COP31 SPECIAL ISSUE

COP31 KICKS OFF



THE BRIDGE
War and climate change are not separate problems – this platform was built on the premise that music can bridge the divide

CONNECTED CONSERVATION
Three organisations united by one shared vision: introducing innovative conservation in Armenia

BOSH! RECIPES
Plant-based cooks Henry and Ian share a bumper set of seasonal, festive recipes for everyone

THE ORGANIC ACTION PLAN
Soil Association Certification takes a closer look at the government's new vision for England's organic sector

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Welcome to My Green Pod Magazine!



Katie Hill, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
katie@mygreenpod.com

Türkiye and Australia, the hosts of COP31 climate talks (09-20 November), have come under fire after a new Global Witness investigation revealed the host nations' fossil fuel firms are planning to rapidly increase oil and gas production over the next decade.

The Global Witness report adds to a growing body of evidence that COP climate conferences are frequently hosted by nations with deeply entrenched fossil fuel interests and a pattern, dating back to at least 2023, of petrostates presiding over UN climate talks while planning significant fossil fuel expansion. This raises legitimate questions about the hosts' ability to lead efforts to reduce emissions and the ambition with which they approach negotiations; the IEA and UN climate body have warned that no new oil and gas production is compatible with the Paris Agreement's goal of keeping global heating as close as possible to 1.5°C.

In the 10 years since the Paris Agreement, Australian coal, gas and oil exports produced 12.4 billion tonnes of emissions. This equates to around a third of the entire European Union's domestic emissions for the same period, and more than the combined domestic emissions of the world's 44 'Least Developed Countries', as ranked by the UN.

Amnesty International has warned that COP31 'must amplify people power, not oil lobby voices', and grassroots groups are already stepping up to meet the challenge. One example is Global Citizen NOW: Perth, which has announced groundbreaking commitments to expand reliable, affordable and renewable electricity to 4.8 million homes across the Indo-Pacific and around the world.

We don't all have a seat in the negotiating rooms, but we can apply pressure and highlight working alternatives to the pursuit of profit at all costs. This COP31, use your voice to call out the solutions you want to see in the world.



ABOUT US

My Green Pod is an independent, family-run UK business, founded by Katie Hill and Jarvis Smith. We want to share the real stories behind the brands and people working tirelessly to offer ethical alternatives to mainstream products and services. You might not see these options on the high street and they may not be the first to appear in online searches. But they are on **mygreenpod.com**. Use the search bar to find conscious lifestyle inspiration – and you could save some cash along the way!

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81%
of 11- to 17 -year-olds worldwide don't get an hour of daily physical activity





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4.4 out of 5


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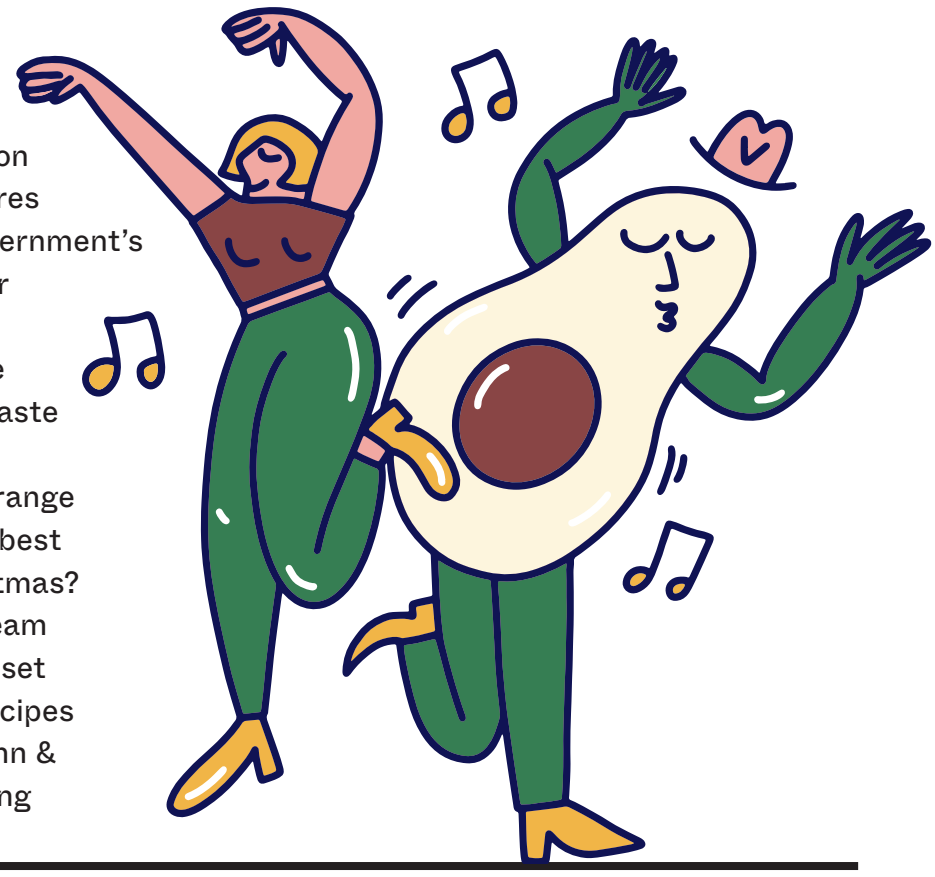
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CONNECTED CONSERVATION

Three organisations with one shared vision for people & nature

At a time when environmental, social and economic challenges are becoming increasingly interconnected, three organisations are coming together around a shared belief: lasting sustainability depends on reciprocity. When businesses support communities, communities help protect nature and healthy ecosystems underpin both livelihoods and economies, everyone benefits.

World Land Trust (WLT), Puro Coffee (Puro) and the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) have announced a collaborative partnership founded on a simple principle: when organisations recognise their interdependence and work towards shared goals, they can create far greater impact than any one organisation could achieve independently.

While each organisation brings a different perspective and its own unique expertise, they share a common belief that thriving businesses, resilient communities and healthy ecosystems are fundamentally connected.

The partnership demonstrates how organisations from different sectors can come together around a shared vision of long-term sustainability, recognising that environmental protection, community wellbeing and economic resilience are not competing priorities but mutually reinforcing outcomes.



