

Plant-based cleaning brand Koala Eco breaks into the US

September 29, 2020



“We were constantly on the hunt for safe, affordable, toxic-free cleaning products that would not only make our home smell naturally fabulous but would actually work. We felt our sons, and pets, shouldn’t have to hold their breath in order to avoid absorbing chemicals every time we cleaned the family home,” says Jess Bragdon who, with this in mind, co-founded the Australian cleaning product brand **Koala Eco**.



Koala Eco founders Jess Bragdon and Paul Davidson

Launched in 2017, with the help of her co-founder husband Paul Davidson, the brand now boasts over 800 stockists across multiple countries with a US expansion next on the list. Not bad for a little Aussie start-up!

Made in Australia, Jess worked with a Sydney lab and chemists to formulate and develop the product line-up which encompasses everything from kitchen and floor cleaner to hand sanitiser, vegetable wash, bamboo cleaning brushes and more. Importantly, the range has been independently lab-tested and proven to have the capacity to kill 99.99 per cent of germs, viruses and bacteria which is obviously very important in times like these.



Packaged in 100 percent post-consumer-recycled plastic bottles, the products are free of synthetic fragrance and colouring, allergens and irritants and draw on the medicinal and therapeutic properties of Australian native plants. “Species such as eucalyptus, lemon myrtle and peppermint have natural antiseptic and astringent qualities and have been harvested for millennia by Australia’s Indigenous people,” says Jess.

Essential oils are derived from the bark and leaves of native Australian trees and plants like Eucalyptus, Tea Tree, Lemon Scented Iron Bark, Lemon Myrtle, peppermint, lavender and rosemary. “We also use essential oil extracted from the peel of citrus species like grapefruit and mandarin.”



A personal favourite of mine, this product smells amazing!

“For example, *Eucalyptus Australiana* (which we use in our Stainless Steel + Chrome Cleaner) is a great antiseptic, while *Mentha Piperata* (Peppermint) is a natural insect repellent which is why we put it in our Glass + Window Cleaner, as well as several other products in our range. To these essential oils we add ingredients like vinegar, sugar-based biodegradable alcohol and bicarbonate soda, plant-derived solubilisers and surfactants, and purified water,” says Jess.

And aside from smelling fabulous, the products look rather gorgeous too which is no doubt due to Jess’ background. She once ran a floral design business with her twin sister Adrienne (in her native US), before meeting her Australian husband in New York City and making the move down under.

“Initially I lived in Perth where I worked at the cultural organisation FORM. I had the privilege of working with many designers, and also collecting some of their work,” says Jess who put her design eye to good use when creating the brand’s beautiful labels.



But in the biggest coup for the brand to date, it's expanding into the US this year with a Californian office currently in set-up phase. "It's been an ambition of ours from the beginning and the US business will run on the same principles as the Australian operation, with mail order and in stores too." Jess will continue to develop new products from the couple's Sydney base.

"The pandemic this year has made all of us realise good hygiene means so much more than cleanliness; it's a way of helping to prevent spread of germs. When we clean and care for our homes with products made from natural ingredients, it's a form of self-care that impacts not only on our physical, but also mental health."

Jess' best DIY home cleaning tips

- Olive or coconut oil and lemon on an old cloth for polishing wooden furniture is a great natural option, and easily accessible from the pantry.
- A few drops of essential oil in the bathroom sink, tub or toilet gives it a fresh aroma – try mandarin or eucalyptus.
- Add old citrus peels to vinegar, baking soda and water for a natural cleaner for bench tops that is safe for your family.

[For more on Koala Eco](#)

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