



難以忘懷的普羅旺斯香味

The Essence of Provence

L'Occitane 的創辦人 Olivier Baussan 為您送上法國南部的奇妙自然香氣。

故事發生在1976的夏天，法國南部魯昂山山谷附近的小農莊。那裡陽光燦爛，生長了千年的橄欖樹、薰衣草以及其他芳香的植物。當年只有23歲的Olivier Baussan，早已對文學失去興趣，他靈機一動，跑去買了一部舊式的蒸餾器，開始研製用迷迭花提煉成香精油的方法，L'Occitane 亦從此誕生。

不久之後，Baussan 被賦予製造肥皂的機器，他復興了普羅旺斯的傳統造皂法，製成全天然的馬賽肥皂。轉眼間，這種當年只在市場販賣的產品搖身一變，成為銷量達2.69億歐元的跨國品牌 L'Occitane。現時，它的分店遍佈5大洲，約共820間，全都打著「歡迎來到普羅旺斯」的旗號。各分店都用了未經加工的木製傢俱來裝飾，土色的牆身及薰衣草和迷迭花香水的清香，均為店舖帶來市情濃情和溫暖的陽光氣息。連品牌

的名字，都是取自法國一個古鎮Occitania。

品牌與普羅旺斯密切的連繫，不純屬是市場推廣的手法，而是創辦人兒時的回憶。他願繼續遙想海中忽冬和法國南部的香氣，「回校共3公里的路程，沿途感受著花香帶來的喜悅，夏天呼著農夫採摘薰衣草的樂章，秋天唱著拾橄欖葉的歌曲。」

L'Occitane 的成功全賴其優質的素材。創業31年，公司一直沿用天然植物和香料研製出不同的化妝護膚品，免卻化學防腐和防腐劑。而Baussan至今仍致力參與產品創作和包裝設計方面的工作。

研究和發展部總監 Jean-Louis Pienisnard 解釋道：「我們用了大概200種不同的材料。」包括淡紫色的薰衣草、科西嘉島田野中的黃蠟菊，生長在普羅旺斯灌木叢林的杜松，還有標誌著地中海文明的橄欖。

另外，品牌秉承傳統的產品製法，務求做到人類和植物均受到尊重。「我們希望能尊重大自然，向農夫直接購入材料，



Southern France has a natural magic all its own – one captured by Olivier Baussan, founder of L'Occitane

The story started in the summer of 1976 on a small farm in the Lubéron region in southern France. It's a sun-drenched area, where the mountains tumble down to the Mediterranean and olive trees, lavender and aromatic plants have been grown for millennia. Olivier Baussan, 23 years old, had lost interest in studying literature; he purchased an old steam distiller and started to distill pure rosemary essential oil. With this, the destiny of L'Occitane's founder was born.

"I was happy, that's the main thing," he recalls.

Shortly after, a former soap-maker gave him his machines and Baussan started fabricating the all-natural Savon de Marseille, reviving a dying Provençal tradition. He sold his products at local markets, initially delivering to his first customers in a rattletrap Citroën 2CV, and later a hearse bought at auction.



L'Occitane now records sales totalling 269 million euros (USD397m). Nearly 820 shops on five continents all brandish the same message: Welcome to Provence. Each of the brand's stores is decorated with unfinished wood furniture. The ochre walls, lavender and rosemary fragrances create the feel of a village market. Every aspect adds to this impression of seaside hills drenched in sunshine, including the company name, a reference to Occitania, an ancient French province.

This firm attachment to Provence is not a marketing ploy but a reality.

When he talks about his childhood, Baussan describes the scent of honeysuckle and the sweet smells of southern France: "Three kilometres of pure fragrant pleasure on the way to school, with the occasional songs of farmers picking lavender in the summer or gathering olives after the first snowfall."

Thirty-one years after its creation, the company continues to create cosmetics made exclusively from natural plants and fragrances, while avoiding chemical sunscreens and other preservatives. Baussan sold his shares in the company, but he remains closely involved as creative director, following each product from its creation to the packaging design.

The success of L'Occitane is based on the high quality of the ingredients. The company supports traditional production methods that respect both people and the planet.