CONSERVATION IN THE CAUCASUS

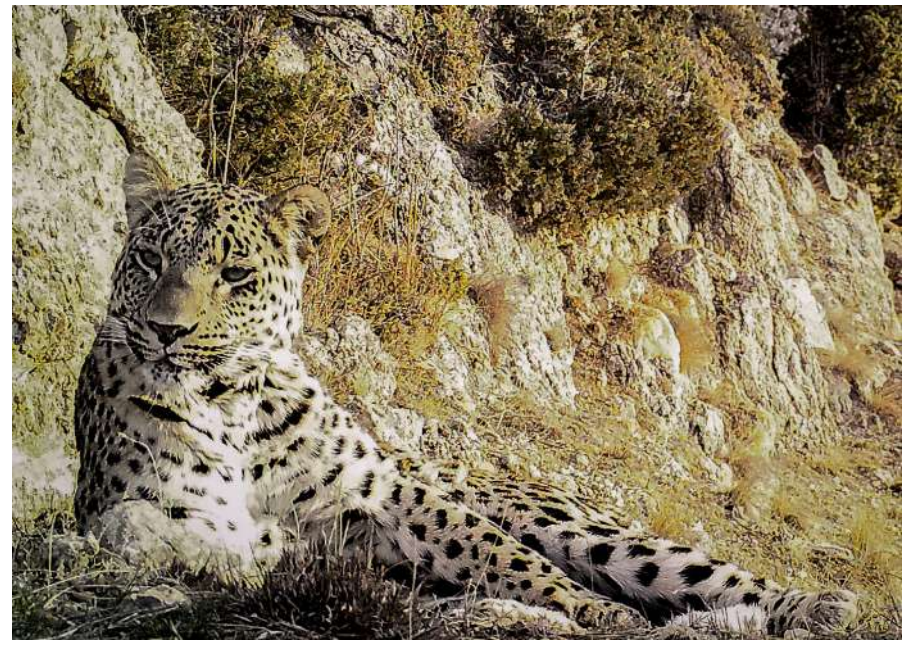
The collaboration will support an innovative conservation initiative in Armenia, led by FPWC, to strengthen ecological connectivity around the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge. The project will secure the long-term protection of 3,000 hectares of high-biodiversity habitat through an approach that combines conservation, community partnership and renewable energy. The area helps connect a wider landscape of approximately 30,000 hectares, creating vital ecological connectivity for species such as the Persian leopard, which can require territories of up to 10,000 hectares.

For FPWC, one of Armenia's leading conservation organisations, the collaboration strengthens efforts to protect and connect critical habitats while developing more sustainable approaches to long-term conservation finance. At the same time the partnership reflects WLT's long-standing commitment to supporting locally led conservation solutions that deliver lasting impact for both people and wildlife.

For Puro, whose business has long championed the relationship between commercial success and positive environmental and social outcomes, it represents a practical demonstration of how businesses can contribute to solutions that extend beyond their own operations.

The partnership comes at a significant moment for Puro; as 'the coffee of COP17', Puro Coffee will be served across conference zones throughout the event. Through the partnership, coffee sales will help to support conservation outcomes in Armenia, helping to demonstrate how everyday commercial activity can contribute to the wider ambition of 'protecting the best and improving the rest'.









A NEW FUNDING MODEL

At a time when many conservation projects face increasing pressure to secure long-term financial sustainability, the partnership explores how business, communities and conservation organisations can work together to create more resilient funding models for nature. Together, the organisations are supporting a project that seeks to address one of conservation's greatest challenges: how to create lasting protection for nature without relying solely on continual external funding.

The initiative includes the development of a solar energy project that will generate revenue to support the long-term lease and protection of biodiversity-rich land. The goal of the project is to create lasting benefits for nature by linking renewable energy generation with habitat protection. This is a practical example of reciprocity in action: using technology to extend help to wildlife.

UNITED BY COMMON PURPOSE

The protected landscape forms part of the South-Eastern Lesser Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot and provides important habitat for endangered species including the Persian leopard, Syrian brown bear and Armenian mouflon. It also helps maintain ecological connections between existing protected areas and future restoration sites across the wider landscape.

Yet the significance of the partnership extends far beyond a single project; it represents a broader belief that many of today's most pressing challenges require collective action and shared responsibility. Businesses depend on healthy ecosystems. Communities depend on resilient landscapes. Conservation depends on strong local partnerships and sustainable sources of support. When these relationships are recognised and strengthened, everyone benefits.

CLOCKWISE
Wildflowers bloom in Armenia's Caucasus Wildlife Refuge; the Persian leopard requires up to 10,000 hectares of connected territory; twin lakes in the wildlife refuge; the bearded vulture calls the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge home; brown bear cubs roaming wild in the reserve; looking out across Tigranashen, an important wildlife migration corridor

This partnership between WLT, Puro and FPWC is an example of what that approach can look like in practice: organisations with different strengths, working together towards a common purpose and creating positive outcomes that extend beyond any one sector.

This will become Puro Coffee's 30th Nature Reserve, contributing to a network of reserves spanning more than 100,000 hectares globally. For World Land Trust, it builds on a partnership model that has helped protect more than 1.4 million hectares of habitat and support the connection of more than 8.3 million hectares of landscapes worldwide, helping wildlife move more freely across increasingly fragmented ecosystems.

For FPWC, this is the first step towards funding land protection through community-owned renewable energy rather than donor grants alone. The new area also strengthens FPWC's contribution to Armenia's progress towards the global 30x30 target agreed under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Protecting nature is not just about protecting wildlife; it is about recognising the connections that bind us all, and the power of partnership to build a more sustainable future.

Find out more

- Information about WLT and its projects is at **worldlandtrust.org**

CHANGING THE GAME

Aaron Ableman explains how the Gaia Ball will help to bring joy to the next revolution in education

I grew up on a 12-acre urban organic farm in California's Goleta Valley, the son of a farmer and a public health nurse. My education came from soil, seasons, animals and games played with balls of woven sticks; our species learned this way for hundreds of thousands of years.

That upbringing shaped the question to which I keep returning: what is essential in a child's day, and how can technology serve it instead of replacing it?

