

CAROLINE EVANS

An herbal life

You won't find many 30 year olds living in a village of just 27 people, picking and distilling their own herbs. But Caroline Evans is different. She swapped London for Pano Akourdaleia and here she explains why.

Despite her training as a master herbalist, Caroline Evans thinks she's too young to be a master and so sticks to naturopath and nutrition consultant when telling me what she does.

"As a naturopath I'm trained in the minimal of herbal medicine which means I can detox patients, I know about homeopathy and nutrition as well as hydrotherapy."

Herbs have always been a love of hers, growing them since she was a child and being influenced by her grandmother.

"When I was young, my grandparents would make their own home brews, like elderflower wine, which is probably where I get my love of distillation from. I also had a very natural upbringing firstly in Wales and then in the Middle East from the age of four until 12, where the living is all done outside. No sitting in front of the television, but outdoors making up your own games and playing with lizards."

She returned to London, "which ruined her a bit," where she studied nutrition, opening the door to herbalism.

"My studies actually began at 17 when I took a year between college and university and studied aromatherapy. That got me onto the path to becoming a practitioner. I then studied nutrition and have a degree in psychology."

As with most people who move to the sunny island, it all started with a holiday.

"I had a friend who was an Oriental doctor living here and I came to stay with him for a week. He introduced me to some people who I worked with the following year at a retreat in Pissouri bay, massaging and offering nutrition consultations. And through them I met someone who introduced me to the herb gardens where I now work, so it all happened through a chain of weird synchronicities. The nature and energy on the island is awesome and

doing what I do is much easier in a warm environment. In the UK it's cold and you crave carbohydrates and become sluggish. Here it's easier to eat fresher and different foods."

Once she began working at the herb garden called Chrysoeleousa, making only teas, she decided she wanted to train as an herbalist and naturopath and travelled to London practically every month for four years and maintained her business here.

"Everything I earned here went into my studies. But, thankfully, everything I learnt I could put straight into practice here. That's the hardest bit, putting everything into practice and prescribing the correct herbs."

As a naturopath and herbalist, Caroline treats her patients individually, and acts as a teacher in the sense she gives them the knowledge to help themselves.

"I put people on a programme of diets, and by diet I don't mean a calorie counted diet. Instead, I tell them what to avoid as the world is full of toxins. We have to flush our bodies out and give them what they need. I also try and treat people mentally and emotionally. In many cases the physical effects are the last expression of someone's illness. I love it when a patient allows me to treat them physically and emotionally. I explain to them the relationship between their symptoms and their diet and tell them to make slight adjustments. People are their own best doctor if they just listen to themselves."

So how does she find working in such a consumerist society as Cyprus?

"This might explain why I live in Pano Akourdaleia, a village with only 27 people. Re-education, which is my job, is very important. I find when I give lectures people will come and ask how can we connect



with nature in the middle of the city. I tell them they have to work with their own nature and use what's on the inside. If someone is constantly buying things they have to look inside and see what is lacking, what are they trying to replace? I tell them to embrace nature and take a walk in the park."

Some people may mistake what she does with homeopathy, but herbalism is ancient compared to homeopathy which is only a couple of hundred years old. Homeopaths use the essence of the essence of a product, whereas herbalists use the crude, hardcore herb.

"I think what homeopaths do is great but homeopathy was born out of herbalism so I'm one step before homeopaths."

And although Caroline often tells her patients to slow down, she's busier than most of us. Apart from the herb garden she has a 'healthy' kafeneion where she serves healthy organic wheat and gluten free cakes.

"My day is very sporadic, I wake up and head down to the couriers to send off some of my products, go to the kafeneion and see patients. I distil and go and harvest herbs and on certain days I will come down to Nicosia to see patients. In the summer I have distillation days, so people can come and see what I do and learn how to distil."

And if she could give people one piece of advice what would that be?

"We are what we think, feel and do so treat your body right."

Caroline will be exhibiting at the Mind, Body, Spirit exhibition in Limassol on April 16 and 17, and at the Health and Wellbeing exhibition in Paphos in May and is the co-founder of the Cyprus Herb Society. All those interested can find her at her herb garden in Pano Akourdaleia on Wednesdays to Sundays with Thursdays set aside as a patients day and every other Wednesdays are live distillation days. To arrange a meeting call her on 99 993412.

