



# Q+A

with Ranavat Botanics founder Michelle Ranavat

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Alice & Grace Yoon*

## **What inspired you to start Ranavat Botanics?**

The idea for Ranavat came to me in the fall of 2016, the year my son Aiden was born, but I think the concept really started when I was a little girl. I was always amazed and intrigued by the recipes my mom would use to cure our ailments. At that age, I was more focused on fitting in than embracing my Indian culture, so although it was something I loved at home, I never felt comfortable enough to share it with my friends. I went on to study engineering during my undergrad and in graduate school, and eventually joined my father's company in the pharmaceutical industry where I worked on sourcing raw materials. I flew around the world finding the best peptides and amino acids and fell in love with the idea of creation and craftsmanship. As I started to move toward natural skin care, I found it very difficult to find high-quality ingredients to use in my tinctures. This was my

"lightbulb moment" and when I realized that I needed to use my passion for sourcing to bring incredibly crafted Indian botanicals to life. So, in August 2017, I launched Ranavat Botanics.

## **You thrive on real connections and pure ingredients. Tell us more about how this shows up in your daily life.**

I am incredibly passionate about ingredients and process. With botanical ingredients especially, the process and quality make a huge difference in treatment efficacy. Take Jasmine oil, for example—a main ingredient in our Mighty Majesty Hair and Body Serum. You have the choice of using a synthetic, chemically derived oil, a solvent-extracted oil (adding hazardous chemicals like hexane to separate the oil from the plant faster and cheaper), or you can steam-distill the jasmine flower, which requires 125 lbs of fresh, hand-picked organic flowers. Each of these methods show "Jasmine oil" as an ingredient on the



label, but only one of them uses our beautiful and pure process to actually make it. Not only is this method more clean, but it brings the best results simply because it's made better.

For me, traveling around the world to uncover these stories is what energizes me and continues to drive Ranavat Botanics. I like to describe my process in three words: discovery, ritual and purity. In my day-to-day, if what I'm doing doesn't reflect each of these words, I won't do it.

**What are some common myths about Ayurveda and what do you think people should know?**

I love this question! There are so many myths about Ayurveda. The biggest myth is that people think Ayurveda is ingredient-based. For example, if you add turmeric to a latte, it's perceived as an "Ayurvedic" latte. Ayurveda is a medicinal science that started over 5,000 years ago in ancient India. Before modern medicine, people used Ayurveda to treat their ailments. You can think of Ayurveda as a science that has "prescriptions." If you suffer from acne, Ayurvedic text will categorize you into a "dosha" with very specific treatments, but it's not actually driven by a single ingredient.

Ayurveda is inspiration for our treatments, using many of the same active botanical ingredients that were used to treat ailments. The difference is that I really wanted to create a beautiful and luxurious royal treatment, not a medicinal and formulaic one.

**Is detoxing (of any kind) a regular practice for you?**

Yes! Over the past 15 years or so, dance has been a huge part of my life. It's a creative outlet that I crave. I danced professionally as a

Bollywood dancer in New York City and Los Angeles at venues like the Lincoln Center. Since Ranavat's launch and being a mother of two young boys, it's been a challenge to get to a dance class or prepare for a performance. For the days and times when I'm super busy, I substitute dance with a yoga class to keep my flexibility up and incorporate some movement into my life. My goal is to get back into dancing in the next six to nine months. It's the place where I feel the most free. Plus, I find that some of my best ideas come to me when I'm dancing.

**Is self-care a must or optional for you?**

Self-care is a must for me. Whether I'm taking a dance class or going to the gym, movement is a big way I give back to myself. I also practice self-care by going to bed early on days I need extra rest. To me, life is about balance. There are times where I have to give my work 100% and other times where I can leave work early and spend time with my kids and family. I think the most important thing for me is to be present and live in the moment so that when I do have a chance to engage in self-care, I can fully experience it. What I try to avoid is pointless Instagram scrolling when I'm with my husband and kids—I really try to unplug when I'm with them.

**Words to live thoughtfully by?**

Don't compare yourself to others. Compare yourself to who you were one year ago and look at how far you have come. In a highly competitive industry like skin care, it's easy to compare yourself to other brands and their successes. One of the biggest things I've learned in building my brand is that it takes time. I think we all need to take a step back and remind ourselves that we are on our own unique journeys. If we compare ourselves to where we were a few months ago, we would clearly see the progress that we've made.

Connect with Michelle at [ranavatbotanics.com](http://ranavatbotanics.com) + @[@ranavatbotanics](https://www.instagram.com/ranavatbotanics)