

WELLNESS WARRIORS: MOJEH MEETS ELENA KINANE

April 18th 2020

4 min read



Featuring the Dubai entrepreneurs dedicated to making us healthier and happier from the inside out, MOJEH meets Elena Kinane, founder of Greenheart Organic Farms



Elena Kinane wears sustainable fabric skirt by KAGE, and a recycled cotton T-shirt

“When we first started out, our shop was only open two days a week, because we didn’t have enough vegetables to fill our shelves every day,” recalls Greenheart Organic Farms’ founder and managing director, Elena Kinane. “Now we deliver all over the UAE and offer a huge selection of organic produce grown here on our farms, as well as a selection of the best organic goods imported from India, Lebanon, the South of France, Sri Lanka and the UK.”

MOJEH meets Elena on a busy Thursday morning (prior to the UAE’s lockdown) in her farm shop in Dubai’s Barsha South, just as the day’s delivery has arrived. “Greenheart grows genuine organic vegetables, greens and fruit in the UAE desert. We build soil, make many of our own fertilizers and remedies, and collect our own seeds,” she explains, showing us around the shop packed with woven baskets loaded with juicy home-grown heirloom tomatoes, lush bunches of herbs and fresh, crunchy apples.



Greenheart Organic Farms

“We’ve developed an amazing set of techniques for organic desert farming, are one hundred per cent chemical-free and grow over 140 different varieties, many of which are unique to the gulf region and beyond.”

Elena’s idea for her business took root from her own personal needs back in 2012. “I wasn’t well, and doctors weren’t really able to help me regain my health, so I changed my lifestyle and began eating better, as well as relying upon alternative treatments like acupuncture,” she explains. “Then I decided to start growing organic vegetables for myself. I was taught basic gardening skills by my great aunt when I was growing up, so I wasn’t a complete novice!” she laughs.

“It took me a while, but eventually, I became hooked on it, and teamed up with some Emirati friends who had farms here. It wasn’t until the birth of my daughter though that I felt the urge not only to grow produce for my family and friends, but for the families around me. The more success I had, the more I wanted to shout out to the world, ‘Look what we can do! We don’t need chemicals to grow food. We are doing this right in the middle of the UAE desert, and look what we can achieve without using all those nasty toxins!’



Greenheart Organic Farms

Growing up in Germany and moving to Dubai in 1995, Elena’s mother laid the foundations for her daughter’s interest in the environment and the importance of a healthy, natural diet. “My mum was light years ahead of most people back in the 1970s,” she smiles.

“She made sure I ate plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, and really limited my intake of refined sugar and meat. She’d also inherited an old book of herbal remedies, and whenever I got sick, she’d go to the local herbal shop and buy custom-made herbal teas to make me feel better. So when I got sick as an adult, I thought back to how I stayed healthy as a child, and this is how it began.”

With the aim of making the way they farm and conduct their business the norm for fresh food production and retailing, Elena wants to be able to extend the reach of Greenheart Organic Farms, so more people can eat healthy, sustainable food, as well change consumer behaviour.



Greenheart Organic Farms

“Although it has improved in the UAE in the last few years, and we have a large following of loyal and supportive customers, overall we have a long way to go,” she explains. “For most consumers, comfort takes over doing the right thing. We have to face the fact that we can no longer gloss over the truth. If we want our children to be able to have clean water, biodiversity and to breathe unpolluted air, we all need to change our consumer habits now, before it’s too late.”

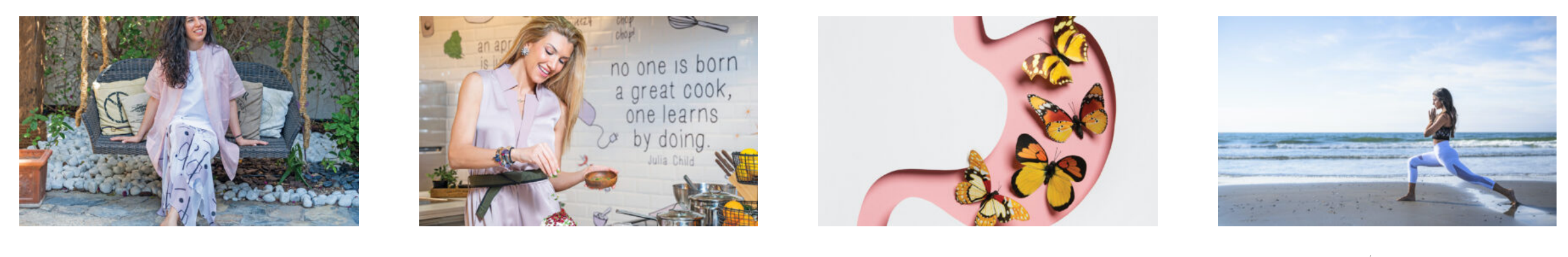
“We are very serious about the work we do here, and every decision we make centres around one question: ‘Is this the right thing to do?’ I strongly believe that in the future, the success of a business will no longer be measured in monetary terms, but also by the way in which it conducts itself, and how it impacts the planet.” Greenheartuae.com

Read Next: [Wellness Warriors – Meet Eda Gungor of SEVA](#)

Words by Lucy Wildman
Photography by Ausras Osipaviciute

#Wellness #organic dubai #Elena Kinane

RELATED:



LIFESTYLE

FOOD

TALKING POINT

BODY / WELLNESS