



GREEN STAR

koala eco

What began as a simple idea hatched out of necessity at a family dinner resulted in a plant-based kitchen brand that's cleaning up for conscious consumers around the world

There is no doubt that being close to nature makes people feel better," says Jessica Bragdon, co-founder of plant-based cleaning brand Koala Eco. This is the philosophy punctuating every part of the business she runs with her husband, Paul Davidson. A health scare when their son was young led the couple to seriously reassess the cleaning products they were using at home – and when they couldn't find a suitable non-toxic alternative that worked, they decided to make their own.

"The 'superpower' ingredients in our products are the 100 per cent pure essential oils from the bark and leaves of native Australian trees and plants, as well as citrus species like grapefruit and mandarin," Jessica explains. "They have incredible natural antibacterial and antiseptic properties and they can deodorise, clean, purify... the list goes on!"

Developed by chemists and stringently tested in a laboratory, Koala Eco products are non-toxic, allergy-friendly and certified vegan, and safe for using around children and pets. Since launching in 2017 with a select offering of home-cleaning essentials, the range has expanded to include the whole gamut of detergents and disinfectants, along with a personal-care range of hand and body products. "Our ingredients are natural, sustainably sourced and packaged in recyclable bottles made from post-consumer plastic waste," adds Paul.

Along with their natural credentials, Koala Eco products smell delicious and are pretty enough to adorn the kitchen, bathroom or laundry bench. "In our Natural Dish Soap, the lemon myrtle and mandarin are what we call the 'happy oils' because they're naturally uplifting," says Jessica. "And our Laundry Wash with lemon-scented eucalyptus and rosemary makes the whole house smell amazing while the washing is on."

As well as the burgeoning online store, you'll find Koala Eco stocked in more than 2000 stores in Australia, and overseas in Hong Kong, Korea, the US, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan. "There are now 10 people working for Koala Eco, including Jessica's twin sister, who is part of the US operations," says Paul. "We are still very much a family company."

WORDS STEPHANIE HOPE



"As a company making safe products for people and the planet, naming ourselves Koala Eco was a way of connecting with broader environmental issues" JESSICA BRAGDON



THIS PAGE (from top left) Jessica Bragdon and Paul Davidson's stylish mid-century-style living area, cleaned by their own products. Sons Arthur and Emerson connect with nature in the family's garden. Koala Eco products are stylish as well as practical. **OPPOSITE** (from top) The range includes Natural Glass Cleaner, Natural Floor Cleaner and Natural Laundry Wash. The founders moved to Sydney from New York in 2007.



With success comes responsibility, and the couple are determined to apply their conscious approach in other meaningful ways. Each Koala Eco product sold results in a donation to environmental charity One Percent For The Planet, and Jessica and Paul also support WWF Australia and rescue sanctuary Port Stephens Koala Hospital. They were one of the first companies in the world to be invited to add 'eco' to their business domain. The next altruistic goal is to work with organisations that specialise in the eco-psychology space.

"Connection to nature is absolutely vital to healthy living and mental and physical wellbeing," says Jessica. "In fact, Paul and I think it's so crucial that we ask our employees to spend an hour a week in nature, as part of their paid work, so they can do something intentional, above and beyond the normal routine of exercise. This is ultimately what makes the work we do at Koala Eco most meaningful to us." **LO**

Find the full Koala Eco range at koala.eco or follow @koalaeco