Research suggests we have the order backwards. According to Common Sense Media, American teens averaged 8 hours and 39 minutes a day on screens for entertainment in 2021, not counting schoolwork. Globally, a WHO study of 1.6 million students in 146 countries found that 81% of 11- to 17-year-olds don't get the recommended hour of daily physical activity. Its lead author linked part of that decline to digital play displacing active play.

We face existential crises and are raising what has been called 'the anxious generation'. The least we can do is return to the tried-and-true practices that lead children back to balance.



The Gaia Ball is the first modern eco-football that encourages outdoor play for young people of every background

WHEN CHILDREN CHANGE

I spent two decades working with children: through hospital arts programmes, enrichment classes in low-income schools and a touring hip-hop musical, *Pacha's Pajamas*. I saw the same pattern everywhere: children rarely changed because they were given more information – they changed when they were moved by story, by play and by being trusted with something real to do.

The research is clearer than most people realise. In 2018 the American Academy of Pediatrics published a clinical report arguing that play is not frivolous; it builds executive function, the capacity to plan, focus and ignore distraction, and helps regulate the body's stress response. The authors went as far as to urge paediatricians to write prescriptions for play.

The report also notes that play matters even more for children facing adversity. In one study it cites, anxious preschoolers given 15 minutes of play showed twice the stress relief of peers who listened to a story. That finding matters most where childhood is hardest. At the end of 2025, UNHCR counted 117.8 million people forcibly displaced worldwide. Children make up 29% of the global population but 39% of the displaced. In camps and under-resourced schools, the scarce resource is rarely information; it is safe, structured, joyful time with other children. That is the design problem behind the Gaia Ball.

STORYTELLING THROUGH SPORT

A large share of the world's footballs, more than 200 million a year, are made and stitched in Pakistan. Their outer shells are usually polyurethane or PVC, plastics made from petroleum. We set out to make



a ball from entirely natural materials that performs as well as any ball on the market, without harming health or becoming waste in the places children live. The ball launched at the official Earth Day celebration in New York's Times Square, and has been shortlisted for a UK sustainability award.

Football, the world's most popular sport, requires no electricity, instructions or shared language. The QR code on each Gaia Ball adds a layer of stories, lessons and activities from the Gaia's Game universe. The bridge runs both ways: a child who has played can scan the ball and meet characters and messages behind the game. A child who finds the stories first is led back to the field, and back into their body. Our collaborations extend that content.

PUTTING TECH IN ITS PLACE

With the Frequency School, founded in 2024 by the producer Maejor, we are adding music and self-regulation practices. The science here is promising: a 2010 study from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology found that four-year-olds who made music together were more likely to help each other afterwards.

Our goal is to get millions of Gaia Balls to refugee programmes, low-income schools, orphanages, frontline communities and grassroots leagues that lack equipment. We intend to share what we learn: what social-emotional and ecological literacy develops naturally through play; whether the digital content increases or decreases outdoor play and cooperation and what teachers and coaches observe. The aim is not to remove tech from childhood but to put it in the right order.

You cannot lecture a child into ethical purpose. You can only let them practise it, again and again, inside something that feels like play.

If you run a foundation, brand, school, league, or programme serving young people and families and want to help test this approach, or you have research that could sharpen it, we would love to collaborate.

ABOUT AARON ABLEMAN

Aaron is a UN acclaimed creative & polymath, CEO & founder of Gaia's Game Inc. and a founding producer/ambassador of the ORIGIN Initiative. He is the bestselling author of Pacha's Pajamas and Gaia's Game, alongside others books like Welcome to Earth and Rebels of Kindness.

Find out more

- Information about Gaia's Game and the Gaia Ball is at **gaiasgame.com**

HERO PRODUCTS

Introducing our November Heroes!
We've picked these products because we believe they are all best in their class for people and the planet. They represent simple, sustainable switches that will help to keep you, your home and the planet healthy – without compromising on experience or performance!

View all our Heroes at mygreenpod.com/heroes

HEALTH & BEAUTY

FYSHA SOLID VEGAN CLEANSER

With rose geranium and French red clay, this concentrated cleanser treats cleansing as skincare – not simply the step before it.

mygreenpod.com/heroes/fysha-rose-geranium-french-red-clay-solid-vegan-cleanser



HOME & GARDEN



KEEP THIS CRACKER REUSABLE CRACKERS

A reusable and plastic-free alternative to the standard disposable cracker, with pet-friendly ecosnap®. Set of six.

mygreenpod.com/heroes/keep-this-cracker-six-reusable-crackers-red-jewel-design

RE-WRAPPED WRAPPING PAPER

Gift wrap made using 100% recycled post-consumer waste unbleached pulp and vegetable-based inks.

mygreenpod.com/heroes/re-wrapped-wrapping-paper



FOOD & DRINK

VINTAGE ROOTS ORGANIC EVERYDAY

Three white wines, three red wines – all organic and all delicious.

mygreenpod.com/heroes/vintage-roots-organic-everyday





BETTER FOOD TRADERS

Buy delicious, seasonal groceries and organic veg boxes from your nearest producers.

mygreenpod.com/heroes/better-food-traders

ORGANICO ORGANIC OLIVE OIL

Lovingly created by a small, family-run producer in Tulette, on the Côtes du Rhône wine trail.

mygreenpod.com/heroes/organico-organic-olive-oil



TOP 5 NOVEMBER SWITCHES

1

Looking for a sustainable stocking filler? The Huskup eco coffee cup is made from rice husk – with no melamine, no plastic, no BPA and no toxins.

@huskup_eco
mygreenpod.com/heroes/huskup-eco-coffee-cup

2

The gift for the person who has everything: tickets for Valley Fest 2027 are now on sale! This festival is a magical wonderland where the young at heart – whatever their age – can run free.

@valleyfest
mygreenpod.com/heroes/valley-fest

3

Treat your pet this Christmas: The Conscious Way Pet Dog Wash is the first UK-made organic shampoo for dogs. Kind, gentle and effective, it lathers well but rinses out easily.

@the.conscious_way
mygreenpod.com/heroes/the-conscious-way-pet-dog-wash

4

For a gift that really gives – for generations to come – Buy An Acre with World Land Trust. Protecting land, acre by acre, is the best action to ensure a future for wildlife.

