' animals;
- the use of methods of domination to traumatise and subdue animals;
- animals closely handled by multiple untrained people, giving them no option to retreat;
- risk of zoonotic disease transmission especially with animals used as photo props and handled by numerous people;
- keeping of animals no longer used for exhibition in cruel surroundings or their killing before reaching their natural end of life.

STAE is calling on the UK Government to ensure the passage into law as soon as possible of the Animals (LowWelfare Activities Abroad) Bill, in line with its past pledges to help elephants and other endangered species, in line with its action plan on animal welfare.

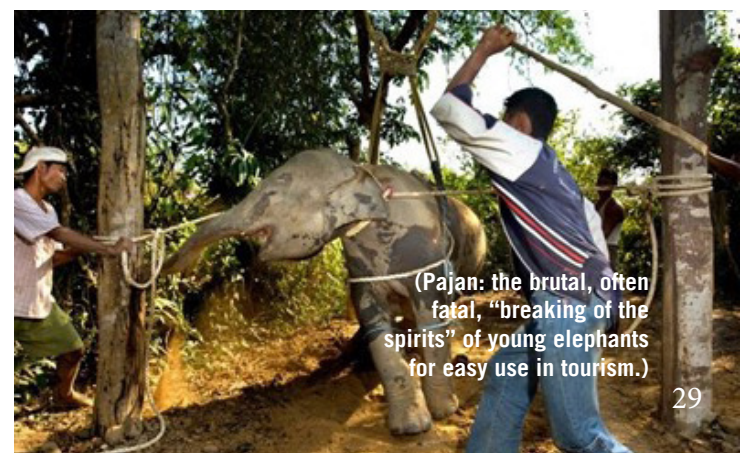
STAE has a raft of high-profile supporters who have been backing the campaign, including:

- actress and animal rights advocate Dame Joanna Lumley;
- comedian, actor and animal welfare campaigner Ricky Gervais;
- conservationist and TV presenter Chris Packham CBE;
- primatologist and anthropologist Dr Jane Goodall DBE;
- actress and animal welfare campaigner Evanna Lynch;
- actor and animal welfare campaigner Peter Egan;
- STAE board member and conservationist Stanley Johnson;
- STAE Ambassador, zoologist and TV presenter Megan McCubbin;
- STAE Ambassador, polar explorer and conservationist Sir Ranulph Fiennes.

<https://stae.org>

[www.facebook.com/stae.org](http://www.facebook.com/stae.org)

[www.instagram.com/stae\\_elephants/](http://www.instagram.com/stae_elephants/)



(Pajan: the brutal, often fatal, "breaking of the spirits" of young elephants for easy use in tourism.)

## Eco Holidays

**W**hether you are looking for a UK staycation or wish to travel further afield, doing your homework on the eco credentials for your holiday location is getting easier. Proudly announcing bigger and better achievements and with an ongoing commitment to improving sustainability, holiday destinations and accommodations of all levels are raising the standards of eco tourism.

### Try a 'Swisstainable' adventure

Sustainable travel means greater awareness and depth and more enjoyment. With this in mind, Switzerland follows its own sustainability strategy: Swisstainable. Adhering to the destination's commitment to sustainability, the first-ever 'Swisstainable' travel itinerary from a global tour brand sees it join forces with award-winning travel company Trafalgar. Over five million holidaymakers have enjoyed Trafalgar's tried and tested tours, created by local travel experts in destinations, with the aim of making a positive impact on the locals, communities and the visited wildlife.

Now, by working together, this new Swisstainable travel experience supports Switzerland's natural and social resources and Trafalgar's commitment to achieve net zero, of which low carbon travel options are a key tactic.

### The travel itinerary

The eight-day journey, Contrasts of Switzerland, through Zürich, St. Moritz, Zermatt, Geneva and Lucerne, includes 'Swisstainable' accommodations, experiences, meals, and a new MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience supporting small, women-owned local businesses in Zurich, and greener transportation considerations, such as replacing vans with train travel on the Glacier Express and Golden Pass Train Line. Throughout this itinerary, travellers will have opportunities to enjoy nature up close and experience the local culture, while consuming regional products as they travel through the majestic Swiss Alps, to the top of Matterhorn, the streets of medieval Lucerne and more.

Prices start from £2,912 per person, with seven nights' accommodation including breakfast, a number of highlight meals, transportation, sightseeing and experiences as per the itinerary, and the services of an expert Travel Director throughout. Travel by train from London to Zurich (the tour starts and finishes in Zurich) are from £78 per person (via RailEurope).

