

Some Europeans Prefer their Brazilian Caipirinha All Over their Body

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Brazil's caipirinha (a margarita made of sugarcane liquor), one of the country's most emblematic beverages, has become the latest trend in Europe in recent years, at the bars and pubs in countries such as Germany, France, Spain and Portugal. The drink has even earned a mention in a film by North American filmmaker Woody Allen.

In the city of Mogi Mirim, in the interior of São Paulo state, the brand Brazilian Fruit has turned the much-celebrated flavor of the caipirinha into an innovative line of products that includes a hydrating cream, an exfoliating gel, and foaming soap.

Besides the caipirinha, company Gus & Vicki, which owns the Brazilian Fruit brand, exports a series of cosmetics based on the rich Brazilian flora. Typical fruit from the country provide the colors and scents of a line of products that has been conquering consumers in several countries for two years now.

Hydrating cream made from assai, pitanga soap, Brazil nut hydrating butter, cupuassu soap bar, guarana and passion fruit foaming soap, and banana gloss comprise the diverse list of tropical cosmetics by Brazilian Fruit.

Gus & Vicki emerged ten years ago, recollects businesswoman Veronika Rezzani, who is a partner at the company along with her husband, Gustavo Rezzani. In the beginning, Gus & Vicki would only manufacture products for other companies. Its buyers even include a multinational company based in the United States. "The client comes to us, says what type of product he wants and we manufacture it, according to their needs," explains Veronika.

In 2005, Veronika and Gustavo also decided to invest on the creation of a brand of their own. "The idea was to bring Brazilness to our cosmetics, having Brazilian fruit as the main item, and to compete in the foreign market with products complying with international regulations," says Veronika Rezzani.

In the following year, the brand was launched at Cosmoprof, a trade fair in the Italian city of Bologna, and exceeded the expectations of manufacturers. "The acceptance was fantastic and, shortly after the event, we were already exporting to Portugal," says the businesswoman from São Paulo.

Gus & Vicki has also sold its products to countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, India, the United States, Spain and France. During a brand launch event, in Barcelona, revenues from product sales totaled 6,000 euros (US\$ 8,323) and was donated to an institution that works with impoverished children in the city of Jesuânia, in the state of Minas Gerais.

Veronika underscores that social and environmental responsibility is one of the most important elements in the work of

Gus & Vicki. According to her, the company only purchases inputs from suppliers who care about sustainability. The businesswoman also informs that in her company, within the realms of possibility, everything is recycled. Leftover materials, mostly plastic, are donated to garbage collector cooperatives.

Another strategy adopted at Vicki & Gus is treatment of production residue in order to prevent contamination of water tables in the vicinities of the factory.

According to Veronika, exporting is not easy for a small-sized company. She explains that adapting to the legal requirements for registering the cosmetics and to the profiles of consumers from other countries are very difficult tasks.

"Our products are elaborated taking into account international norms and requirements concerning formulation and regulation," she explains. She underscores that the products undergo dermatological tests and boast high concentrations of natural assets.

Besides, the businesswoman from Mogi Mirim informs that the Brazilian Fruit labels feature texts in English, French, Spanish and Italian, with up to two languages per package.

Veronika explains that for each country, the line of products explores a certain fruit. In the United States, for example, Brazilian Fruit sells cosmetics made from assai, due to the growth in consumption by North Americans of products derived from the Amazonian fruit. In India, in turn, consumers were pleased with the line of cosmetics made from pitanga, according to Veronika.

Upon speaking of Brazilian Fruit's flagship product, the partner at Gus & Vicki remembers the difficult process, involving countless tests, for the creation of the line of caipirinha-based cosmetics. Veronika created the concept for the line, whereas the scents were conceived by perfumer Elizabeth Maia.

The caipirinha line is based on sugarcane extract and lemon extract. The product formulas do not contain alcohol. "When people rub it on their skin, they have a sensation of freshness, and the line is unisex. As most of our products, it can be used by men and women," says the businesswoman.

While talking about the originality of her products, Veronika praises the work of the entire Brazilian cosmetic industry. "There are lots of serious people who are exporting, who are concerned with sustainability, and who are offering items that have differentials. Brazil is really good in this field," she claims.

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