@worldlandtrust
mygreenpod.com/heroes/world-land-trust-buy-an-acre

5

You can mark any special occasion or moment with Tree2MyDoor. It sends trees and plants as unique, meaningful gifts, offering a long-lasting, eco-friendly alternative to mass-produced presents.

@Tree2MyDoor
mygreenpod.com/heroes/tree2mydoor-tree-of-life-gift

Preparing for DISRUPTION

Kevin Chan, CEO of Epitome Global, lifts the lid on 'the sustainable workforce'

As ever, this month's COP (09-20 November) will focus on how to alleviate the climate crisis – from accelerating the green energy transition to controlling carbon emissions, with the aim of creating a more sustainable world for us to live in. But it'll also address the growing recognition that climate change impacts the economy as well as the environment, and that sustainability within business must be a total state of mind.

Increasingly, investors are not only looking at companies' performance but also at how prepared they are to deal with disruption to their business model. In other words, how resilient and sustainable they are to future challenges, whether technological or climate-based.

Just as corporations are compelled to calculate their carbon footprint, we need to start measuring the sustainability of the company as a functioning, organic entity – with the workforce as its beating heart – to demonstrate preparedness for whatever might happen.

RECLAIMING SUSTAINABILITY

If you were to mention the word 'sustainability' in connection with business, most companies would point to initiatives such as recycling, carpooling and smart lighting – small but nonetheless important gestures towards working in a more environmentally friendly way.

For larger companies, sustainability is bound up with corporate social responsibility (CSR) and getting a green tick on their website. Yet the concept of sustainability in business stretches far beyond the 'green' agenda.

Sustainability has come to mean being kind to the planet – but that's only half the story. At its heart, sustainability is about making the best of the resources we have – and that means our people as much as our planet.

We need to reclaim sustainability in a workforce context. Rather than just measuring our CO2 emissions, we have to start properly measuring our people if we're to be ready to change and adapt as business and economic circumstances rapidly evolve. We need to develop a viable and durable 'workforce sustainability' model.



Epitome Global was awarded 'Digital with Purpose (DwP) Committed' certification by GeSI (Global Enabling Sustainability Initiative) at the organisation's recent summit in Shenzhen, China

A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

In simple terms, workforce sustainability is about retaining, nurturing and redeploying people with a long-term view instead of constantly firing and hiring. It's also about developing an enduring workplace culture that runs on shared values and goals. What it isn't about is ping pong tables in the canteen or annual wellbeing surveys. Rather than just paying lip service to inclusivity or work-life balance, it's about assembling a team whose skills, capabilities and aspirations are recognised and harnessed to their greatest potential. In other words, a team that feels both seen and valued.

However, achieving a strong level of workforce sustainability requires a lot more than just occasional meetings with line managers and mission-statement away days. In fact, companies need to take a leaf out of the green sustainability playbook and come up with accurate ways of developing long-term talent pipelines – measuring not only how employees are performing, but also understanding what their potential is: where they could go within the company in the future and what needs to happen to get them there.

MEASURING EMPLOYEE CAPABILITIES

It's an odd situation that, beyond pre-existing qualifications and corporate milestones, most companies tend to have a poor understanding of the people who work for them. As we've already seen, most corporate boards can tell you their carbon footprint, but ask them about the capability footprint of their workforce and the room goes quiet.

That's because HR departments simply aren't oriented in this way. They know headcount, payroll and attrition rates. They have files of exit interviews and might administer regular reviews against pre-set KPIs. But so much of this data is formulaic and backward-looking; there's little effort to measure and understand the workforce's potential and assess unique capabilities. There's no insight into how individuals within the organisation could adapt and change as the business develops. Simply put, there's no workforce sustainability model in place.

Environmental sustainability has become a board-level discipline because measurement made key indicators sufficiently visible to influence decision-making. For workforce sustainability to become similarly influential, the same shift needs to take place: we need to begin measuring employee capabilities at an individual level in order to understand business resilience before disruption arrives.

AVOIDING CORPORATE MYOPIA

At the moment, we're seeing exactly what happens when a workforce sustainability model isn't in place. AI is the latest example of a new and effectively unforeseen development suddenly disrupting the standard business model. Many companies have panicked and made rash, ill-informed decisions, sacking people they assumed were excess to requirements before quickly finding out that they'd cut essential workforce they then had to re-employ for more money. Needless to say, this is the opposite of workforce sustainability, as well as being an expensive and inefficient way to run a business.

The irony is that we've been here before – only a few years ago. When Covid hit in 2020, many companies started cutting jobs; they were terrified of what was happening to their bottom line and gave little thought to what would happen when the situation changed. Rather than planning for the future and treating the workforce as a valuable, sustainable resource, they hacked away at the very roots of their business, which made re-growth a much more difficult process than it ever should have been.

The aviation industry offers the clearest example of how Covid induced a wave of corporate myopia around the world. With planes grounded, a lot of carriers cut hard into their workforces – and then spent the recovery period hurriedly buying back their own talent, rehiring pilots in record numbers at inflated wages amid a global shortage of skilled personnel. Like AI, Covid represented a major disruption to business – and similarly resulted in an outbreak of blinkered short-termism.

Yet there was at least one carrier that understood the concept of the sustainable workforce. Instead of responding to Covid by blindly laying off staff, a Southeast Asian aviation group I worked with took the time to measure and understand what the 3,000 affected employees were actually capable of, beyond their job titles. By redeploying them into new roles, it retained 87% of its staff and cut redundancy costs by more than 80%. It was able to do this because it had proper visibility of its employees and the individual talents and qualities they each possessed.

A REAL-TIME PROCESS

So how can companies sensibly resist the impulse to cut their workforce whenever disruption occurs and move instead to a more sustainable employment model? As I said, the measurement of people is vital – but I don't mean the rear-view mirror perspective that HR currently has. Instead, workforce measurement has to become an ongoing, real-time process that produces a validated, evidence-based view of each and every employee.

In order to develop a long-term sustainable workforce strategy, there are three key indicators that organisations must measure if they are to adapt and endure going forward.