[www.trafalgar.com/en-gb/tours/contrasts-of-switzerland](http://www.trafalgar.com/en-gb/tours/contrasts-of-switzerland)



## Scottish seclusion

If going off-grid in Scotland appeals, the Outfield Farm Cabins overlooking the Tay Estuary in rural Perthshire, and offering couples a chance to totally reset and relax, are perhaps worth consideration. The owners have been based on the 40-acre hillside farm since 1995, and they have long established off-grid credentials and eco solutions. Over recent years, and on the main body of the farm, guests have enjoyed the choice of three different-sized, pet-friendly cottages, but the recent addition of three architect-designed hillside eco cabins has fulfilled a long-standing dream for owner Tim Stobbs.

## Connect with nature

Ideal for a couples retreat, these three unique cabins are strikingly individual and much thought has gone into the eco solutions, as well as the comfort levels. Low impact, local materials have been used inside and out, with some unique and creative touches throughout. Shower rooms are outside, wood-fired hot tubs are open to the elements and there is the option of outdoor cooking. The outdoor spaces are as important as the indoor, with strong connections to the landscape and panoramic views, which can be enjoyed from the large balconies or decks.

The **Bothan Dubh** cabin floats above the established pond, where a cantilevered viewing platform allows you to experience the flora and fauna which inhabit the pond below, as well as observing the waterside wildlife.

**Whin** has a wildflower roof, along with external mirrored panels set amongst the larch cladding, as well as a large external balcony with a fabulous view.

**Sheiling** is set within mature woodland, high up the hill (at 675ft above sea level) and is the most alpine feeling of the cabins. Take in your external surroundings as you relax in your very own wood-fired Swedish Hikki tub.

## What to do?

Of course, there is much opportunity for long or leisurely walks, as well as being present in nature and doing absolutely nothing but relaxing. There are also shared wellness and leisure facilities onsite though, These include a wellness studio containing light gym equipment, a wood-fired sauna and games room. Outside, a tennis court, croquet lawn and summerhouse are available for all to use. Lastly, it is worth noting that the location of the cabins make them unsuitable as pet-friendly holiday locations.

Cabins start from £200 p/n; <https://outfieldfarm.co.uk/>.







## Soap with plantable packaging

**D**aring to change the status quo and prove that eco can be luxurious as well as sustainable, natural skincare brand Bloom In Soap goes one better than plastic-free when it comes to packaging its products. The ethical brand advocates biodiversity here in the UK by offering its customers the chance to grow wildflowers from its innovative wildflower seed packaging.

Bloom In Soap is a multi-award-winning luxury skincare brand that empowers women to make good choices for the health of their skin and the environment when considering which skincare products to purchase. The founder of Bloom In Soap, Alison, started the business after a family member developed a severe reaction to a cosmetic product. Months of research later, she discovered that commercially produced products are often made with synthetic ingredients that could cause skin problems. She has since made it her mission to create products with natural, botanical ingredients minus the toxins and fillers often found in mass-produced skincare.

Keen to adopt ethical practices in all areas of her business, Alison decided early on to offer customers the opportunity to feed their skin and the planet, so she decided to go one step further with the packaging. Wildflower seed paper gave Alison the plastic-free aspect of her business – on steroids.

Not to be compared with cheap, mass-produced seeded paper from China, this paper boasts a low carbon footprint and a high germination rate, as it's made to order from a UK paper mill where it's impregnated with 20 varieties of UK native wildflower seeds, meaning that there's no chance of introducing non-native species into the environment.

This paper is then professionally printed, using eco-friendly, vegan inks, before cutting into labels to wrap around Alison's range of products. The labels can be planted directly into the ground to help Bloom In Soap's customers create a haven for pollinating insects (including bees, lacewings and butterflies) in their garden, supply food for insects throughout the year and create microclimates for overwintering invertebrates.

The labels can be planted indoors or outdoors, giving customers the opportunity to create a wildflower garden whether they live in a flat, have a small patio area, or have acres of gardens. Autumn is the best time to plant the labels in the garden; the winter months give the seeds the best chance of germinating to produce a magnificent wildflower show the following spring. Where no outside space is available, the labels can be planted in a pot during early spring and left on a sunny windowsill to shoot.

Plantable wildflower seed labels can be found on Bloom In Soap's range of botanical products, including natural soap bars, whipped body butter, solid shampoo bars and aromatherapy candles.





## *Households could save £1,850 on energy bills by changing habits*

**A**EG partners with leading academic to help save up to £264.25 a year with energy saving tips

Research commissioned by leading home appliance brand AEG has discovered that 72% of people admit to being more aware of wasting energy in the home since costs have increased, with 93% making an effort to reduce the amount of energy they use. The research also highlights that, when it comes to smarter ways of using our appliances, many of us don't know how to use some of the key programmes to maximise energy efficiency and struggle to understand the energy ratings of appliances such as dishwashers, tumble dryers and washer dryers.

