



By Shelly Ballestero

GREEN GURU NARELLE CHENERY, co-founder of “Miessence” (the world’s first certified organic skin care company), is not only a wife and mother of three—she’s also a formulator and Director of Research & Development for **ONE Group** (an acronym for Organic and Natural Enterprise, which produces three distinct labels: Miessence, nutrition range, MiVitality, and organic household brand MiEnviron). A company that started in her ‘kitchen laboratory’ made world waves into the atmosphere of ‘organic solutions’ for us all to enjoy.

This article is best read while sipping on organic tea.

GET TO KNOW NARELLE...

A Distinctive Style: When were you first introduced to “organic” products?

Narelle Chenery: *Food. I got involved in an organic home delivery co-op when I first became pregnant because I wanted the cleanest possible food to nurture my growing baby.*

Cosmetics... When I created the world’s first certified organic product back in 2001, whilst there were claims about being ‘organic’ before then, no one had actually ever been certified

organic. We were the first in the world to actually achieve organic certification for skin care.

ADS: What does Certified Organic mean to consumers?

NC: *It’s a independent third-party guarantee of the authenticity and integrity of every ingredient in the product. Simply put, it’s a guarantee of organic integrity, purity and utmost safety. Unfortunately, some people still don’t know that the only way to verify that a product is truly certified organic is to look for the certification logo on the label.*

ADS: You’ve been referred to as “The Mother of EcoBeauty,” how do you feel about that title and what does it mean to you?

NC: *Wow I hadn’t heard that! Such a title is certainly an honor! As with any mother, I feel very protective of “Eco-beauty,” particularly her truest and purest daughter - “Certified Organic.” I have fought long and hard to create products that meet those most stringent standards, and have defended the integrity and honesty of anyone making claims against certified organic beauty. I shall defend her purity always.*

ADS: How can we educate the public to think more about the toxic products they use on their body everyday, and how it could be detrimental to their long-term health?

NC: *I wish I knew the answer to that. I am continually dismayed at the blind trust of people who use ‘natural’ and ‘organic’ product that aren’t verified by certification, and their misguided belief in the ‘safety’ of consumer products, just because they’re on our shelves. People who expect the government and corporations to look after their best interests are gravely mistaken. Unfortunately,*

you can’t force people to think critically. You can only plant seeds of doubt that inspire critical thinking. Then it’s up to them to investigate further if they desire. To that end, I’ve written articles, and conducted public seminars on the topic of cosmetic safety for the last decade.

ADS: What are the toxic chemicals we should be looking for in our personal care products?

NC: *There are quite a few hundred! But I have a few super-toxics to avoid:*

1. Formaldehyde donor preservatives
2. Ethoxylated ingredients that are contaminated with 1,4-dioxane
3. Nitrosamine-contaminating ingredients

ADS: With all recent news about the “Safe Cosmetics Act” being reported, can you tell us how this will change things for women who use cosmetics?

NC: *You may be perplexed to discover that I’m actually opposed to the Safe Cosmetics Act. Firstly, I think the FDA would do a pretty rotten job of guaranteeing the ‘safety’ of cosmetics. We just have to look at the Vioxx scandal to learn about their dubious reputation for ensuring the ‘safety’ of pharmaceuticals. Additionally, there is growing concern that the Act will require unnecessarily burdensome testing, registration, labeling and reporting requirements on small manufacturers that have little to do with the actual safety of cosmetics. My recommendation for women is to rely neither on government nor industry to look after their best interests. We must become responsible for our own health and well-being through self-education.*

Thank you Narelle and **ONE Group** for making organic ‘waves’ around the world...one product at a time!

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