The first is capability coverage. Define the capabilities you're going to need over the next three years and compare that against current evidence of skills and experience. This indicates how much required capability is already present, where it's concentrated and which gaps need to be filled.

Secondly, how flexible is your workforce? How well matched are employees to the work they do today, and how many have the profile – skills, but also qualities and motivation – to move into the roles that will emerge tomorrow? It shows which transitions appear viable and what development each would require. For instance, who's ready to be stretched, who could benefit from retraining and who needs more time before stepping into a critical role?

Thirdly, does your workforce derive a sense of purpose from what they do, and is it aligned with where the company is going? This is important because employees who are invested in a company's goals will be more willing to learn and adapt as the workplace continues to evolve.

How does this actually work in practice? With these three key indicators acting as a guide, employees are regularly measured against a set of criteria and assessed in terms of the overarching direction of the company.

Using AI, the results can be combined with relevant role and workforce data not only to produce a 360-degree view of the individual's current status, but also to uncover future potential. There may be ongoing arguments about how useful AI actually is in the workplace, but one thing it's undeniably good at is analysing large datasets like this to uncover previously unseen connections and insights. Think of it as mapping the company's genome, and using that information to create an index of workforce sustainability.



'As the demands of business become increasingly complex and subject to ongoing disruption – whether from AI or climate-related economic shock – we need to develop workforces that are durable, flexible and built for the long term'

KEVIN CHAN
CEO OF EPITOME GLOBAL

A FUTURE-PROOFED WORKFORCE

While the climate emergency is unarguably pressing, the reason that sustainability as an environmental cause has dominated the corporate narrative is because it's based around things that can be measured. It has proved attractive to organisations because they've been able to demonstrate compliance against specific metrics. We need to adopt a similar class of demonstrable metrics to promote a culture of workforce sustainability.

As the demands of business become increasingly complex and subject to ongoing disruption – whether from AI or climate-related economic shock – we need to develop workforces that are durable, flexible and built for the long term, rather than treat them as disposable commodities. We need to measure, identify and nurture the talent that already exists in the workforce and be ready to adapt as necessary, because that's what real sustainability looks like in the workplace.

Find out more

- Information about Epitome Global and its workforce tools is at **epitome.global**

The slow glow

Natural beauty expert **Janey Lee Grace** shares how to nurture yourself naturally this autumn & winter



As the clocks go back and the evenings draw in, nature shows us what to do: slow down, draw inward and conserve energy. Yet we often do the opposite, and end up pushing harder on less sleep, more caffeine and central-heated skin.

This season, take time for rest, nourishment and consistent, gentle care that's kind to the planet as well as your body and mind. A warm bath, a few drops of well-diluted essential oil and 10 unhurried minutes signal to your body that the day is done. Switch off the screens, light a candle and let the day go.



WINDING DOWN

Darker evenings naturally help your body kick in to wind-down mode – and Penny Price Aromatherapy can help your mind switch off as well. The Luxurious Aromatherapy Wind Down Rituals Collection (£36.20) comprises a Wind Down Bath Foam and Body Moisturiser, Dream Pillow Spray and Dream Rollerball. It's targeted bedtime aromatherapy that will bring the spa to your own home!

FEED YOUR SKIN

Cold winds and indoor heating strip moisture from our skin. A rich, plant-based balm helps lock it in, and Weleda's Skin Food (£15.95) remains a winter staple for good reason. Its blend of plant oils and herbal extracts works on rough patches like hands, elbows and cheeks. A little goes a long way, which will suit anyone who wants to buy less and use better.



NOURISH FROM WITHIN

Skincare is only half the story. Winter comfort food is wonderful, but heavier meals can leave us feeling sluggish, and that doesn't help when we're trying to feel our best. Amíu's Meal Prep (£46) is designed to be taken alongside meals, with the aim of helping you feel lighter and more comfortable after eating so you can enjoy the season's feasts without the heaviness.

COLLAGEN BOOST

For those who want extra support for their skin, Nature Provides' Collagen Protocol+ (£36.65) takes a thoughtful, quality-first approach. Each four-capsule serving provides 2,000mg of type I marine collagen tripeptides from single-origin tilapia, a low-molecular weight form chosen for absorption rather than sheer quantity. It's combined with hyaluronic acid, Mesoporosil® (a bioavailable form of silicium), natural astaxanthin and organic amla berry, a source of vitamin C. Vitamin C contributes to normal collagen formation for the skin, and manganese contributes to normal connective tissue formation.



CLOCKWISE
The iconic Weleda Skin Food; Amíu's Meal Prep capsules; Meraki Cacao's range of raw Peruvian cacao; Nature Provides Collagen Protocol+ and the Penny Price Aromatherapy Wind Down Rituals Collection





The capsules are flavourless, with no mixing or gritty texture, and can be opened into food or drinks. They were developed by certified nutritionist Rachel Aceso and have no fillers, binders, flavourings or preservatives. They're not suitable for vegans though.

GIFTS THAT GIVE BACK

The best presents at this time of year are the ones that encourage someone to pause. Skip the landfill-bound novelty and choose something to be used, tasted and savoured, whether it's for a friend or for yourself. Treating yourself isn't indulgent in the dark months – it's a kindness.

For something edible, try Meraki Cacao; these handmade bars and drinks are made from raw organic Peruvian cacao, stoneground for many hours before being tempered into bars. Free from dairy, soya, palm oil and refined sugar – it's sweetened with Palmyra blossom nectar instead.

THE GENTLEST BEAUTY

Nothing here asks you to overhaul your life. A bright shower, a quiet bath, a balm, a lighter meal, a little support from within: these small, repeated acts add up to something sustainable for you and for the planet. This winter, make rest the new radiance.

Find out more

- Discover more of Jane's organic beauty recommendations at **imperfectlynatural.com**



ORGANIC ACTION

Soil Association Certification's **Paige Tracey** shares the government's new vision for our organic sector

The UK government has unveiled its new plan to grow the organic sector. The Organic Action Plan for England, announced by Defra on 14 October, was an exciting moment at Soil Association Certification; the plan – the culmination of painstaking work by us, the English Organic Forum and others – is the biggest policy change for organic farming in England in nearly 25 years.

