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Dear Sir/Madam,

Welcome to your Discovery Kit into the world of Gnosis Chocolate! We are grateful for these valuable minutes of your time.

This is the story of a 23 year old girl and the raw chocolate company she started in her kitchen. Now, four years later, Gnosis:

- Creates 40+ superfood functional chocolate products that are Certified Organic, Vegan, Kosher, and are free of gluten, soy, cholesterol, and refined sugars;
- Is sold in over 300 stores; this has been accomplished with *zero* brokers, distributors, or sales reps; each and every store came to us due to customer demand;
- Has grown 100% by word of mouth with *zero* startup capital, advertising, or investors;
- Is the country's best selling truly raw cacao bar (including Whole Foods' Northeast Region);
- Has become a model in the raw foods industry for the growing movement towards a more sustainable model for food production, and a highly conscious approach to corporate social responsibility.

Thank you for allowing us to share our passion and purpose with you.

I hope your interest and imagination will be ignited by these materials. We look forward to working with you to bring Gnosis' story, message… and of course, its chocolate…to more people who care about our planet and its people.

Warmly,

Vanessa Barg
Founder and Owner

gnosis MEDIA COVERAGE

Organic Processing MAGAZINE

SPECIALTY FOOD MAGAZINE

THE GLOBAL RESOURCE, FROM MANUFACTURING TO RETAILING
CANDY INDUSTRY

Dessert PROFESSIONAL

trend watching .com

New York family
parenting with sense and sensibility

DAILY CANDY

edible QUEENS

GRUB STREET

The Feel-Good Issue! Eat Well. Look Good. Feel Great!
easy eats
GOOD TO BE GLUTEN FREE
January/February 2012

THE early show

NBC

TIME

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

THE FIFT BEST

MONOCLE

Smart ways to live well
Prevention

Men'sHealth
The magazine men live by™

Health®

AKA
Ashley Koff RD APPROVED

VegNews magazine

Spirituality & Health
The Soul/Body Connection®

INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATIVE NUTRITION

natural awakenings
healthy living. healthy planet.

well+GOOD nyc
YOUR HEALTHIEST RELATIONSHIP

ALL UNSOLICITED

(877) 4-GNOSIS www.GnosisChocolate.com vanessa@gnosischocolate.com

gnosis OVERVIEW

Company Vision & Vision

Gnosis Chocolate's Mission is to raise global awareness of health, well-being, and environmental sustainability through the ethical business practices in sourcing, manufacturing, and sale of high integrity, superfood-infused, organic chocolate and other products.

Gnosis's Vision is to be a worldwide brand recognized for creating the healthiest chocolate - without sacrificing flavor - with an uncompromising commitment to social responsibility, sustainability, and the welfare of our planet and all its inhabitants. Using consumer education as our marketing strategy, we seek to empower consumers to create meaningful change with their purchases.

Awards

- 2011 Gold Award: Best Raw Chocolate *(Best of Raw)*
- 2011 Gold Award: Best Raw Chocolatier *(Best of Raw)*
- America's 10 Top Chocolatiers of 2011 *(Dessert Professional Magazine)*
- Award Nomination for 2011: Best Vegan Chocolate *(VegNews)*
- 2010 Silver Award: Best Raw Chocolate, Best Raw Chocolatier *(Best of Raw)*

Company Description

- Founded in 2008 by Vanessa Barg, board certified holistic health practitioner;
- First and best-selling organic raw chocolate bar with national presence;
- Distributed online and through natural foods and fine retailers, including Whole Foods, Bristol Farms, independent grocery and gift stores, doctors' offices, and health spas, Amazon.com, Chocolate.com, and many others;
- Growth completely funded by sales (no investors or startup capital, and no paid advertising); paralleled the growth of other companies with greater resources;
- Ingredients and packaging sourced directly; uncompromising specifications verified by supply chain visits and active collaboration with country of origin;
- Sponsors like-minded charitable organizations and community efforts, including REACH Grenada, The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation, The Institute for Integrative Nutrition, The Urban Zen Foundation, The ASPCA, and many others.

Product Information

- Launch at 2012 Expo West: 16 new Gnosis recipes featuring Big Tree Farms' coconut palm sugar sweetened chocolate.
- Product line of over 40 products includes chocolate bars, truffles, spreads, hot chocolate trail mixes, body care, and gift collections;
- Sweetened with low glycemic sweeteners, thus diabetic-friendly;
- Gluten-free, soy-free, peanut-free, refined sugar-free, dairy-free;
- Made with raw ingredients (heated under 118 degrees Fahrenheit) to maintain nutritional integrity and minimal processing;
- Functional Chocolate: infused with superfoods including goji berries, acai, pomegranate, and herbs used in Chinese, South American, and Ayurvedic traditions.

Certifications

- Certified Organic: California Certified Organic Farmers, USDA
- Certified Kosher: International Kosher Council
- Certified Vegan: Vegan Action
- Certified Green: Green America
- American Association for Drugless Practitioners Certified (Founder/Owner Vanessa Barg)
- Institute of Integrative Nutrition Graduate & Ambassador (Founder/Owner Vanessa Barg)

Social Responsibility Initiatives

- Raw Integrity Project
- The Agave Report
- The Grenada Project
- Eco Sustainability Project

Affiliations

- Fine Chocolate Industry Association
- Green America
- Womens Business Enterprise National Council (in process)
- World Cocoa Foundation (in process)

Press & Speaking Engagements: Founder/Owner Vanessa Barg

- Lecturer: Institute for Integrative Nutrition, Lincoln & Javits Centers, Beacon Theatre
- Lecturer: Health Freedom Expo, CA
- Lecturer: Raw Spirit Festival, DC
- Guest Expert: Martha Stewart's Healthy Living Radio Show
- Guest Expert: Sundance Channel's Love/Lust focus on Chocolate
- Guest Expert: Bloomberg Channel's Healthy New York
- Judge and Speaker: Best of Raw Contest, NYC
- Early Show: Focus on best products from New York Chocolate Show
- NBC New York City Live: Interview about the first Raw Chocolate Store in NYC
- NBC Philadelphia: Product Spotlight as eco-friendly gift for mothers-to-be
- New York's local channel 25: Full episode feature
- NY Talk Radio, WCBS-FM, 1010 WINS
- Features on more than 60 websites, including Huffington Post
- Featured in Oprah, Time, and Men's Health Online Magazines
- Easy Eats, Edible Queens, Organic Processing, Prevention, VegNews Magazines

(as of February, 2012)

gnosis
RAW CHOCOLATE

gnosis (nō'sĭs) *intuitive knowledge of the heart; experiential knowledge*

70-90% RAW CACAO
WITH SUPERFOODS, FUNCTIONAL HERBS, & COCONUT PALM SUGAR

FREE OF:
REFINED SUGAR
CHOLESTEROL
DAIRY, SOY & GLUTEN

4th Annual BEST OF RAW AWARDS PRODUCTS 2011 FAVORITE

Made with respect for the **origins** *of cacao, the well-being of our* **society**, *and Earth's natural* **majesty**, *Gnosis products celebrate health and* **integrity**. *To* **ethically** *sourced cacao, we add* **low glycemic** *sweeteners and high nutrition* **superfoods** *- resulting in an* **exquisite** *balance of flavor and* **function**. *Elegantly packaged with only the most* **sustainable** *of materials,* **Gnosis** *is an indulgence to delight both palate and* **conscience**.

ABOUT GNOSIS:

Gnosis was founded by Vanessa Barg, a Board Certified Holistic Health Counselor. Vanessa began making chocolate to help her clients towards a healthy, satisfying diet they could truly enjoy. Her background in nutrition and the culinary arts motivated her creation of recipes with superfoods & medicinal herbs from around the globe. Vanessa works directly with farmers and cooperatives to develop organic agriculture initiatives and fair labor practices.

