

# P Life in PETERSFIELD

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Winners: Sarah Brooks (left) with Susi Lennox with their 2009 Ethical Small Business Award



## The Ultimate for the Intimate

Froxfield-based Sarah Brooks and Susi Lennox have established a rapidly expanding international business producing and selling certified organic health products. By Nick Keith

**T**he pioneering founders of Yes Pure Intimacy, Sarah Brooks and Susi Lennox, have designed, formulated, manufactured, marketed and exported the world's first, and, they reckon, still the only range of certified organic intimate lubricants and moisturizers. Their scientific use of pure plant-based formulations is restoring intimate comfort to women when age, chemicals, surgery, stress, or pregnancy and breast-feeding have caused a woman's body to stop responding in the way it used to.

Having worked in the pharmaceutical and oil industries, they met some 20 years ago at Exxon, Southampton. A chemist by training, Sarah has worked for Bayer and for Pfizer in New York. "Researching the side effects of Viagra, we realized that it was creating a huge

“ While 60 per cent of sales are currently in the US, Yes is busy expanding into Europe with distributors in Germany, France and Scandinavia. ”

problem for women and that there was a clear need in the market for effective lubricants," she says. "We were inspired to

form our own company, based on our own values to address this need."

Susi adds: "We decided to focus exclusively on the area of intimacy. Our mission is to change the world from the inside – to become 'the ultimate for the intimate'."

So they embarked on three and a half years of research and product development. "The analysis of competitors' products revealed many concerning chemical ingredients, insensitive packaging and demeaning language," Susi says. "We set out to create high-performing alternatives that, based on sound science would deliver benefits. Purity and discretion were key, combined with elegant "blush-free" packaging and language."

After trials at a plant in Leicestershire, they launched Yes in August 2006. Sarah says: "We always knew the value of our innovation and patented it straight away." Susi adds: "Since its launch we have received so many comments from women confirming that it is even more brilliant than we dared hope." Achieving official organic certification was also important for them, as this provides a guarantee of product purity.

Originally sold only online, 75 per cent of Yes products are still bought through their website (developed by Wizbit in Corhampton). In late 2008 the products were put into retail stockists, including The Bran Tub in Petersfield, and independent pharmacies and health food stores, such as Holland & Barrett.

Sales have grown by more than 7 per cent month on month since the launch. Yes now exports to more than 44 countries, and is retailed in 200 stores in Australia and New Zealand. In Japan it will be the first product of its type to be made available in 5-star hotels. While 60 per cent of sales are currently in the US, Yes is busy expanding into Europe with distributors in Germany, France and Scandinavia.

"This summer, Yes Pure Intimacy won the Triodos Bank Ethical Small Business of the Year Award, sponsored by Ecover, in association with The Times. Sarah and Susi say the award "dignifies" their products and "confirms the importance of their mission".

By the end of 2009 Yes will have launched its latest innovation, with the working title 'Yes Baby'. It is aimed at couples trying to have a baby and needing to work to the calendar to conceive. "99 per cent of lubricants kill sperm. We have developed and patented a process which is sperm friendly without compromising the woman's natural pH," they say.

Yes now employs nine people, all of them local and some part-time, and may soon outgrow its premises in Froxfield. There is a great sense of fun in the office, where Sarah is 'Head of Trickster Things' (product development, finance and IT), while Susi is Alchemical Director (sales and marketing). They are truly putting inspiration into intimacy.

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www.yesyesyes.org .

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