During the Organic Trade Conference in October, it was particularly reassuring to hear Under Secretary of State Stephen Morgan MP say in a video address: 'Organic is a priority for this government and we recognise the contribution the sector can make to profitable farming, a healthier natural environment and growth across the food supply chain.'

BOOSTING ORGANIC PRODUCTION

The plan recognises the benefits of organic systems for soil, water, wildlife and animal welfare, and includes an ambition to increase England's organic farmland from around 3% today to 10% in the next decade.

Demand for organic food remains high in the UK – the latest figures from Nielsen show volume growth of organic sales in supermarkets is five times that of non-organic – yet the area of organic farmland in England has remained at around 3% for many years. This has resulted in the demand too often being met by imports. Increasing organic production in England would offer an opportunity to reduce our reliance on imported food and ensure the wider benefits, including increased biodiversity and better soils, are seen at home as well as abroad.





CLOCKWISE The Organic Action Plan aims to boost England's organic farmland from around 3% to 10%; Alex Cullen, Soil Association Certification's commercial & marketing director, speaking at the Organic Trade Conference; Stephen Morgan MP's video address at the Organic Trade Conference

More organic production will also reduce our reliance on imports in other ways. Organic farming's avoidance of fossil-fuel derived nitrogen fertilisers and pesticides will reduce the need for these to be imported, reducing vulnerability to fuel shocks and disruption to global supply chains. As English farmers deal with increasing extreme weather events, including our incredibly dry summer this year, organic farming can also help to build resilience on farms, including healthier, more resilient soils.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

In addition to the ambition to increase organic farmland to 10%, delivery of the Organic Action Plan for England will be assessed against four other key outcomes, including goals to close the gap between imports and exports of organic goods and increase domestic organic production. Reductions in fertiliser and pesticide use delivered by organic conversion will also be assessed.

Growth in the knowledge and understanding of organic production among farmers, growers and consumers will be monitored, as will any sustained increases in the share of organic food within public procurement settings.

FUNDING THE TRANSITION

We know there is demand from farmers to convert to organic, but ring-fenced funding is needed to ensure they can make the initial transition. This was made evident when the entire £233 million SFI (Sustainable Farming Incentive) budget was allocated within a few hours in September, going faster than tickets to an Oasis concert. For farmers to make that transition and for existing organic businesses to prosper, stronger, ring-fenced financial support will be needed, and Soil Association Certification and other parties will continue to engage with Defra as the plan develops to ensure that funding is going to those who need it.

SUCCESS IN SCOTLAND

Government-backed organic action plans are a recognised strategy for increasing organic farmland and opening new market opportunities.

Following a target to double organic land area, a plan for Scotland was launched in partnership with the Scottish government this year. The political will is already showing sharp increases in organic land area, including a 28% increase from 2024.

The action plan is also opening up new avenues for Scottish organic food and drink across local authorities and the public sector. Glasgow Caledonian University, for example, has begun sourcing its milk from Mossgiel Organic Dairy in Ayrshire and Mungoswells organic flour from East Lothian. Small swaps like this add up to big changes, keeping more money in the local economy and improving the biodiversity on farmland.

BREAKING BARRIERS

While it is still early days, we are positive that the Organic Action Plan for England is the natural fertiliser we need for the green shoots of progress that have already been made. We are hopeful and confident the plan will deliver for farmers, businesses and all key players across the organic sector.

A key ask to organic businesses at the Trade Conference was to consider what they could source from the UK that they don't currently; we hope that the plan will not only grow farmland but break down the supply chain barriers for all local and organic businesses, too.

Find out more

- Information about why organic farming matters is at **soilassociation.org/what-we-do/championing-organic**

Tackling food waste

The team at Olio asks: are we on the brink of a food waste revolution?



PHOTOGRAPHY ISTOCK

A new item has been introduced to kitchens across the country: a food waste caddy. With weekly food waste collections rolling out across England, millions of us are seeing – sometimes for the first time – exactly how much food we throw away each week. It has put food waste firmly in the spotlight; the issue has been making headlines and filling social feeds.

This attention is long overdue, because food waste is one of the most overlooked drivers of the climate crisis – and one of the easiest to fix.

FOOD WASTE & THE CLIMATE

For something we do without thinking, food waste carries a huge climate cost. With more than a billion tonnes of edible food binned worldwide every year, food loss and waste accounts for around 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Every wasted item carries with it all the water, land, energy and transport that went into producing it, plus the methane it gives off as it rots in landfill. Waste the food and you waste all of that, too.

Here in the UK, Wrap estimates we throw away 10.2 million tonnes of food every year. Some of that happens further up the chain – on farms, in factories and in the shops and restaurants we buy from – but the biggest portion of that waste comes from our own homes. Households are responsible for around 60% of all UK food waste, and most of it is food that could have been eaten.

A lot of the waste comes down to small, everyday things: the confusion between use-by and best-before dates, fridges running warmer than the recommended 5°C and uncertainty around how to use up the foods we bin most, like bread, milk and potatoes.

By scraping food waste into a separate bin, we can see exactly how much we're throwing away – and the real win is that a full caddy can be turned into energy or compost rather than releasing methane in landfill.

ARE BUSINESSES NEXT?

Households are being asked to take food waste seriously, and the encouraging news is that attention is turning to businesses, too. The UK government has considered requiring large companies to measure and report their food waste, a move backed by industry groups, environmental organisations and many retailers. What gets measured gets managed, and reporting would help show where surplus food can be put to better use.

Some countries are already ahead of the curve. The EU now requires food waste to be measured to a common standard, with reduction targets on the way. France goes further still, with a 2020 law that encourages supermarkets to donate (rather than bin) unsold edible food. Together, they're proof that the right rules can change a whole industry.

FOOD WASTE HEROES

All of this is happening as food waste finally earns a place on the global climate agenda. The issue has been flagged as a priority for COP31 (09-20 November), and organisations including Wrap, WWF and the World Resources Institute are calling for it to be treated as a climate solution, backed by a global goal to halve food waste by 2030. But policy takes time, and perfectly good food is still going to waste every single day while we wait.

