



# GOING NATURAL

We spoke to Kinetic founders Alexander and Kim Barani about what to look out for in the UK's natural products market

**25** years ago, the UK was introduced to its first comprehensive personal care brand: American family-owned body care range JASÖN. It was brought here by Kinetic, the natural product distributor founded by Alexander and Kim Barani.

At the time there were very few authentically natural brands around, and none of the large health stores we see today to stock them. For Alexander it was a case of filling a suitcase with JASÖN products and hitting the road to visit potential stockists.

Alexander and Kim were spurred on by a true belief in the power of natural products; 'Having seen how big the movement was in the US', Alexander says, 'I knew the natural health sector would grow eventually.'

## CUSTOMERS GET SAVVY

Grow it did: today the natural health sector is booming. According to the Soil Association's *Organic Beauty and Wellbeing Market 2020* report, the certified organic and natural products sector has grown 23% since 2019. This is not only the ninth year of consecutive double-digit growth, but the third-biggest percentage growth since 2010.

'The last few years we have seen a snowball effect in the industry, largely thanks to social and digital media', Alexander explains. 'The studies and the reviews are all at our fingertips, and it's rare for a day to go by without some new superfood ingredient, supplement or anti-ageing hack being featured in the news. We're living longer, so we want to be healthy for as long as we possibly can. It makes sense that people are turning to natural health and wellbeing products.'

While educating retailers was a big part of Kim and Alexander's role back in the '90s, today they increasingly find retailers are approaching them to specify what their customers are looking for.

'I feel like there is a real symbiosis in the industry', Alexander says. 'Customers have the means to research products that might be of benefit to their health and wellbeing, and also to check the reviews and testimonials before they invest in a product. Brands are having to up their game as they find an increasingly crowded market; they need to bring innovation to everyday products and always make sure that they are authentic and ethical, whilst also adapting to ever-changing consumer demands, such as sustainability.'

For those just starting out with their own natural health or beauty brands, Alexander and Kim both advise finding a point of difference in this overcrowded marketplace. 'Pin down your unique selling points', Alexander suggests. 'You also have to find your audience and build your following', adds Kim. 'You can have the best packaging and spend a fortune on marketing, but it's no good if you are trying to sell to the wrong people.'

## DEFINING NATURAL

As the demand for natural products grows, so too does interest from mainstream manufacturers. 'We

see more and more conventional brands using a selection of natural ingredients in their chemical-laden formulas', Kim tells us, 'and people will always buy into these products as they have the big brand name behind them.'

Greenwash will remain an issue until there is tighter regulation round the use of 'natural' and 'organic' on product labels. It's not an easy market to navigate; 'There are so many different standards and grey areas in the industry', Alexander tells us.

Still, a relatively new stress on transparency – coupled with an increasingly savvy customer base – makes it harder for big corporations to pull the wool over shoppers' eyes.

Through Kinetic, Kim and Alexander Barani have brought natural products – from brands such as Avalon Organics, JASÖN and We Love the Planet – to UK shelves



Reading up about ingredients and researching brands is a good starting point if you want to avoid greenwash. Next, you can look for natural and organic certifications, and labels that clearly state the percentage of natural and organic ingredients.

'For me personally, a natural product is one that is primarily based on natural and naturally derived ingredients without anything that could have a negative impact on our health', Alexander explains. 'This is what many would call 'clean' beauty.'

## TRENDS FOR 2021

Several years ago, Kinetic's offerings were split into three clear categories: Body Care & Beauty, Nutrition and Superfoods. As well as making things easier for retailers, the move also underlined Kim and Alexander's vision to have a one-stop ethical

shop where health stores could buy the majority of their stock. Following their success with this vision, Kim and Alexander are now in a great position to forecast trends in natural products and act accordingly.

'After the year that was 2020, I think we are going to see a continuation of the beauty as self care trend', Alexander reveals. 'This is something our brands stood for long before it became a trend; Avalon Organics uses essential oils for a dose of everyday aromatherapy and JASÖN has the De-Stress Cannabis Sativa Seed Oil Body Wash & Moisturizing Creme, and Pampering Pink Himalayan 2-in-1 Bath Soak & Body Wash.'

'I am sure we are going to see some innovation in immunity', Kim adds. 'We are also going to see a growing 'food as medicine' movement, with people looking to superfoods to improve their health.'

Over the last few months Kim and Alexander have been developing an Eco-Living category, which they are now looking to grow. So far the products include EcoBoom biodegradable nappies and wipes; We Love the Planet zero-waste deodorants; long-standing Kinetic brand Preserve, which creates recycled and recyclable toothbrushes and razors, and My Green Pod Hero WaxWraps – a reusable, zero-waste alternative to cling film.

## ROOTS IN NATURE

The brothers grew up on the shores of the ancient Roman town of Carthage – with its wealth of nature, land and sea. 'Being and living in nature through our childhood definitely meant that a move to the natural products industry was something that resonated with us on a deeper level', Kim tells us.

Kim and Alexander were always close to the land and very aware of where their food came from; they grew and picked fruits and vegetables in their garden and foraged for seasonal foods.

'The idea of health coming from diet, and medicine being your food, is something that is ingrained in us', Alexander tells us. 'It's very normal back home, and is becoming more so over here in the UK – in part thanks to a lockdown period that made people look for activities to do in the home and garden.'

At the same time it's safe to say the brothers' personal interest and passion for natural health and beauty has grown in line with the business. 'We both use a wide range of products from our portfolio on a daily basis, as we really believe in the products and the ethos behind the brands we represent', Kim tells us. 'Also, with the market as competitive as it is, we need to make sure that we have our finger on the pulse – so it's important to keep abreast of what's going on in the global natural health scene.'

## MARKETPLACE

Browse a range of Kinetic products at [mygreenpod.com/vendors/kinetic](https://mygreenpod.com/vendors/kinetic)