

GAIL BRYDEN

# BRYDEN'S BLENDS

Holistic massage therapist Gail Bryden tells **Anne Armstrong** why she quit the rat race to launch her own 'artisan aromatherapy' business and reveals why Scottish peat is one of her magic ingredients

Images courtesy of John Need Photography



Gail Bryden's busy career took her to Newcastle, London and Dublin and into the world of marketing and big brands working for companies like Heinz, Scottish & Newcastle and Diageo. After a few years of the stress of the daily grind, Gail decided to do what many people dream of doing – she decided to leave the rat race and change the pace of her life.

Dumfries-born Gail, who now lives in Edinburgh, went on to launch her own venture – developing her own range of aromatherapy oils and products. Three years on, and just turned 40, she has never looked back.

"I just felt I was ready for a life change. I became really interested in how nature helped people," she says.

Already a qualified life coach, Gail first re-trained as a therapist in a form of holistic massage, specialising in the Hawaiian Lomi Lomi method, which she describes as the "Rolls-Royce of massage for relaxation and stress relief".

This was to be the catalyst for Gail's new business. She says: "It was a challenge to find a massage oil that I wanted to work with, so I thought: 'Why don't I make my own?'"

In Edinburgh she contacted an expert who ran a natural remedy store to find out about mixing oils, and started learning to do it herself. Throughout the process the phrase 'Just Be' kept coming into her head – she found "that people just wanted to be themselves", and so it became the perfect name for her business.

She started developing a range of

products, all handmade at home, using the finest natural ingredients. At the heart of Just Be is "the desire to balance mind, body and emotions and enhance a sense of wellbeing".

Using ingredients such as flowers, fruits, natural oils like coconut oil, herbs, plant extracts and even Scottish peat, Gail has developed Just Be ranges for the face, body, and burning aromatherapy oils for the home, along with a spa range and treatments.

The former Dumfries High School pupil enjoys nothing better than sitting at her kitchen table mixing oils and developing new combinations of ingredients – she calls it "artisan aromatherapy".

She says: "People have done this since the medieval age. To be working with plants mixing different ingredients makes sense to me.

"The same philosophies apply to baking – the best cooks use a lot of intuition as to what works best. Sometimes ideas come to me in the middle of the night, and I have to try something.

"The days when I'm at home blending, it's all about blending and I often forget all about the time."

One of Gail's latest spa treatments – which has just been introduced at Armathwaite Hall Spa in the Lake District – is called Just Be Elemental and includes using Scottish peat in a thermal peat wrap.

Gail says: "I've found peat to be simply incredible. Peat has traditionally been used to treat a multitude of ailments, from mobility problems, arthritis, and hormonal imbalance to post-surgery recovery and



Artisan aromatherapy: Gail Bryden mixes her oils and develops her special blends at home

muscle recovery in sports medicine.

“It’s also a rich source of minerals, including iron, zinc, copper and magnesium, which help heal, nourish and detoxify. It has been shown to have powerful preserving effects and has excellent moisture-retaining qualities, which help to firm up the skin and improve elasticity.

“Peat is also a natural support for weight-loss as the thermal effect boosts the metabolic rate, which helps burn fat.”

It’s been a busy year for Gail, whose family still live in Dumfries, as she celebrated the third anniversary of setting up her business in November, and continued to develop more products and expand into new areas. She also spent a month in Bali in August as a guest therapist

at Tambok Spa Village.

As she aims to make the Just Be experience fully holistic for the mind, body and spirit, she has also created a music album, Just Be In-Tune, to aid relaxation, and has developed a range of organic herbal infusion drinks – which will be given at the end of treatments – to match seven signature oils ready in the New Year.

“Sometimes I look back and can’t quite believe how it’s all come together,” she says. “It feels very organic. I feel quite blessed to be doing it.

“I remember how it felt to be getting up every day for the daily grind, and to be now getting up every day and doing this, I’m really enjoying it.” D&G

■ See: [www.justbeoils.co.uk](http://www.justbeoils.co.uk)



## Win a Just Be gift pack



Gail is giving you the chance to win a gift pack from her new mini range, which includes Just Be Cleansed Cleansing Gel (10ml), Just Be Toned Toner (30ml), Just Be Hydrated Serum 10ml and Just Be Radiant Treatment Oil (10ml).

To be in with a chance of winning, complete the coupon on page 100 with the answer to the following question:

**Q: Where did Gail spend a month as a guest therapist at Tambok Spa Village last August?**

The closing date is 21.02.2013

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