At Olio, we believe the answer is making sure edible food is always shared rather than wasted. For businesses, that means working with charities and plugging the gaps with community volunteers like Olio's Food Waste Heroes: trained locals who collect surplus food from businesses and share it with their neighbours.

More than 176,000 people have signed up as Food Waste Heroes, and Olio is now a community of over 9 million people sharing food and other spare items in their local area. Together, they've saved the equivalent of over 160 million meals to date.

For the rest of us it's even simpler. Olio makes neighbour-to-neighbour sharing easy: in a few taps you can pass on the food you won't get through to someone round the corner who'll be glad of it, or pick up spare food yourself from neighbours and volunteers.

So next time you're going on holiday or discover you've got more than you can eat, don't let it go to waste; share it on Olio and turn your surplus into someone's supper.

Every wasted item carries with it all the water, land, energy and transport that went into producing it, plus the methane it gives off as it rots in landfill. Waste the food and you waste all of that, too.

Find out more

- Olio is available to download on the **App Store** and **Google Play**



CHRISTMAS COCKERELS

Could a free-range cockerel be your best option this Christmas?

The Mercer family has been farming in rural Staffordshire since 1922; when Alec Mercer returned from university in 2005, he established Packington Free Range as a way to realise his fourth-generation vision for the farm.

'Poultry was the part of the family business I wanted to create', Alec shares; 'I wanted to produce poultry in a way that gave the birds more time to grow and mature naturally, with welfare and quality at the heart of how they were reared. That belief has shaped the way we have farmed ever since.'

LOW-IMPACT FARMING

Growing up on a family farm encourages a unique perspective on food and provenance, and this has not been lost on Alec. 'You learn that time and care produce better results than speed and shortcuts', he tells us. 'We have always worked on a simple principle: what is good for the land and the animal is good for the customer. We firmly believe that a bird that has lived well – with space, fresh air, time outdoors and a natural diet – produces better meat.'

For Alec, high-welfare farming means allowing birds to live as close to their natural behaviour as possible. 'Our chicks arrive one day old, so we have complete provenance throughout their lives', he explains. 'They start in warm, well-ventilated housing and, from around three weeks old, are out on traditional pasture every day – foraging, moving and doing what chickens do. They return inside at night for safety. They are reared in small groups, fed on a maize and omega-3 enriched diet, with no growth promoters or routine antibiotics. Our B Corp certification provides independent assurance that we are doing what we say we are doing.'



B Corp certification means Packington Free Range is held accountable across animal welfare and environmental and community impact, but for Alec sustainability is about more than accreditation. 'It is a genuine, ongoing commitment to leaving things better than we found them', he shares.

The land at Packington Free Range is enrolled in environmental stewardship schemes and the farm works with Natural England to improve biodiversity and soil health – planting hedgerows, managing habitats and looking after the land for the long term to ensure it's here for generations to come.

PACKINGTON COCKERELS

Alec's advice for sourcing ethical meat this Christmas is simple: know your producer. 'Look for farms that are transparent about how their animals are reared', he says. 'If you can, buy direct from the farmer or from an independent butcher or farm shop that knows its supply chain.'

At Christmas, Alec acknowledges that people tend to want something a little bit special, and believes cockerel fits the bill. A medium cockerel (4-5kg) feeds 10 to 12 people, cooks in less time than a large turkey and carves beautifully.

Packington cockerels, typically 3-6kg, are given considerably more time to grow and mature than the farm's standard birds. 'That time shows in the eating', Alec explains. 'The meat is moist and the flavour is rich and traditional. The Hairy Bikers once called our chickens 'some of the happiest in Britain'. We've also picked up 79 Great Taste awards over the years, giving independent recognition to the quality and flavour we work hard to achieve.'

LOVE YOUR LEFTOVERS

Packington is also very conscious of waste; every cockerel comes with guidance for cooking the perfect bird, as well as 'Love Your Leftovers' recipes to help make use of every last bit. Leftover meat is perfect for pies, risotto, soup or curry, while the carcass makes a fantastic stock. 'We want customers to enjoy several meals from one bird', Alec explains, 'rather than thinking only about Christmas lunch.'

Community is important at Packington, too. Its education programme at Blakenhall Park has helped more than 65,000 school-aged children to understand where food comes from, and the farm supports Farm Fresh Revolution, a food education charity providing fresh produce to families who need it most.

FUTURE FARMING

It is getting harder to farm in a low-impact way; feed, energy and labour costs have risen, while cheaper imports produced to different welfare standards continue to put pressure on British producers. 'We would welcome stronger country-of-origin and method-of-production labelling so customers can make informed choices', Alec shares, 'but I absolutely believe farming has a strong future. People will always need good food, but we have to produce it responsibly.'

For Alec, that means looking after the animals, the land and the communities around us. 'At Christmas especially, when families and friends come together, you want the centrepiece to be something that has been reared properly, tastes exceptional and feels genuinely special.'



Find out more

- Order a Packington Free Range cockerel, with free delivery across the UK, at **packingtonfreerange.co.uk** Availability is limited – they sell out every year.

Festive feasts

Henry Firth, Ian Theasby and the BOSH! team share a bumper set of plant-based recipes for autumn & winter entertaining



Every Christmas we try to make plant-based food that causes even the sceptics at the table to go back for seconds, and the four dishes featured here are the result.

There's a portobello mushroom, chestnut and pecan pithivier under puff pastry, and a whole roasted cauliflower swimming in two cashew cheese sauces. A hasselback squash gets glazed in cranberry, orange and maple, with carrots piled on whipped tahini with harissa pine nut butter.

These are the dishes we'll be cooking in our own kitchens this year, so steal what you need and build your spread around them! They're guaranteed to brighten your table and ooze wow-factor – whether you follow a vegan diet or not.



PORTOBELLO PITHIVIER

Serves 6-8

INGREDIENTS

- 4 portobello mushrooms
- Olive oil
- 5 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- 6 sprig of fresh thyme
- 7 garlic cloves
- 1 large red onion
- 2 tsp light brown sugar
- 300g chestnut mushrooms
- 125ml white wine
- 1 × 180g vacuum-packed pre-cooked chestnuts
- 250g pecans
- 2 slices of seeded bread (around 80g)
- 4 tbsp plant-based milk
- 2 ready-rolled plant-based puff pastry sheets

Before you start

Preheat oven to 200°C; line 2 baking trays with parchment paper; large frying pan on a medium heat; food processor; pastry brush.