To help one family understand how to better use their appliances, cut costs around the home and lower their carbon footprint, AEG partnered with Newson Consultancy to commission a two-month experiment to reveal how much money and energy can be saved by changing household habits and using appliances more efficiently.

Having new eco-friendly appliances, integrated with better habits, meant that the family saved 30% of energy compared to their previous appliances. This equates to a saving of £264.25 across the course of a year, and a total saving of nearly £2,000 over the course of a typical appliance lifespan, which on average is about seven plus years.

### **Energy saving tips from AEG**

1. Choose Eco: Always choose the Eco setting on your washing machine – it's a longer cycle but actually uses much less energy.
2. Stack it: Make sure your dishwasher is full but not overfilled, to ensure that the correct water and energy is used.
3. Wash at 30: It's a myth that washing at higher temperatures means a better clean – if you wash at 30 you save money and your clothes will feel just as fresh.
4. Cool it: Batch-cooking is a great way to save money and food, but ensure that you're cooling containers fully before you pop them in the fridge, otherwise you use more energy.

During the two-month experiment, the AEG Twin-Tech fridge-freezer was the star of the show, set to save the family £79.42 a year as it used 50% less energy across the month than the family's previous fridge freezer.

**Luke Harding, Managing Director UK & Ireland at AEG**, commented on the experiment: "This experiment shows that changing habits and understanding appliance energy ratings will effectively help lessen costs and reduce energy consumption. Unsurprisingly, the washing machine was the most frequently used appliance. During the experiment, and at peak use, the AEG 7000 ProSteam washing machine used 33% less energy than the family's previous appliance. On the day when the family used the washing machine least, it cost just 7p per wash compared to the 23p cost of using the older appliance – a fantastic result!

Interestingly, 42% of those we polled don't use the eco setting on their dishwashers, as they prefer alternative cycles. However, whether using your dishwasher, washing machine or even tumble dryer, you can maximise efficiency by choosing the Eco feature. These are typically longer than the average cycle, so while it may seem counter-intuitive to leave your wash on for longer, it is the most energy efficient option as shorter cycles draw on more energy to get the job done quicker."

The brand-new range includes the 9000 Absolute Care Washing Machine (30% better than A Energy Rating), Washer Dryers and the 9000 Absolute Care Heat Pump Tumble Dryer (A+++ Energy Rated); each appliance has a new design and new care features to help save energy around the home. The range also features innovative technology to keep clothes looking and feeling like new for longer, prolonging their lifespan, and, therefore, saving you money and reducing negative impacts on the environment.

Each appliance on the AEG website is monitored by Youreko's Energy Savings Tool, a third party verified source which helps people understand the real financial benefit of purchasing an energy efficient appliance. To find out more about the new range, please visit: <https://www.aeg.co.uk/local/the-newlaundry-range/>. To find out more on the experiment and to learn more about AEG, visit: [www.aeg.co.uk/energysavingtips](http://www.aeg.co.uk/energysavingtips).



## Eco-startup shortlisted for Wales Green StartUp Award

**E**co-startup Lavender & Lemon has been named a finalist ahead of the Wales Final of the StartUp Awards.

The StartUp Awards has been launched to recognise the booming startup scene across the UK, which has accelerated since the 2019 pandemic. Over 800,000 new businesses were founded in the UK since 2021 – a 4.3% increase from the year before.

A record number of businesses applied to this year's StartUp Awards, with 1,100 firms shortlisted across ten UK nations and regions. The contribution of these firms – all of which were started in the past three years – is significant, having created over 5,000 new jobs since they were established and generating annual sales of £584 million.

Lavender & Lemon is an eco-startup on a mission to transform household cleaning products using ethically-sourced, biodegradable ingredients in beautiful refillable packaging. Founded by Morgan Bagshaw in late 2022, the business has been nominated for Wales Green StartUp of the Year.

**Morgan Bagshaw** said: "This is incredible news, having only just launched in November. There are some amazing businesses doing wonderful things in the Green category, so it's genuinely an honour to be in such great company."

Supported nationally by Starling Bank, British Business Bank, BT, Creative Ideaz, GS1 UK, Jeeves, Join Talent, ScoreApp and The Purposeful Project, the programme will celebrate the achievements of the amazing individuals who have turned an idea into an opportunity, and taken the risk to launch a new product or service.

The cohort of finalists will be considered for the regional prizes by a panel of seasoned judges with experience of founding or supporting entrepreneurial ventures.

**Professor Dylan Jones-Evans OBE**, the creator of the StartUp Awards, said: "Start-up businesses are the lifeblood of any economy, being responsible for new jobs, innovation and in supporting communities in every nation and region across the UK. All of the finalists this year represent the best of those entrepreneurs who have spotted an opportunity and, through their sheer hard work, talent and perseverance, have created an amazing new business that is creating real impact in its sector."