"We use nearly 200 different raw materials," explains R&D director Jean-Louis Pienisnard. Plants native to the Mediterranean Basin are predominant: lavender, which grows in bright mauve rows stretching across the high plateaus around Manosque-en-Provence; the yellow flowers of the immortelle, which illuminate the fields of Corsica; cade, or prickly juniper, a small wild shrub from the Provençal scrubland; and finally, olives, the ultimate symbol of Mediterranean civilisation.

"For these crucial products, we work directly with farmers who



創業31年，公司一直沿用天然植物和香料，研製出不同的化妝護膚品。

做到最好品質，我們不在乎價錢。」Pierriensard 說。

L'Occitane 仿效其他公司的做法，把進口的原材料如乳木果實在本土以工業形式抽取果油，並於1992年跟布吉納法索的婦女訂立平等交易條約，讓她們以傳統方法預備果油。

「要把所有東西運回布吉納法索的工場，實在是大費周章，不過這就是公司的文化。除了顧及產品的流行性，我們亦支持公平貿易和生態平衡。」真的要感謝L'Occitane，讓那11,000位非洲女工得到額外收入。

現在仍有518名員工於當地工場工作。當中15位研發人員，用蒸餾和凍壓方法，從植物中提煉香精油，利用200種植物的特徵，製造出不同產品。例如：玫瑰帶溫味，會使人興奮，有淨化作用。迷迭香則能抗菌及抗氧。薰衣草能鎮靜抗菌，蘆薈能刺激骨膠原的形成。唯一由動物提供的產品，就是蜜糖、蜜蠟以及蜂膠。

「我們會研究至滿意為止。」他們帶著公司的宗旨，在其後開發了一系列的產品，包括肥皂、身體修護、護手及護髮產品、香水和蠟燭。這些產品都在反對以動物為試本的前提下，得到義工的協助，通過醫學測試。最後，產品更以環保的包裝推出市面，而且大部分的標籤上亦印有盲文。(L'Occitane 跟非政府組織奧比斯合作，為貧窮國家消除眼疾。)

L'Occitane 持續的發展計劃不但能迎合主流的經濟發展，其國際性的成就亦證明機構在營商獲利的同時，都可以尊重生態環境。



grow them according to age-old traditions, with a respect for nature. We require the best quality. We don't even talk about prices!" adds Pierriensard.

Other key ingredients for L'Occitane are also closely monitored. Shea butter, for example, is a component of many L'Occitane products. In 1992, the company established a fair-trade arrangement with village women in Burkina Faso. Rather than import unprocessed shea nuts for industrial extraction in France, as other cosmetic companies do, L'Occitane purchases the shea butter prepared by the female villagers according to traditional techniques.

"Logistically, it's a headache to ship everything back to the Manosque factory, but it's part of our company culture. We were supporting fair-trade and ecology long before they became fashionable," says Pierriensard. Thanks to L'Occitane, some 11,000 African women earn additional income.

Today, 518 people work at Manosque, the company's only production centre as it refuses to move its activities outside Provence. Some 15 people work in the laboratory set amid apple and olive trees, researching and creating new products. Using steam distillation or cold-press techniques, they extract the essential oil from each plant to obtain a concentrated nectar. L'Occitane researchers are both perfumers and pharmacists, and create the oils using the principles of aromatherapy and phytotherapy. Each of the 200 plants



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has its own characteristics: rose is astringent, it stimulates and purifies; rosemary is an antiseptic and an antioxidant; lavender is soothing and an antiseptic; while immortelle stimulates the production of collagen. The only animal products used come from beehives: honey, wax and royal jelly.

"Using what we know, we blend and experiment until we are satisfied with the results," says Pierriensard.

They then develop a line of products incorporating the active principles: soaps; products for the body, hands and hair; fragrances and candles. This development is followed by a test phase conducted under medical supervision and using volunteers, as Bausan has always refused animal testing. Finally, the products are sold in environmentally friendly packaging, made from cardboard produced from sustainable managed forests. Most of the labels are printed in Braille (L'Occitane works with ORBIS, an NGO fighting to eliminate blindness in the world's poorest countries).

As sustainable development joins the mainstream economy, the international success of L'Occitane proves that it's possible to combine profits with a respect for people and the environment.

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