Vanessa thoroughly supports the stores and communities that carry Gnosis. She is passionate about educating people about the benefits of making healthy choices and would love to host events and demos in your retail store or health center!

gnosis RAW CHOCOLATE

877 4.GNOSIS (646.688.5549)
wholesale@gnosischocolate.com
www.GnosisChocolate.com

CHOCOLATE BARS

LISTED BY RANK

NET WT 2oz (56g)
UNIT 4.5” x 2.5” x .75”

CASE 12 units/cs
DISPLAY 4.5” x 2.5“ x 9.25”

Bite Sized Pieces Coming Soon
Now with Coconut Palm Sugar

#1

TRAIL MIXES

CASE 6 units/cs
NET WT 1/2lb (8oz)
UNIT 5” x 8” x 3”

IMMUNITY

POWERCHOC

available in bulk

HOT CHOC

CASE 6 units/cs
NET WT 1/2lb (8oz)
UNIT 5” x 8” x 3”

APHRODISIA

IMMUNITY

MAYAN HEAT

available in bulk

TRUFFLES

CASE 6 units/cs
NET WT 1.5oz (42g)
UNIT 1.5” x 3.75” x 1”

VITALITY

ENDURANCE

IMMUNITY

PASSION

available for deli case

SPREADS

CASE 6 units/cs
NET WT 2oz OR 8oz
UNIT 2” x 2“ x 2” OR
3.5” x 2.5” x 2.5”

GOJI BERRY

CHOCO HEMP

CUPUACU ACAI

ASSORTMENT

All packaging is made from post consumer recycled, FSC certified, vegetable ink printed, biodegradable, and/or compostable materials.
We offer seasonal items and cater to private label, special events, and corporate gift requests. Please visit us onlnie to view our entire line.
Call or email us to receive a wholesale order form. All Sales are Guaranteed. We very much look forward to making chocolate for you!

gnosis MEET OUR BARS

Without further ado… 17 Flavors of Raw Chocolate Bars

SuperChoc: No other chocolate bar can match its sheer power - so be prepared for this thunderbolt to your senses and systems! SuperChoc's antioxidants, superfoods, traditional herbs, and adaptogens send nourishment to our brains and healing tonics to our blood…making Super Heroes of us all.

Simplicity: The essential chocolate experience. Start with the elemental taste and myriad of health benefits of raw, organic cacao. Add its perfect compliment – low glycemic organic sweetness – and enjoy…guilt free! "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication." - *Leonardo Da Vinci*

Pom Açai: Put all the pieces of vibrant health in one place as antioxidant-rich pomegranate and Amazon açai berry meet and collaborate with protein-dense brazil nuts and deeply-healing raw, organic cacao. Ultimate rejuvenation!

Aphrodisia: How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Ways: nectar for sweetness; fo ti to stir desire; maca for fullment; cacao's arginine to heighten bliss, and; horny goat weed to… alas, modesty forbids me to say more.

Fleur de Sel: Fully satisfy your twin cravings for savory and sweet; this healthful bar makes you feel complete! Two varieties of salt deliver 92 minerals while aiding in digestion and intensifying the deeper elements of cacao's flavor profile. Make all your taste buds happy with one bite!

Coco Almond: Tropical-born, Heaven-sent, flavor and potency-filled. This bar supports digestion and improves absorption of fat-soluble molecules. Almonds are alkaline and extremely high in protein, and Maca is said to balance hormones and enhance endurance and sexual vitality.

Mayan Heat: Named to honor Earth's first chocolatiers, we reach back across the millennia to the original Mayan chocolate combination! Cayenne is used to stimulate the circulatory system and metabolism. Cranberries and currants add a touch of sweetness, but this hot chocolate pulls no punches!

Dazzling Darkness: "The ingredients of both darkness and light are equally present in all of us… The madness of this planet is largely a result of the human being's difficulty in coming to virtuous balance." - *Elizabeth Gilbert*
Let your light be dazzled by the 90% cacao darkness within!

Zero Glycemic: We've subtly sweetened the most nutritious, bittersweet raw cacao with organic stevia! This miracle of nature has Zero calories and, therefore, Zero impact on blood sugar. Coupled with herbs to regulate your metabolic response to sugar, this bar will help you get off the sugar roller coaster and put you on more solid ground.

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Immune: Prepare your system with this treat! Echinacea, elderberry, ginseng, and chaga blend beautifully with warming ginger, cinnamon, and cardamom. As the earth turns 'round the sun, celebrate the seasonal flavors of pecan, cranberry, persimmons, and pumpkin seeds. Enjoy staying vibrant and healthy – even through the "cold and flu" months.

Cool Mint: Smooth, fresh, and clean, powered by chlorophyll – a powerful antioxidant and tissue repairer. Peppermint, "the world's oldest medicine," calms the digestive system and relaxes your body and mind. Let this bar roll up its leaves to make you the strongest kid on the block.

PowerChoc: The ultimate support to an active life! Enjoy decadent chocolate that's powered by Sunwarrior protein powder. With hemp, almonds, amino acid-rich goji and goldenberries providing additional highly absorbable protein, maca and cacao join the team to enhance endurance and nutrient assimilation. Truly a Choc full of power!

Goddess: "A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture, and transform...Let us call upon woman's voice and woman's heart to guide us in this age of planetary transformation." - *D. Mariechild*. Let the herbs in this bar support every stage of your cycle!

Superberry: The SuperPowers of eight SuperBerries from around the globe are at work in this bar to give you more antioxidants and biodiverse nutrition than any other chocolate experience. This fruity, zesty, flavor-filled combination for beauty from the inside out is proof that the best things come in small packages!

Cinna Fig: Sweet, chewy figs, currants, and cranberries burst with fiber, antioxidant and cleansing power. Almonds share their wonderful protein, a subtle note of warming cinnamon helps you to metabolize glucose and balance blood sugar, and Cinna Fig's aroma kisses you goodbye until next time...

Hazelnut: Is where vanilla, cacao, and hazelnut meet and fall in love. It was inevitable, given vanilla's luscious flavor, immune enhancing polysaccharides, and antioxidants; hazelnut's crunch and proanthocyanidins, and cacao's encyclopedic benefits and delights! It is with gratitutde that we enjoy this classic luxury – guilt-free!

Cashew Goji: …a fusion of East and West whose taste and texture you'll not soon forget! Soft, sweet goji berries – known for their longevity-promoting powers – gift antioxidants, protein, beta carotene, and Vitamin B6. Rich in healthy oleic acid, nuggets of raw, crunchy cashews nestle happily in between!

gnosis DEDICATION

Made with respect for the origins of cacao, the well-being of our society, and Earth's natural majesty, Gnosis products celebrate health, exquisite flavor, and integrity.

To a foundation of ethically sourced, high antioxidant Raw Cacao from Bali, Grenada, Madagascar, Ecuador, and Peru – we then add low glycemic sweeteners, nutrient dense superfoods, and medicinal herbs sourced fastidiously from the Amazon to the Himalayas.

If a product is to be truly healthy, it must also be healthy for the planet. Environmental consciousness guides every step at Gnosis. We use post-consumer recycled, compostable, and biodegradable packaging printed with vegetable based inks, and pack our orders with reused padding materials.

We collaborate with and donate over 10% of our profits to dozens of local and international causes that focus on healing the environment and working with it in harmony.

Superfoods & Medicinal Herbs

Each Gnosis Chocolate product is created with a specific health function as its inspiration: *Endurance*, *Pure Energy*, *Detox*, *Balance*, *Circulation*, to name a few. Every product is infused with medicinal herbs and superfoods from around the world, including goji berries, açaí, pomegranate, maca root, Siberian ginseng, gingko biloba, and over fifty others. Medicinal herbs and superfoods add antioxidants, phytonutrients, vitamins, and minerals to the incredibly high nutrient and antioxidant content already found in our organic, raw chocolate.

Diabetic Friendly and Free of Gluten and Soy

To ensure our product is the most nutritious and does not have any negative effect on health, we use only low-glycemic sweeteners: Agave Nectar, Coconut Palm Sugar, and Stevia; all are diabetic friendly.

Our products are 100% free of refined sugar (including cane), soy, gluten, peanuts, eggs, shellfish, dairy, preservatives, colorings, alkaloids, and other ingredients often found in chocolate.

877-4-GNOSIS www.GnosisChocolate.com vanessa@gnosischocolate.com

Certifications

Organic
We are proud to be certified by CCOF. By supporting the certification process we promote organic food and agriculture, and commit to using only organic ingredients. The organic movement not only creates healthier finished products, but also guarantees a more sustainable process for farmers, the soil, and water.