The StartUp Awards was created in collaboration with the team behind the Great British Entrepreneur Awards, one of the most successful awards programmes in the UK. The StartUp Awards are running for the second year, after launching in 2022.

This year's Wales StartUp Awards were held in Cardiff on 22 June. Finalists can be found online at: <https://www.freshbusinessthinking.com/nationalstartup-awards/finalists/2023-shortlist/wales>.



## Summer 2024 Fashion Picks

**A**s much as we may want to update our wardrobes regularly, in order to have less impact on the planet, it is wise to assess what we already have and perhaps plan any shopping around capsule wardrobes, timelessness and, of course, brands that have a sustainable ethos...

MNK Atelier is a new Australian brand that has sustainability at the core of its narrative. Founded by two sisters, the recently launched slow-fashion Australian brand was born with the aim to create clothing and accessories that are sustainable, of a high quality and long-lasting.

MNK Atelier champions slow fashion with its seasonal capsule wardrobes, where each garment has been designed to be mixed and matched. Timelessness is at the forefront of the designs, alongside at least 90% of the garments in the collection being made from organic and sustainable materials, including botanical dyed organic cotton and recycled Japanese PET bottles and Japanese paper, 'washi'.

Their aim is to slow down the fashion cycle and create clothes with sustainability and luxury fashion in mind. We asked them for their fashion inspo this summer...

### Go classic but with a pop of colour

"White is always a classic colour for summer, and Barbie-like pink or periwinkle purple would be a pop of colour, so a great addition for this summer. We also love relaxed soft tailoring and it is a fun way to put these elements together to achieve this summery look. The UK summer can be very different from Australian summer, so it is good to have classic black soft tailored pants, like ours, as a base to be styled differently for all occasions. Accessorise your outfits with simple classic jewellery, for timeless investment."

### MKN Atelier's favourites this summer

"Our top picks this summer are definitely our botanical dyed light pink tailored shorts, oversized Nonchalant shirt with bralette and yacht club blue cross cami top. These are the pieces we wear over and over again throughout the summer season. Our yacht club blue cross cami is an elevated everyday classic camisole with an effortless back drape that makes you look sexy for this summer. Pair this cami with a jacket from your existing wardrobe, just in case it gets cooler at night."

Yacht Club Blue Cross Cami, £171



[www.mnkatelier.co](http://www.mnkatelier.co)

Nonchalant Broderie Anglaise Shirt, £313.  
80s Flair Pants in Periwinkle Purple, £220.  
Bralette, as before.



Tailored Crinkle Shorts in Carnation, £265.  
Nonchalant Bralette in White, £171.

**It seems planning for variable weather is high on our radar when choosing our summer outfits. Janie Morgan-Wood, founder of sustainable fashion brand Frock Tales, also thinks we need to be prepared for changing temperatures.**

She says: “If you are holidaying in the UK, then, as you know, the weather is not guaranteed. If you are venturing to a hot climate, then your wardrobe may be somewhat more simple to put together. Wherever you are venturing, even a staycation from work or days out, it will be time for some relaxation and a change of wardrobe”.

#### Tips on accessorising?

Janie champions revisiting previous favourite buys and suggests that we don't rush to buy new every year. “In general, styles outlast season's favourites with new accessories such as scarves, belts and bags. Consider taking last year's styles to an alteration shop. Change lengths and sleeves to give new life without costing a fortune.”

#### What's on trend this summer?

“Gathers continue to be a must-have feature and our Aurora Dress (£95), in wedgewood or cream, is a crisp organic cotton pick for sustainability, feeling cool and ultimate comfort. Team with our Nancy Crop Top which comes in a range of colours (£105), for cooler times. Our Paradis Dress (£85) is our holiday essential: cool, not too figure hugging and in breathable fabric. You can rock this well into Autumn, with one of our cropped hoodies or shrugs.

Kimonos have returned as a vibrant colour splash in your suitcase - great over a bikini or dress. A versatile must-have for the beach; team it with bright coloured jewellery and headwear.

#### Don't forget...

your shades! Remembering these means that you will be protecting the delicate skin around the eye as well as adding style to any outfit. Also, we should think about hats! As the issue of skin cancer remains topical and we all reach for a higher sunblock, we have seen an increase in summer hats, especially natural straw types, as well as leading retailers offering recycled materials.”

Frock Tales promotes slow fashion and Janie designs pieces that are intended to be enjoyed for years to come. All garments are designed and made within a five mile radius of her studio in Leicestershire, including all fabrics, dyes, and embellishments, and she uses dead stock where possible, so it really is a sustainable choice for eco conscious shoppers.

[www.frocktales.co.uk](http://www.frocktales.co.uk)



**TOP TIP:** Janie's top tip for the UK is to pack at least one item for inclement weather. Look for a stylish oversized parka or raincoat that can be worn over other layers.

