

Soothing Hana Nai'a

*By Paula Rath
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Maryann Rose Broyles of Honoka'a is an unlikely candidate to run a business. In fact, one could say she is an accidental businesswoman.

Hana Nai'a Aromatherapy was born because, as a massage therapist at the Four Seasons Hualalai spa, Broyles was unable to find oils pure enough to meet her exacting standards. Stressed about slathering less-than-stellar oils onto her pregnant clients, in 1998 she developed her own pregnancy massage oil, Expecting Magic.

The move wasn't completely out of the blue. Broyles said she has been "playing with aromatherapy" since 1980.

Expecting Magic was so popular that she decided to create an Ayurvedic-based foot treatment, along with seven sister products to go with it. They became best-sellers at the Hualalai spa.

"It is a delicate balance to work on this level with the plants and have it be a business at the same time," Broyles said. "Hana Nai'a did not start out as a business. It was and is a passion."

PASSION FOR PURITY

Broyles hand-blends her Hana Na'ia oils and lotions on the Big Island. She spent years searching for the best possible source for exotic, and effective, essential oils.

"Having a good source for oils that can be trusted is No. 1," Broyles explained. In her search for the purest possible ingredients, she met California aromatherapist John Steele: "He took me under his wing. He's my mentor, my supplier, my teacher. The soul of his oils is intact.

"I know my oils have touched very few hands and in a respectful and dignified way," Broyles said.

Hana Na'ia uses 100 percent pure organic ingredients whenever possible. They contain no synthetic fragrances, no preservatives, no alcohol, no mineral oil, no petroleum, no parabens.

"One of my crusades is educating people on the dangers of using synthetic fragrance and chemical preservatives," Broyles said. "I can make beautiful, safe things without all the dangers. The cosmetic industry is a self-regulated industry and they hire the cosmetic review board, which is worse than no regulation. They work with the FDA but most things are not even tested."

Dolphin connection

Broyles got her big break in 2005 when Samantha Brown of Travel & Leisure filmed her doing spa treatments at Hualalai for a segment on "Top Ten Resort Spas." Magazines such as Bazaar, Elite and Travel & Leisure have also featured Hana Nai'a.

When Broyles decided to take her homespun aromatherapy to the next level, forming a company, she contacted the late Eleanor Makita of Kona Village Resort, "who blessed my company and helped me name it for the spinner dolphin," Broyles explained.

The dolphin has special meaning for Broyles because of the way she first arrived in the Islands. While sailing between the Mainland and Hawai'i, Broyles was caught in a storm for 10 harrowing days. As she arrived on the Kona Coast, hundreds of spinner dolphins escorted her boat on the last leg of the

journey, until she arrived safely in Kealahou Bay.

Other spas learned of Broyles' expertise with aromatherapy and requested special products. The Fairmont Orchid uses Kona Coffee Scrub, Hemp/Green Tea Scrub and Amber Dreams Lotion. Kona Village uses Chocolate Coconut Scrub and Sandalwood Scrub.

Staci Shupe, lead therapist at Spa Without Walls at the Fairmont Orchid, uses Hana Nai'a body treatments and face masks. "We are committed to using local sources," Shupe said. "We feel Maryann Broyles' commitment to purity and excellence of product fits with our mission."

A product that has special resonance with Big Island residents suffering from vog-related symptoms is SacredBreath, made of ravensara oil from Madagascar, an antiviral, antibacterial immunity stimulant. Big Island residents Donna Loren and her husband Jared Cargman swear by it, particularly for travel. "It is excellent for breathing problems such as asthma and congestion," Loren said. Cargman uses it to soothe his vog-related cough.

Wrapped up

Broyles is a purist who has researched each aspect of Hana Nai'a thoroughly, including her packaging. She uses Miron violet glass (www.miron-glas.com) for her bottles because, she said, "It's a new technology from Switzerland and is violet glass that protects the products from change caused by exposure to light."

Hana Nai'a perfume bottles, with a look inspired by Hawaiian-style wood perfume bottles from the 1930s to the 1960s, are hand-carved mango wood created by sculptor Markus Broyles — Maryann's spouse. Not surprisingly, his specialty is sculpting dolphins.

Next up from Hana Nai'a: a line for pets. Broyles began the line with No Fleas Please flea and tick shampoo made from a healing oil called leshwa from Kenya. It comes from African wild sage. "The big African animals rub against the bark of the shrub to ride themselves from fleas and ticks," Broyles said.

Select Hana Nai'a oils and lotions are sold at the spas in the Four Seasons Hualalai, Fairmont Orchid and Kona Village Resort. The complete line is available at www.hananaia.com.

Additional Facts

AROMATHERAPY BASICS

Ginger: Stimulates circulation, nourishes and firms the skin

Spearmint: Cooling, soothing, yet invigorating

Thyme linol: Helps with clear thinking

Ravensara: Anti-viral, anti-bacterial, opens the lungs and bronchial passageways

Green tea: Stimulates circulation, skin cell regeneration and UV protection

Himalayan cedar: Opens up respiratory tract