Vegan
Gnosis Chocolate is certified by Vegan Action. Gnosis believes its products should never harm any creature - and so we only use plant-based ingredients. This means our chocolate bars do not contain any dairy products, are free of cholesterol, and do not block antioxidants.

Kosher
In Hebrew, “Kashrus,” means “suitable” and/or “pure,” thus “ensuring fitness for consumption;” Gnosis wants all chocolate lovers to be confident that its products are, indeed, “fit for consumption.” Gnosis Chocolate is proud to be certified by Rabbi Zev Schwarcs of the International Kosher Council.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
Gnosis Chocolate is proud to use packaging certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. The FSC ensures that the consumption of forest products by its certified companies is ethical and sustainable. Look for “Recycled, Post-Consumer Recycled, FSC Certification, and Printed with Vegetable Inks,” rather than the misleading "Recyclable."

Green America
Gnosis Chocolate has just been awarded the Green America Seal of Approval, signifying successful completion of the Green America’s Certification Process and approval to be listed as a socially and environmentally responsible—or green—business in the National Green Pages directory.

Transparent, Direct, Truly Raw Trade
Gnosis purchases the heritage cacao and coconut palm sugar made by Big Tree Farms on the islands of Indonesia. BTF works directly with over 13,000 farmers to build a sustainable supply chain that ensures livelihood for 13,000 farmers and their families. Vanessa has personally visited their farms and new bamboo factory.

Raw (heated under 118° F)
As there is not yet a certification to regulate and verify the term raw (heated under 118 degrees f), Vanessa personally visits sources throughout our supply chain. At the request of raw food industry leaders, Gnosis is developing a set of standards for what constitutes “raw” and will be starting a raw verification/certification program.

gnosis

Choosing a Sweetener

… is undeniably one of the most important food choices we make. Until recently, refined sugar, corn syrup, and chemical sweeteners were the only options to satisfy a sweet tooth in need. Unfortunately, today's surging rates of diabetes, heart disease, and obesity – all preventable epidemics – has been the result.

As consumption of sweeteners void of nutrition (often GMO and paired with chemicals and saturated fat), were found to be undermining our health, demand grew for alternative sweeteners. The wisdom of indigenous cultures has supplied healthy sweeteners to meet this demand – agave, and more recently coconut palm sugar. It was by examining the food habits, traditional preparations and medicines of ancient cultures that we have begun designing a healthier food space by incorporating their superfoods, functional foods, and medicinal herbs.

The new products routinely reaching shelves of health food stores and gourmet alike are widening consumers' range of options. A wonderful opportunity, it must also be supported by proper verification and consumer education to avoid misleading claims and false advertising. At Gnosis, we've assumed responsibility for keeping our customers informed of these advancements so they may choose wisely. It's clear that people are increasingly aware that health is an investment made over a lifetime, and are willing to vote with their dollars for a more nutritious marketplace. It's time to fill the shelves with *only* high integrity, high nutrient products that address the causes of preventable disease.

Gnosis now offers a SweetChoice –Coconut Palm Sugar, Agave Nectar, and Stevia!

As healthfulness, exquisite flavor, and integrity lie at the core of Gnosis, our products have always been sweetened with low-glycemic options – primarily Agave Nectar. Our customers have been thrilled by its wonderful flavor and low impact on blood sugar.

At the same time, we constantly search for - and thoroughly investigate - new ingredients and alternatives so that our products are the very healthiest possible. Vanessa has personally visited the sources of our ingredients, and after inspecting Big Tree Farms in Indonesia, she was thrilled and polled our customers' interest. The response was loud and clear – *"We want coconut palm sugar chocolate!"*

Your SweetChoices

Coconut Palm Sugar, Agave Nectar, and Stevia come from indigenous cultures that have sourced multitudes of nutritious and curative herbs and foods. Unlike unrefined sugar and high fructose corn syrup, agave and coconut palm sugar break down slowly during digestion, avoiding the sugar spike that invites the development of diabetes. Palm Sugar's glycemic index is 35, Agave Nectar's is 27, and Stevia's is 0 – all far less than most

foods; honey (55-60) and high fructose corn syrup (62). It's also lower than that of almost every fruit, for example: grapes (47), oranges (42), and papayas (59). Unlike highly-processed sweeteners that offer no benefits to health-conscious and environmentally responsible consumers, both agave and palm sugar are grown and processed in ways that are healthy for us and for our planet.

Coconut Palm Sugar – Our NEW Primary Sweetener!

"Local populations can easily turn the nectar into coconut blossom sugar. It is a way to solve the world's poverty. It is also an antidote against misery." *Mohatmas Ghandi, 1939*

This staple of South East Asian culinary heritage and herbal medicine has become the most requested sweetener in global health communities as a nutritious, sustainable, satisfying sweetener. It has certainly earned its spot in our hearts and that of our customers who have been awaiting this launch!

Big Tree Farms Coconut Palm Farmer

Coconut Palm Sugar delivers a rich storehouse of nutrients: B vitamins; minerals, including phosphorous, potassium, protein, magnesium, and calcium. Cocos Nucifera trees yield 50-75% more sugar per acre than sugar cane and use 1/5th the soil nutrients and water – and can produce nectar (then granulated into sugar) and coconuts for water and meat simultaneously, thus making it an incredibly sustainable crop. In fact, The UN's Food & Agriculture Organization called palm sugar the world's "most sustainable sweetener." Our Coconut Palm Sugar from Big Tree Farms even comes recommended by Dr. Oz!

http://www.GnosisChocolate.com/Palm-Nectar

Stevia – A little bit goes a long, sweet way!

Stevia has a 1,500 year history of medicinal use in South America, and at 28% growth rate since 2008, it is clearly in high demand. Stevia has no calories or carbohydrates, its glycemic index is 0 (!) and nutrients found in stevia leaves such as chromium, magnesium, manganese, potassium, selenium, zinc and niacin are known to help regulate blood sugar and blood pressure.

Stevia – little leaf, big flavor!

We have added just a tiny pinch to our bars (leaves are 30-45 times as sweet as ordinary table sugar!) to brighten up our dark cacao without adding any additional glycemic load to your super chocolate or waste load to our majestic planet. http://www.GnosisChocolate.com/Stevia

Agave Nectar – Where it all began…

Traditional Mexican medicine makes use of agave for antifungal, antibacterial, blood pressure lowering and anti-inflammatory purposes. Agave nectar is extracted from the blue agave plant, a succulent that that grows chiefly in Mexico. The nectar is rich in calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium, and vitamins E, C, D, and E.

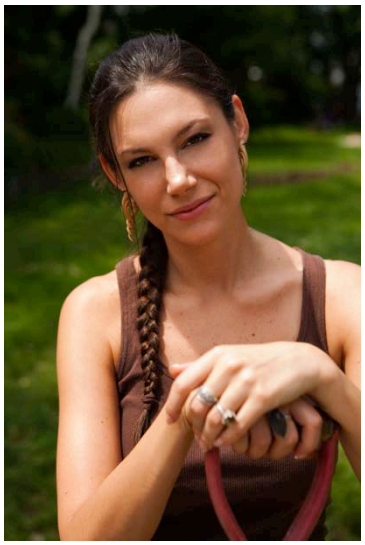
Agave Farmer – Jalisco, Mexico

1.3 times as sweet as cane sugar, agave nectar imparts only its sweetness to the flavor profile of our chocolate – thus allowing us to highlight the flavor of the chocolate alone, unlike Palm Sugar and Stevia, which gift a unique flavor to our bars!
http://www.GnosisChocolate.com/Agave-Report

Make a SweetChoice: Our new bars now are available online and in stores nationwide!

gnosis RAW INTEGRITY

The Raw Integrity Project is Gnosis Chocolate's lens for scanning the raw food industry's commitment to producing truly raw. This lens is vital because the current triple digit growth in demand for more nutritious and sustainable foods is sometimes met by producers who label products and ingredients "raw" when they are not (below 118 degrees is the raw benchmark).



