

## MŌNO'I, THE MAGIC POLYNESIAN LOTION

For two thousand years, the *mōno'i*, a term taken into French where it became *monoï*, has perpetuated the image of the beauty of the *vahine* (Tahitian women) who use it in the daily care of their skin and hair. The idea behind *mōno'i* is made up of two elements: *mō* is a concept-word which refers to the state of civilisation, culture and reason as opposed to savagery and the state of untamed nature. The second term *no'i* refers to the notion of mixing, mingling, coming together. Thus we have *mōno'i*, the name given to that famous “perfumed oil” whose legendary and authentic preparation involves magical gestures, ancient and ancestral, together with precious and highly sought after ingredients. Hence its use during sacred rites practised in the archipelagos of the southern seas. This traditional beauty product, also used for therapy and treatment, and as a precious trading asset, is made from a fine mixture of mainly two products, both great symbols of Polynesian heritage: the coconut and the *tiare tahiti* flower.

The base of *mōno'i* is an oil obtained by hot pressing the dried kernel of the “ripe” coconut from the coconut palm *Cocos Nucifera*.

The *tiare tahiti* —*Gardenia Tahitientis*— is a small shrub in the Rubiaceae family which flowers all year round. Its regular snowy-white flowers stand out against the dark green of its glossy, smooth-edged leaves. The emblem of the island whose name it bears, the *tiare tahiti* possesses a unique perfume, powerful and soft, which immediately enchants the traveller...

*Mōno'i* is obtained by soaking the *tiare*, freshly picked in the afternoon, in coconut oil which has been refined for two to three weeks.

It is used daily for the whole family. Mothers like to anoint their babies with it after a bath to protect them from the cold and keep their skin soft. Surfers and divers use it after each trip to rehydrate the skin at risk from its exposure to salt, the burning rays of the sun and the strong winds. Because of its soothing and antiseptic properties, *mōno'i* is also used to help reckless victims of sunburn. *Mōno'i* is also part of the traditional pharmacopoeia. When extracts of other plants are added to it, it becomes an ointment for external use, by massage or as a remedy applied to the skin. These traditional recipes are passed down within families from one generation to the next. So, since time immemorial, the art of *mōno'i* massage, known as *taurumi*, has been practised in Polynesia. An important element of the traditional medicine of the Polynesians, or *rā'au tahiti*, and of their philosophy and customs, the *taurumi* is reputed to heal the body, mind and spirit all at the same time. It links touch to spirituality, energy and speech. *Taurumi* means to affix, to place the hands and feel, by massaging.

The *taurumi mōno'i* ritual is performed today in the most luxurious of Spas. Just imagine yourself lying on the surface of the water, your body bathed in sunlight, in the middle of a turquoise lagoon...

Imagine expert hands gently massaging you with this oil that envelops you in a perfumed mist. French Polynesia is the ideal destination to experience such a sensory escape. Here they practise real treatment rituals in which ancestral tradition and the Polynesian skill of today combine perfectly to give you unforgettable moments of magic.

This is a true waking dream which will excite your senses in the intoxicating scents of the *mōno'i tiare tahiti*.

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