

Behind the Brand

Alenka Dirnbek

Founder of Alexami Cosmetics

Born in the European country of Slovenia, Alenka moved to Australia seven years ago with her husband and daughter looking for a change. "I'd always heard about 'The Lucky Country' and thought it would be wonderful to live in a warm climate surrounded by friendly people, and be able to develop my skills and talents in a country known for opportunities and open mindedness," Alenka recalls.

A popular face in her home country's beauty industry, Alenka had run her own successful salon business and regularly contributed articles to various beauty magazines. Now, based on the Gold Coast she is well known both here and internationally as the woman behind the growing Alexami Cosmetics label, an Australian luxury professional-grade mineral cosmetics brand.

Alenka had extensively studied colour, and out of personal interest had also spent many years researching into the toxic ingredients prevalent in mainstream beauty products. Armed with her beauty background and driven by the desire to offer women safer and more natural cosmetic options that didn't compromise in performance or durability, Alenka started developing her own cosmetics line. After three years of brand development and research, Alexami was born in 2009.

Fascinated by her new homeland, Alenka went to great lengths to ensure the Alexami brand reflects Australian quality and aesthetics. Alexami products are all Australian made, and even the packaging has a distinctly Australian influence - each box depicts a different native plant image and description.

Alenka also wanted to apply as many eco-friendly company policies as possible, opting to use waterless printing technology for print packaging, using bamboo for accessories, and instituting a no plastic bags policy, opting for reusable cotton pouches instead. Alenka also made it a priority to ensure Alexami products are registered by the Vegan Society, accredited by Choose Cruelty Free, are a Compact Signer for Safe Cosmetics and included on PETA's consumer list.

Alenka has worked hard on building Alexami from the ground up, and says one of the toughest lessons

to learn when you're starting out is that it's not just about the quality of your products, it's about building a brand. "You can't just put a label on a great product and expect to create a successful brand overnight. It's a lot more involved, and I've learnt a lot along the way. I've made mistakes but I've learnt through them. I must say it hasn't been easy, especially initially

working on a limited budget, but commitment and determination drives me along. When I am down, I just go for a walk along the beach as the ocean re-energises me and gives me strength. I feel blessed and fortunate to be surrounded by the beautiful nature Australia has to offer."

Within the first year of launching Alexami the brand was exporting to two countries, and in the second year into an addition two countries. Now the brand can be found in nine countries, and has four exclusive distributors across Asia and Europe. The brand also recently set up an online store due to international demand.

"I am really happy to see many new international stockists coming on board. Being a young and such a small company I am extremely proud of my achievements. But our development does not stop here. I am currently working closely with an institute of product development and research and we are developing the whole new range coming that will

be available to market next year. I can't say more but it is on its way."

Alexami recently won 2nd place in the Innovative Products category at the Belgium Beauty Expo. 100+ Professional Beauty & Wellness exhibitors were welcomed to submit their new products launched in 2011. Ten were nominated as finalists, and the estimated 5000 expo visitors were encouraged to vote for the products they deemed most innovative. Alexami Cosmetics was proud to be nominated for an award, and judged 2nd place in the Innovative Products category.

Whatever new breakthroughs are included in the new range, one thing is for certain - through Alexami's products Alenka will continue to share the story of her love affair with Australia with the world.