Facing a similar situation in the 1970s, the organic community developed a standard and influenced legislation that both defined and created the forces to enforce the standard. This is where the raw community is now, and there is a clear need for: pure food, transparency in production,honesty in labeling, and consumer education in order to protect the integrity of "Raw" Foods.

What Gnosis is Doing

Gnosis defines its own stringent standards and verifies them through personal visits to sources. The dedication of Gnosis Founder/Owner, Vanessa Barg to enforcing stringent standards and verification procedures is both unique and well-known in the raw chocolate sector. She visits up and down the supply chain to ascertain that no ingredients are heated above 118 degrees and that labor practices and production methods are both fair and sustainable.

Eladio Pop's Family Farm, Belize

Gnosis' leadership in this area was confirmed when several of the most respected companies in the raw food industry asked Vanessa to develop a set of standards and verification procedures to protect consumers, guide and influence producers, and give government agencies a check list for enforcement. The hope is "Raw" will take a path similar to that of "Organic," rather than Natural – a term that holds little commitment to nature in food labeling standards.

Belmont Estate, Grenada

The Raw Integrity Perspective: Raw Food and Our Future

We are learning more and more about the fundamental role diet plays in major diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, depression, gastrointestinal diseases, and so many more. Even the quickest of internet searches will identify hundreds of success stories written of lives that have been dramatically improved - in some cases saved - by eating a raw food diet.

The health and environmental crises will only be solved when our collective individual efforts - including voting with our dollars for high integrity products made by transparent companies - move the food industry and regulatory agencies to take action. Important actions include: educating consumers about preventative strategies; raising standards for what is considered safe for consumption, and; filling shelves with products that prioritize health, well-being, and sustainability over sweetness and low price.

Best Ground Agave, Mexico

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Why Raw?

In her work as a Health Practitioner, Vanessa worked with her clients to more raw, high nutrient foods to their diets and found that a rapid disappearance of empty calorie, highly processedfoods naturally occurred without focusing on eliminating them. Adding a minimum of 70% of raw produce and prepared foods to the diet helps torecalibrate their understanding of proper portion size, and can balance weight issues and hormones, identify underlying food allergies, decode and curb cravings, and most importantly, help people learn to listen to their bodies and know how certain foods affect their energy levels more than any of the 40 dietary theories she has studied.

REACH Grenada 2011

The dramatic growth in the number and availability of prepared raw food products is a powerful and encouraging indication of the future of food. Instead of only searching for a remedy to our current health crisis, people who choose raw foods are looking beyond symptoms to the root cause of illnesses.

Big Tree Farms Cashews, Bali

Raw Certification

The next goal for the Raw Integrity Project is to respond to the community and the industry leaders' request to develop definitive Raw standards and verification procedures. Gnosis plans to collaborate with raw food experts to create an industry-wide definition of what is "raw" and, as a logical next step, develop methods for verification.

Eventually, Gnosis may very well a certifying agency that would also create a communication channel to report producers' certification status and serve as a discussion forum.

Thanks to our organic predecessors and Vanessa's visits to Big Tree Farms, there is a blueprint for action, and The Raw Integrity Project's informed voice for creating standards is a first step towards guaranteeing that the benefits of raw food to consumers and to the planet will continue. If given proper education, resources, and respect, we believe the resounding vote - from the farm to final consumer - will vote for the higher integrity path.

Big Tree Farms Coconut Sugar, Java

Big Tree Farms Cacao, Bali

gnosis PROJECT:
RAW INTEGRITY
Building Transparency in Raw Chocolate
www.RawIntegrityProject.com

Please follow this project and get involved!
http://www.RawIntegrityReport.com

gnosis PROJECTS

Gnosis Chocolate is 100% committed to not only excellence in final product, but also to the quality of life of all its stakeholders.

The fact that education, research, and outreach programs have been the primary focus of Gnosis since its inception and that its reports have been the sole 'marketing' behind Gnosis' growth prove that businesses can, no matter how small or unfunded, be both profitable *and* socially responsible from the very start. It is not necessary to wait for profitability to give back – in fact it leads to unsustainable business.

Activities that nourish and sustain - rather than undermine - life on our planet are not incompatible with the bottom line; they are, long term, the bases of it.

Here are some of the activities that demonstrate Gnosis's commitment to nutritional and manufacturing integrity, fair labor standards, and reporting that benefits both industry and consumers.

gnosis PROJECT: RAW INTEGRITY

an Exploration of Transparency in Raw Chocolate

The Raw Integrity Project's main activities include: *Confirmation:* To insure the ingredients Gnosis uses are raw and of the highest quality, Vanessa personally visits the Gnosis supply chain and puts her hands in every stage of production to ensure the foundation of Gnosis - integrity. *Consultation:* Vanessa continues to work with industry leaders to develop new and ever more effective ways to define and guarantee raw food standards, and to move the raw foods industry forward through research and communication. *Communication:* Updates, reports, and discussions of raw chocolate's properties, benefits, and challenges. *Collaboration:* Several of the most respected companies in the raw food industry have collectively asked Gnosis to develop a set of industry-wide standards to define and verify products labeled as "Raw." Please see http://www.RawIntegrityProject.com for updates.

gnosis PROJECT: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Respecting Culture with Raw Chocolate

By sourcing directly, we support thousands of small family farmers growing organic food – thus involving local economy in a venture that will provide for generations to come without the introduction of GMO or pesticides and other harmful substances. In addition, our collaboration with domestic community initiatives and local organizations has touched thousands of people in the United States and abroad. Specifically, Gnosis Chocolate sponsors and shares funds generated by its chocolate with: ASPCA, American Holistic Medical Association, Doctors without Borders, The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation, Housing Works, Institute for Integrative Nutrition, REACH Grenada, Urban Zen, and many other like-minded organizations. Please see http://www.GnosisChocolate.com/Social-Responsibility for updates.

please see reverse

Gnosis Chocolate products are all packaged with 100% recycled, 77% post consumer recycled, and FSC certified papers printed with vegetable inks. Our wrappers are made from biodegradable or compostable materials, our shipping materials are reused and environmentally sustainable, and we have found summer shipping methods that eliminate the use of styrofoam or other harmful insulants. We believe our practices not only affect the planet directly, but also serve as a model for other small companies by voting with our dollars for a shift in the marketplace for responsible entrepreneurialism. Please see http://www.gnosischocolate.com/earth-day for updates.

Gnosis' *Grenada Project* works with REACH Grenada to help alleviate the suffering of at-risk youth due to neglect, abandonment, hunger, and emotional, physical and sexual abuse. The domestic havoc that breeds child abuse in Granada are rooted in economic difficulties caused by the island's massive unemployment and hurricane-caused infrastructure degradation. Gnosis is working with the Grenada Chocolate Company - a 100% farmer owned cooperative to use organic chocolate agriculature to improve economic and family health on this beautiful island. Please see http://www.GnosisChocolate.com/Grenada for updates.

In the Agave Report, Vanessa provides a thorough overview of agave nectar, its production, health benefits, and the challenges to its purity created by unethical producers. The report is based on her intensive research, which includes visiting Gnosis' agave supplier in Guadalajara, Mexico. Vanessa feels the only way to make health claims with integrity and truly verify quality assurance is to go beyond reading research and third party blogs and personally visiting every link in Gnosis' supply chain. Please visit http://www.Gnosis Chocolate.com/Agave-Report for updates.

Future International Goals

- **Grenada Chocolate Company and Big Tree Farms (Indonesia):** ongoing collaboration to support sustainable agriculture and implement nutrition programs for farmers and families;
- **Africa:** connect to labor practice improvement projects, rehabilitate mono-cropped cacao plantations; support and develop ongoing PALF wildlife conservation efforts;
- **Central & South America:** support existing organic cacao initiatives, catalogue genetic varietals with focus on preservation of heirloom cacao;
- **Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicine:** collaborate with PCRM to produce research studies on health benefits of raw foods and superfoods.

gnosis OUR STORY

Gnosis answers the call for pure, decadent chocolate, while sending messages about health, well-being, and awareness of our environment and society. Gnosis' aim is to shift the marketplace towards high integrity companies, healthful products, and consumers who are empowered to make educated choices.

The Beginning

In 2008, Vanessa Barg, a Certified Holistic Health Counselor, formulated raw chocolate bars that combined superfoods and herbs with raw cacao and low-glycemic sweeteners to help her clients choose foods full of nutrients rather than unhealthy sweets. They began buying her chocolate for friends, family, and co-workers. Word spread, and Gnosis Chocolate and its certified organic, raw, vegan, kosher product line are now in over 300 stores - including Whole Foods - in over 20 countries.

Founder and Owner of Gnosis Chocolate: Vanessa Barg

Four Years Later

What began as a one person operation in a tiny kitchen with no startup capital, partners, or investors is now an international business with dramatic growth and product diversification, an unimpeachable reputation for quality, customer service, vision, and social responsibility, and - according to thousands of customers - the very best chocolate in the world. This judgment was echoed this year as Gnosis was named one of America's top 10 chocolatiers by *Dessert Professional Magazine*, and was voted Best Raw Chocolate and Best Raw Choclatier by *Best of Raw*.

All of Gnosis' growth has been by word of mouth - with no paid advertising or investments. Vanessa's belief is that a business model based on focusing 100% of efforts on making a superior product and providing excellent customer service will result in a louder voice from our consumers - who will demand this quality and integrity on the shelves of our stores.

Team Gnosis

A Model of Conscious Enterprise

Gnosis works directly with our farmers and suppliers. Vanessa has visited farms in Belize, Grenada, Mexico, and Indonesia, following her supply chain to its roots to ensure quality assurance and fair labor practices onsite. Team Gnosis has grown to include a chocolatier classically trained in France, and committed employees who are encouraged to develop their leadership potential and pursue their passions.

Since the first bar sold, Gnosis has operated with environmental and societal awareness. From manufacturing to packaging and shipping, Gnosis invests in sustainable materials and methods of operation, making the chocolate by hand, and using vegetable based inks and packaging that is 100% recycled and biodegradable.

Vanessa in Mexico visiting Gnosis' agave source

Now known as far more than a chocolate company; Gnosis is recognized, embraced, and covered in the press as an articulate, informed voice for responsible entrepreneurialism. Gnosis represents a shift in the market place – from its donations and environmental consciousness to the quality, integrity, and Love in each and every bar.

877-4-GNOSIS www.GnosisChocolate.com vanessa@gnosischocolate.com

gnosis CHOCOLATE GIRL

Hello! My name is Vanessa Barg. I'm a Board Certified Holistic Health Counselor, and the founder of Gnosis Chocolate.

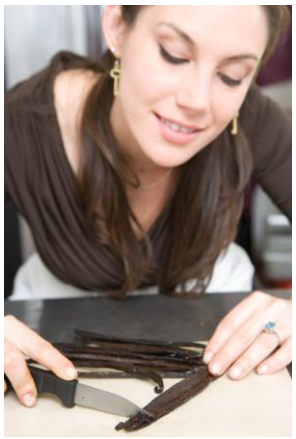
Eight years ago, I was on track to medical school when I realized that food is the best medicine of all so I changed direction and began studying nutrition and traditional herbs as preventative medicine. I trained at the Institute of Integrative Nutrition (IIN) in New York City, and studied with Andrew Weil, Deepak Chopra, and David Wolfe. I then opened a Health Counseling Practice with programs focusing on my clients' diet, well-being, exercise, relationships, and career. I was a nutritionist – a counselor. I had no dream of becoming "Chocolate Girl"… yet….

How & Why I started making Chocolate

When I was at IIN, David Wolfe (world authority on raw food) lectured on the benefits of raw chocolate. I became inspired to buy the superfoods he spoke about, commandeer my mom's copper bowl, utensils, and kitchen…and whip up my first batch of raw chocolate. The result was so delicious and energizing that I began making chocolate to help my clients choose foods full of nutrients rather than unhealthy sweets, and to show them making healthy choices does *not* have to be a sacrifice!

Demand for the chocolate grew through word of mouth like wildfire! Stores started calling – even Whole Foods asked me to carry the bars – and I founded Gnosis Chocolate without *any* funding, partners, or marketing. Now, Gnosis has created a unique category of chocolate that meets the needs and palates of both the fine chocolate market as well as the health conscious market.

Why Raw?



Why did I choose to make raw chocolate instead of conventional, roasted chocolate? Raw chocolate is less processed (closer to how nature intended!) and is rich in nutrients, neurotransmitters, and antioxidants. The raw food diet allows for a recalibration of quality and quantity, and is, in addition, far more environmentally and socially sustainable. By including large amounts of raw, high nutrient foods in one's diet, an exclusion of empty calorie, highly processed foods naturally occurs.

A dramatic change in diet to high nutrient, minimally processed foods also helps re-establish the frequently long-lost connection between food and the body. The consequence can be a feeling of greater health and the desire to work towards wellness in all areas of one's life.

"*Gnosis* Chocolate?" What does "Gnosis" Mean?

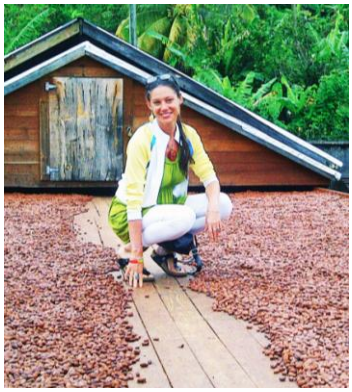
"Gnosis" means "intuitive knowledge," "knowledge of the heart," and "experiential knowledge." It's the philosophy that underlies the development of our products and our business. The company, Gnosis, Chocolate has become so much more than a chocolate company – it's also a vehicle for filling packaging and websites and speeches full of Gnosis – "full of knowledge" - about health, well-being, spirituality, social and environmental awareness, and conscious commerce.

Chocolate is a key that opens so many doors to peoples heart, so this is a great place to start!!!"

877-4-GNOSIS www.GnosisChocolate.com vanessa@gnosischocolate.com

Chocolate Girl Shares the Message of Gnosis

"The Cacao Bean is where Nature and the Divine have met, and together lead you to fulfill your ultimate potential on this earth - which is to Love with all your being. If love is the only gold and Chocolate leads to it, then Cacao is a ticket to all the riches imaginable.



It would appear ideal for every chocolate maker to own his or her own farm and bean-to-bar processing machinery in order to have complete control over their process. But it would also be a massive waste of resources. There are farms that are able to verify raw integrity, operate with awareness of environmental sustainability, and that are able to customize the process to their customers' specifications…if we will actively support them directly. Incredible amounts of shipping damages to the environment, obscene financial investment, and extraneous work can be saved by having these sources focus their efforts on the perfection of this process.

I am blessed to be able to work directly with our suppliers and farmers to ensure integrity, learning so much along the way about nutrition and sustainable business. But - even after personally harvesting pods from trees; dehydrating, winnowing, grinding, and conching the beans; making tens of thousands of bars by hand; reading, researching, studying, attending seminars and conferences, and consulting with industry leaders – there is still so much to be learned.

It's more expensive to package our products in the way we do – but only in the short run. In the long run we'll save much more than dollars by choosing the more sustainable option – we'll be helping save the planet! - because we know these practices have direct impacts and set an example for others to follow.

As always, the responsibility to demand high quality and standards must be shared. We must perform due diligence to ensure those standards are maintained, and that they evolve with as demand increases.

Each day, we vote with our dollars. As consumers, we control demand. We can vote for a shift in the marketplace - for shelves filled with nutritious, properly labeled products from transparent companies that operate with integrity and transparency."

gnosis

TESTIMONIALS

http://www.gnosischocolate.com/guestbook2

"Unbelievable!!! Raw, Organic, Vegan, FAIR TRADE and SUGAR FREE?!!!! Does it get any better than this?! Thank you, thank you, thank you. You've just built a bridge to heaven for me!" - ***Tonya***

"You have originated a chocolate bar that is unforgettable. You are a genius as far as I'm concerned." - ***Renee***

"I love your chocolate. It makes me feel like I'm doing something good for myself instead of eating junk but it's also a treat. I also started adding your cocoa to my coffee. It is helping my cut down on coffee but still have a warm drink in the morning." - ***Suzanne***

"My husband and I are absolutely obsessed with Gnosis Chocolate, and I am normally not a huge fan of chocolate! We bought almost every flavor at Whole Foods last weekend" - ***Marisa***

"Gnosis chocolates are a godsend for someone like me who can't eat sugar. Gnosis bars do not give me a glycemic response. I love the peppermint bar and simplicity is great too." - ***Kristin***

"Love everything about your chocolates, your packaging, and your support of organic farmers all over the world! I have gotten the Passion Collection for each of the couples attending my Holistic Childbirth class on Valentine's Day." - ***Lesley***

"I purchased your chocolate (ZeroG, Simplicity, and Peppermint) for my husband who is a choc-aholic but cannot have dairy or sugar in his diet. He absolutely loved them and I just wish we had a local store that carried them. Will definitely be ordering in the future." - ***Connie***

"You guys have the best costumer service I've ever dealt with. I intend to buy from you for life. Gnosis is incorporated into my diet now and is essential." - ***Sam***

"Best chocolate, hands down, and a vital part of every day. Every single person I share this chocolate with goes crazy for it! Made with real care and love and with the best possible ingredients---I feel healthier and happier with a little bit of Gnosis Chocolate every day." - ***Laura***

"To put it mildly, I'm obsessed with your chocolate. I was never a real chocolate lover until I had the Fleur de Sel bar and I'm IN LOVE. The richness is way better than any non-vegan chocolate bar I've ever had and I can't go back!!

I finished ten bars in five days. 'Nuff said...
I got my office HOOKED! :)"
- ***Hillary***

"One of my clients who was struggling with her transition to a healthy vegan lifestyle from being a serious sugar/candy addict called me to report that when she tasted your chocolate it renewed her hope and gave her that certain something that was missing from her diet. She now feels she will surely succeed with this path!" - ***Taylor***

"The Gnosis chocolate I sent to Michigan for the special gathering was a HUGE HIT!! I've ordered from other companies before and yours was the best!" - ***Nancy***

"Please sell back in the Other Avenues in San Francisco! That is where I first bought your bars. They now have lots of imitations, but you remain the original." - ***Ana***

"Your chocolate is so good and I feel great about giving it to my 7 children for Valentine's Day knowing that's it's happiness for the body and soul" - ***Rose***

gnosis TESTIMONIALS

http://www.gnosischocolate.com/guestbook2

"I am allergic to chocolate. Or so I thought. But then I discovered Vanessa's chocolate. I can eat it with impunity, and I have no symptoms of allergy at all! And on top of that, Vanessa's chocolate is even more delicious than other chocolate. In fact, after I started eating it, other chocolate doesn't taste good to me anymore!" - ***Patricia***

"The bond between Sunfood and Gnosis is clearly meant to be. With all our back and forth about quality and ingreients, we can safely predict the result of introduction of Gnosis to our customers: a new generation of raw chocolate lovers, a new wave of superfood devotees, and a shift in attitudes which will be felt from New York to San Diego and all around the world! Words do a poor job of expressing our appreciation for the incredible grace and wisdom you have contributed throughout this process." - ***Sunfood Nutrition***

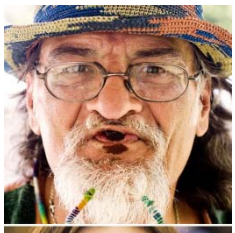
"Before I knew about Gnosis, my consumption of chocolate bars was about two per year. Let's say now that both joy of chocolate and consumption have increased - significantly!" - ***David***

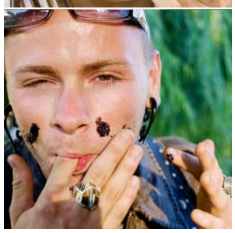
"I am pretty sure the Immune Boost chocolate bar helped me remain healthy while everyone near me succumbed to the flu, for which I am eternally grateful!" - ***Caroline***

"Chocolate Girl really is onto something. She is like the Ben & Jerry's of raw chocolate bars with her incorporation of the chunks fill-osophy!" - ***Rosie***

"I don't think I'll ever go back to eating ordinary chocolate ever again. Yours is sooo much better. You can taste the quality ingredients used and definitely feel all the LOVE put into making them" - ***Luis***

"I have to say this chocolate is the most delicious chocolate I have ever tasted. Also, the most surprising of all - my husband liked it and he doesn't like much. Bravo!" - ***Karen***





"Vanessa, I just love your chocolate and ordered a bunch for Christmas gifts. I was introduced to your Superchoc product by Dr. Alejandro Junger and his Clean Company team, based in NYC. I live in St. Louis and have tried to find dairy-free, organic, raw, refined-sugar free chocolate to no avail. Even my Whole Foods carries nothing similar. It would be so fantastic if you could work with the St. Louis Whole Foods in terms of distribution. Thank you for offering such a fabulous and healthy product!" - ***Trilogy***

"Dear Vanessa – I know that you will appreciate this little story.

Last night (Christmas Eve) my husband took me to my favorite restaurant for dinner. It was perfect. My husband ordered some scrumptious desert, which I do not eat, as I have not had any sugar in almost two years and I also eat organic food (and about 75% raw). The waiter brought over the desert for my husband and put a plate of desert in front of me. I started to say "no no – I can't . .. " and was promptly interrupted by my husband saying "YES. You can . . . "

I looked on the plate, and what was there, but an unwrapped bar of Gnosis Chocolate!!! My husband gone to Rising Tide earlier in the day and bought the Gnosis chocolate, brought it down to the restaurant, and arranged to have them serve this sumptuous tidbit to me for desert! You weren't there and yet, through the fruits of your labor of love, you brought me (also my husband, and the waiter!) such great joy!! Thank you so much…" - ***Jane***

January/February 2012 Vol. 9 Number 1

Organic Processing

Strategies for Best Practices in Food, Fiber and Personal Care

The International Market: Sourcing and Export

Gnosis' Raw-Some Chocolate

FDA's New Food Safety Rules

Social Media Leaders

Nonprocessing Handling

Adventures of Chocolate Girl:

Gnosis Masters the Art of Healthy Decadence

By Kat Schuett

When Vanessa Barg, a certified holistic health counselor, first started coaching people on how to improve their diets, there was one plea that she would hear time and again: "I'll give up anything else... soda, muffins, whatever, but *pleeeese* don't take away my chocolate."

While cacao is high in antioxidants as well as phenethylamine and anandamide—chemicals we naturally produce when we are happy—Barg couldn't condone the refined sugar and empty calories found in the existing chocolate confections her clients craved.

So Barg, a.k.a. Chocolate Girl, then just 23 years old, donned her cape (or apron) and started making the "healthiest chocolate in the world" out of her small New York kitchen—grinding raw organic cacao beans in her coffee maker and mixing it by hand with healing herbs and superfoods.

Word spread, and what began as a gift to motivate clients turned into a business a few months later when a store in Brooklyn called saying customers were requesting "Vanessa's Chocolate." Working through the night, she delivered her first order to the store the next day and in the three years that followed, she never had to make one sales call. Instead, hundreds more stores would call to ask for her Gnosis Chocolate—a name that means "intuitive knowledge, knowledge of the heart."

With Gnosis, Barg has successfully merged the seemingly mutually exclusive worlds of decadence and health, bringing to market raw, organic, vegan, diabetic-friendly chocolates that boast so many good-for-you ingredients they make broccoli blush...yet your taste buds tell you it's still a sinful indulgence. Today, Barg's healthy creations sit among the world's best on the "Fine Chocolate" shelves of the Food Emporium and Gnosis has its own section at select Whole Foods. Team Gnosis's chocolatier, trained by Valrhona in Paris and the former chocolatier at NYC's acclaimed Per Se restaurant, was just named one of *Dessert Professional's* Top 10 Chocolatiers in America.

Just shy of the million dollar sales mark, Gnosis already produces over 40 products—100 percent by hand—including 22 different chocolate bars, as well as truffles, spreads, trail

mixes, drinking chocolates, plus custom orders and private label products. What's even more impressive is that Barg has been able to do this without taking on partners, accruing debt, hiring brokers or marketing firms, or giving away chunks of her chocolate company in exchange for capital.

From the beginning, it has also been Barg's goal to create a product that is not only healthy for the body but also good for the planet and communities she works with. This has led to everything from ultra-eco-friendly packaging to projects to help children in Grenada and plant fruit trees for the hungry around the world. Through her regularly updated blogs and strong online community, Barg shares details on all of this as well as other issues she is passionate about—using her chocolate as a means to deliver a message as well as a healthy Rx.

With New Year's resolutions to eat healthier and do more good in the world—and Valentine's Day just around the corner—healthy, socially responsible chocolate may be the perfect answer. (And if you want to heat things to a whole new level of romance, try Chocolate Girl's Aphrodisia, available in a bar, as well as a "hot" chocolate mix.) From firing up your romance to cooling off your nerves, lowering your glycemic response to increasing your immunity—Chocolate Girl has a confection that can save the day.

Let Chocolate Be Thy Medicine

While chocolate may be a guilty pleasure to most, to Barg it's the ultimate delivery system for nutrition. "A focus in my practice was developing the skill of listening to the body's natural cravings and discovering healthful ways to satisfy them," she says. "I saw absolutely no reason to remove chocolate from my clients' diets since this cherished indulgence is one of the most nourishing foods on the planet for the body, mind and spirit, especially when the cacao is in its raw, unaltered state."

But raw cacao was just the first step. As a graduate of the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, a board-certified health counselor and a raw foodist with a passion for traditional, naturopathic medicines, Barg put together a host of superfoods, herbs and botanicals to infuse into her line of healthy chocolates. Each creation was specifically designed to perform a function and help the body's systems work in holistic harmony.

Chocolate-Dipped Health. In 2008, superfoods such as raw cacao beans, goji berries, maca and lucuma were becoming available thanks to raw food leader David Wolfe. Barg spent countless hours scouring the shelves of stores and searching the internet for sources of these ingredients and other medicinal herbs in bulk, and then packed as many into her chocolate as possible (while still making sure it was pleasing to the palate). The Immune Boost bar for example, contains over 20 ingredients to help prevent physical illness as well the winter blues. SuperChoc, Gnosis's number-one seller, is a fusion of ingredients used in Indian ayurvedic, Chinese and South American medicine. These include antioxidants, superfoods for the brain, healing tonics for the blood and adaptogens (shown to balance the hormonal system). Here are just a few super-ingredients used in SuperChoc:

- Blue-Green Algae: (in every Gnosis bar)shown to heighten clarity, concentration and creativity and stabilize mood swings. It's also made up of 50 to 70 percent protein and contains vitamins A, E, cyanocobalamin, niacin, choline, folic acid, thiamine, chlorophyll, copper, magnesium, zinc and potassium. Shown to have antiviral and anticancer properties, and linked to weight loss and lowering cholesterol.
- Maca Root: protein-packed, builds stamina, energy and sexual potency. Incan warriors took it to battle to increase strength and endurance.
- Siberian Ginsing: boosts the immune system and increases energy. It may also improve memory/concentration, regulate blood pressure, reduce inflammation and lower blood sugar levels.
- Gotu Kola: used for centuries as a tonic to benefit the brain and enhance cognitive function.
- Reishi Mushrooms: adaptogen and antiviral and anti-inflammatory that also assists in respiration by enhancing oxygen absorption.
- Ginkgo Biloba: helps improve blood flow within microcapillaries, which

Fighting Off a Cold (and Winter Blues) Has Never Tasted So Good

Gnosis' Immune Boost bar contains over 20 super-ingredients. Here are just a few:

- persimmons (vitamin A & C, fiber)
- pumpkin seeds (zinc, magnesium, l-tryptophan for depression)
- blood orange essential oil (aromatherapy: brightly antidepressant)
- fennel pollen (one of the only foods containing vitamin D)
- echinacea (activates white blood cells for immunity)
- rose hips (loaded with vitamin C, anthocyanins, anti-inflammatory)
- elderberry (anthocyanins enhance immune function by boosting the production of cytokines)l
- ginseng (ginsenosides for endurance, stamina, stress reduction)

works in concert with the reishi mushroom to increase the oxygenation of the blood.

These are just a fraction of the ingredients in one Gnosis bar. There are 20-some others we don't have room to discuss.

Other favorites are the Sacred Feminine bar which contains several herbs to balance hormones such as dong quai root("female ginseng").

And, Gnosis's Ahphrodisia bar is about much more than the horny goat weed. In the description, Barg notes that it's "about empowering passion, awakening compassion, strengthening your sense of connection with both people and with your own life's path. So don't be afraid to give an Aphrodisia to your grandmother and tell her how much you love her."

Sourcing. Since Barg's focus has been on quality, she has often removed ingredients she did not feel fit the bill. As an example, dried blueberries are not available without the addition of oils, so she changed her Blueberry Pomegranate bar to Pomegranate Acai. And everything, of course, had to be organic. While this proved relatively easy to do as the organic movement has brought certified organic options to almost every category, it was much harder to find raw ingredients because the raw foods industry was just beginning to emerge. However, certain ingredients, such as organic freeze-dried camu camu, have proved difficult to find because of low demand.

Sweet Alternatives. In addition to the super-ingredients, it was important to find healthier alternatives for refined sugar. She began with raw agave nectar, which is known for its low glycemic response. After hearing concerns about some agave on the market, she visited her supplier to verify that no additives were used and that it was minimally processed at low temperatures and shared this information with her consumers in www.gnosischocolate.com/agave-report. In addition to agave, Barg has also started making many of her products with coconut palm nectar, also low glycemic, but touted for its high potassium levels, which offset sodium to help improve heart health. Plus, Barg points out that palm nectar contains protein and gives her chocolate that "snap" that people expect. Gnosis will be launching several bars in 2012 with coconut palm sugar, and is also working on some new products sweetened with stevia.

> **"As one of the first** raw chocolate companies to grow to scale, I have felt the responsibility to advocate for the development of raw standards and protocols for quality assurance."

Raw: More Than Just Marketing Hype

Along with making sure her ingredients are certified organic, it was also important to Barg and her customers (many of whom are raw foodists) that the foods she was using were truly "raw," or not heated above 118ºF—the most common definition in the raw foodist community. Why is this important? Barg says, "The molecular structure of the raw food including enzymes, fats, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and, in chocolate, the neurotransmitters, are closer to their natural state. By eating more unprocessed, raw foods, our body's ability to function improves drastically. The same applies to chocolate!"

And Barg is not the only one who believes in the powers of raw food. Raw has become a fast-growing trend with raw food restaurants popping up everywhere and retailers setting up raw foods sections. In fact, in November 2011, Mary Jo Marks, the natural and organic category specialist for United Natural Foods Inc., announced raw foods as one of the top category trends. However, since the category is new, there are no defined rules or official standards for what "raw" means, and many who seek to capitalize on the trend use the term loosely.

"As one of the very first raw chocolate companies to grow to scale, I have felt the responsibility to advocate for the development of standards within the industry and protocols for quality assurance," says Barg. "There is no certification for raw as there is for organic, nor is there a way to 'test' for low-temperature processing as there is to test for pesticide residue. As a result, items subjected to high heat are able to pass on the market as 'raw' when, in fact, they are not."

To prove to herself and her customers the high integrity of Gnosis' raw claims, Barg has traveled to the countries of origin—Indonesia, Grenada, Mexico, Belize and France—with a thermometer in hand to track temperatures

throughout processing and a video camera to document the process. From this she created the "Raw Integrity Report" to explain to the market and to consumers what raw chocolate is, and what Gnosis does to ensure quality.

Even in the food industry itself, Barg found that the definition of raw food was not clear. "For example, in nut industry terminology, 'raw' simply means 'not roasted.' In this context, it's easy to understand why, even with the best of intentions, a company may mislead customers."

Barg says she chooses which countries/companies to source from based on their level of transparency, but she found it very difficult to get answers to many of her questions about raw verification. Big Tree Farms, co-owned by Dagoba Chocolate's founder Frederick Schilling, was one company that opened its doors and allowed her to follow the raw chocolate process firsthand.

One thing Barg learned from her Raw Integrity Project is that raw chocolate is no easy process. "Maintaining low temperatures during processing is not part of the normal production routine; it's more labor-intensive, time-consuming and costly," she points out.

Ensuring that cacao remains raw starts with controlling the fermentation process, which alone can go past 118ºF. In most cases, this fermentation is done at the farm level, but some raw cacao suppliers like Big Tree bring all the cacao to one place to better monitor the process. Next, while most cacao is roasted, raw cacao is instead dehydrated at very low temperatures. Most raw cacao suppliers stop here and just offer the raw cacao nibs.

Gnosis donates 15 percent of the purchase price from its REACH Grenada OrigiNib bar to fund Grenadian organic agriculture to help provide a stable economy that leads to healthier communities.

Making the cacao butter is the most challenging step. In traditional chocolate processing the pressure used to press the butter out is enough to bring it far over 118ºF. To date, Barg says that verifying the proprietary Big Tree process with her temperature gun made it the only source she can attest is making truly raw butter. "After seeing these internal control systems, I feel more confident in using these ingredients. I hope more manufacturers seek out opportunities to verify and personally connect with their supply chain," she says.

Socially/Environmentally Responsible Decadence

Holistic health is about more than what you eat. What about the communities that grow the chocolate, or the impact the product's packaging has on the health of the planet? Barg addresses these as well with several projects.

Helping Children via Chocolate. Many of the places in the world that grow cacao and other indulgent items live in poverty themselves. When Barg visited Grenada in 2009, she personally saw the children affected by a 40 percent unemployment rate and the degradation of infrastructure and agriculture after the 2004 hurricane. Many of these children had been orphaned and/or forced into prostitution. Inspired to help change the situation, she began working with REACH Grenada, which primarily works with children residing in Grenada's institutional care homes, many of whom are victims of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, neglect and abandonment.

Similar to her effort to prevent illness through her chocolate, Barg asked herself how she could prevent the tragedies she saw in Grenada. She came to the realization that by helping promote healthy, strong economies through organic agriculture, she would take away much of the root of the problem. So Barg created the REACH Grenada OrigiNib bar, and donates 15 percent of the purchase price to support Grenadian organic agriculture.

Gnosis Chocolate also donates 10 percent of its profits to The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation, whose mission is to plant a total of 18 billion fruit trees across the world and encourage their growth under organic standards. Gnosis also donates to: Doctors Without Borders, Housing Works, Wayuu Taya Foundation, Urban Zen, Integrative Nutrition and American Holistic Medical Association.

Green Packaging. Gnosis has also made a huge commitment to eco-packaging. All boxes are 100 percent recycled, 80 percent post-consumer recycled and Forest Stewardship Council Eco Box Certified. Plus, the inner

chocolate bar bags are biodegradable and trail mix bags are 100 percent home compostable. Labels are made of NatureFlex (wood fibers) and are FSC certified, certified compostable and the majority are printed with veggie-based ink.

Growth via Education

With no investors, partners or start-up funding, Gnosis has been profitable since inception.

The key to this success is not only great chocolate, but the work that Barg has done to educate consumers about company values and products.

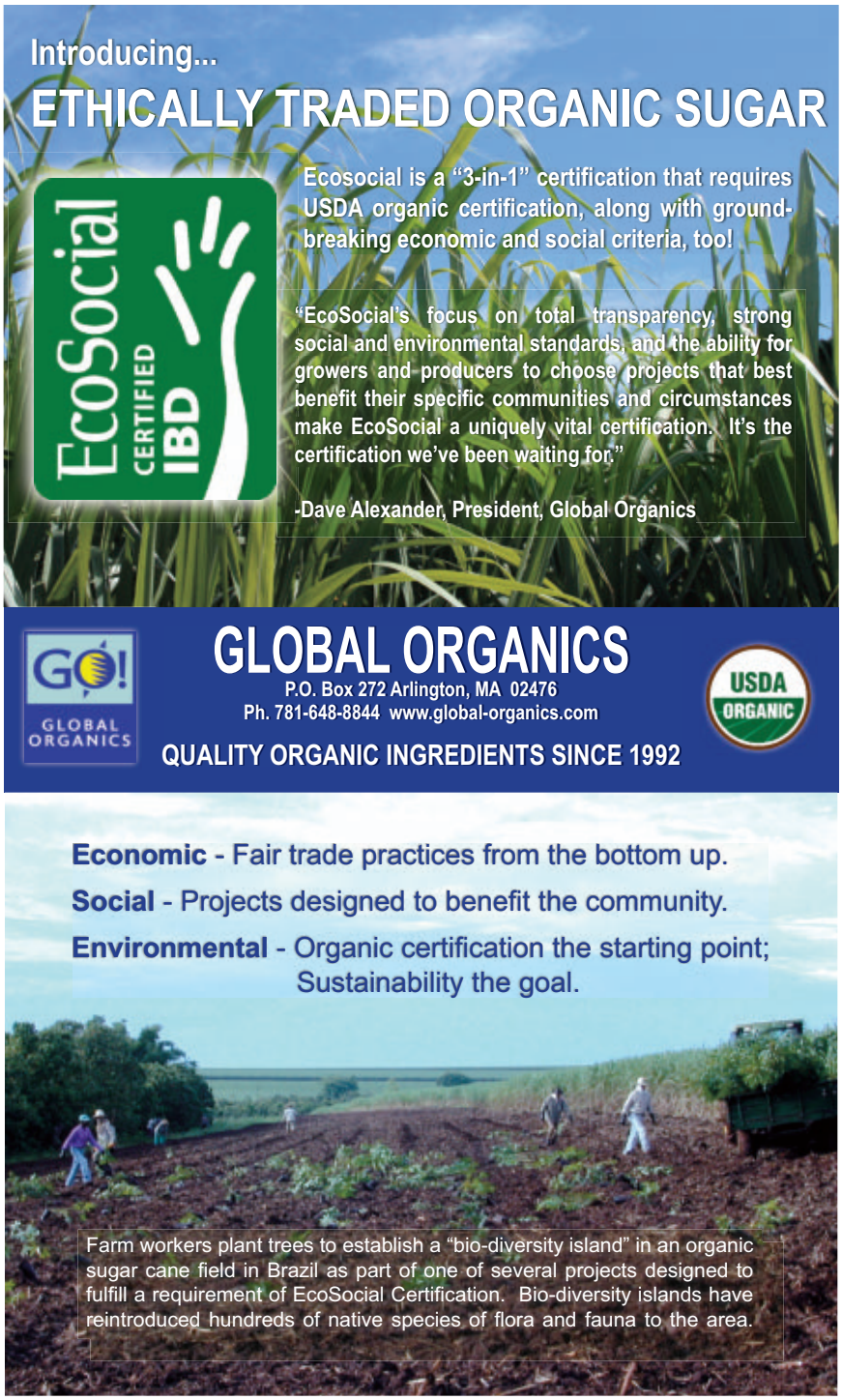
Gnosis' main marketing strategy is very grassroots, connecting with consumers via its website (which generates 20 percent of sales) and blog, a monthly newsletter (11k readers) and social media (10k fans/followers).

"Writing a blog and visiting suppliers cost a small fraction of what most companies allot for advertising and marketing," says Barg. She points to her Raw Integrity Report and Agave Report, which led to exposure on numerous websites and newsletters, helping educate many more consumers.

Through her personal Facebook page (which is maxed out), Barg provides information about the company, shares inspirational stories and quotes. She also uses it to promote other like-minded companies and ask questions that may inspire customers to step into their highest potential.

Events are also a big opportunity to educate. Gnosis has hosted dozens of community events, chocolate parties, health seminars and fundraisers. "I believe these events and community alliances are key elements in our growth," says Barg. "If we had assigned the budget to a sales force, distribution of free samples to prospective stores, advertising, etc., I don't think we would have connected with people on the same level."

And that connection is what her chocolate is about. For Barg, Gnosis chocolate is a delicious catalyst for change.

"Gnosis has proven to be an incredible platform for me to share information about health, well-being and how a consumer can vote for change in the marketplace with each dollar they spend. If Gnosis were just about manufacturing and selling healthy chocolate, I don't think I would be as satisfied as a human being," says Barg. □

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