METHOD

Finely chop the garlic, rosemary, thyme, red onion and chestnut mushrooms. Stir together the plant-based milk and maple syrup.

Lay the portobello mushrooms on one of the lined baking trays with the stems pointing up. Drizzle oil over the gills of each mushroom and sprinkle with a little salt and pepper. Divide half the chopped rosemary, thyme and garlic between the mushrooms. Roast for 20 minutes. Remove and set aside.

Add the oil to the frying pan. Add the red onion to the pan and sauté for 10 minutes, stirring regularly, until softened. Measure 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon of the pepper and the sugar into a small bowl. Add the remaining garlic, rosemary and thyme along with a pinch of salt, pepper and sugar into the pan and stir everything round for 1 minute. Tip the chestnut mushrooms into the pan, increase the heat to high and cook until softened and all the liquid has evaporated (about 5-7 minutes). Pour the white wine into the pan and simmer for 3 mins until the liquid has evaporated. Tip the mixture into a large mixing bowl and leave to cool.

Put the chestnuts, pecans and bread into the food processor and whizz until they resemble breadcrumbs. Add to the bowl with the onions. Mix everything together until combined.

Lay 1 pastry sheet on the other lined baking tray. Cut into a 23cm circle. Spread half the chestnut mixture in a circle on the pastry. Put the portobello mushrooms on top of the chestnut mixture, stems facing up, making sure the sides of the mushrooms don't hang off the edges. Layer the rest of the chestnut mixture over the top. Smooth and shape into a neat, long, circular mound. Using a pastry brush or your finger, brush a little of the plant-based milk and maple mix around the exposed pastry edge.

Lay the second pastry sheet over the mushroom filling and press it all down well, ensuring there are no air bubbles. Seal the edges by pushing down all the way round the filling with your fingers. Crimp around the edges, brush with milk and maple and score curved lines from the top to bottom of the pithivier. Score a small hole in the top of the pithivier for the steam to escape.

Put the pithivier in the oven and bake it for 30-40 minutes, checking after 30 minutes. Slice and serve.

WHOLE ROAST CAULIFLOWER CHEESE

Serves 6



INGREDIENTS

- 1 large cauliflower
- 1 whole bulb garlic
- Olive oil
- Chives to garnish

For the marinade:

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp turmeric

For the cashew cheese sauce:

- 1 × 300g silken tofu
- 80g cashews
- 150ml plant-based milk
- 30g nooch
- 1 tbsp white miso paste
- 1 tsp onion powder
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 × 350g jar roasted red peppers, drained
- 3 tbsp tomato purée

For the brown butter topping:

- 60g plant-based butter
- 60g hazelnuts
- Small handful sage leaves

Before you start

Heat the oven to 190°C fan;
1 large baking tray;
3 small saucepans;
1 frying pan

METHOD

Prep the ingredients:
Trim the leaves from the cauliflower, keeping them for roasting. Slice the stem so the cauliflower sits flat. Slice the top off the garlic bulb. Roughly chop the hazelnuts. Finely slice the chives. Soak the cashews in boiling water for 15 minutes and drain.

Make the marinade:
Place the cauliflower on a baking tray lined with a large sheet of foil. Whisk the marinade ingredients together with salt and pepper. Rub it all over the cauliflower, working it into every crevice.

Roast the cauliflower and garlic:
Wrap the cauliflower loosely in foil and roast for 30-40 minutes until starting to soften. Drizzle the garlic bulb with olive oil, wrap it in foil and roast for 45 minutes until completely soft. Unwrap the cauliflower. Add the reserved leaves to the tray with a little oil. Roast uncovered for a further 20 minutes until tender and golden.

Make the cheese sauces:
Squeeze the roasted garlic cloves out of their skins into a blender. Add the tofu, drained cashews, plant milk, nutritional yeast (nooch), miso, onion powder, lemon juice and seasoning. Blend until completely smooth and creamy. Pour one third of the sauce into a small saucepan. Add half the roasted peppers to the remaining sauce in the blender. Blend until smooth. Keep adding peppers to reach your desired colour. Pour half this sauce into another saucepan. For the final colour, add tomato purée until it turns a rich red. Warm the sauces gently over a low heat until ready to serve. Add a splash of milk to loosen if needed.

Make the brown butter topping:
Melt the plant-based butter in a frying pan over medium heat until golden and nutty. Add the hazelnuts and cook for 1 minute. Add the sage leaves and fry until crisp. Remove from the heat. Finish with lemon juice.

To serve:
Transfer the roasted cauliflower and leaves to a large serving plate. Spoon or pour the sauces around the base or over the top. Drizzle with the brown butter topping. Finish with chives. Serve immediately.



CRANBERRY GLAZED HASSELBACK SQUASH

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 butternut squash
- Olive oil
- Orange zest and thyme to garnish

For the cranberry glaze:

- 200g cranberry sauce
- Juice of 1 orange
- 1 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar

For the sage garlic beans:

- Handful sage leaves
- Olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic
- 2 × 570g jars butter beans

Before you start

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan; line a baking tray with baking paper; chopping board; knife; small saucepan; blender.

METHOD

Prep the ingredients: Peel the squash. Slice it in half lengthways and scoop out the seeds. Zest and juice the orange. Finely chop the garlic.

Prep and roast the squash:
Place each half of the squash flat side down. Lay wooden spoons on either side and slice thinly across the width of the squash, stopping just before the base. Repeat with the remaining squash. Transfer to the baking tray. Drizzle with olive oil and season generously with salt and pepper. Roast for 30 minutes until starting to soften.

Make the cranberry glaze:
Put all the glaze ingredients in a small pan. Gently simmer for 2-3 minutes until glossy.

Glaze the squash:
Remove the squash from the oven and brush generously with the cranberry glaze (reserve a little for the end). Return to the oven for 25 minutes, until tender and caramelised (may need longer depending on the size of your squash).

Make the sage garlic beans:
Heat olive oil in a pan and add the sage leaves. Fry until golden. Remove from the pan and add the garlic in the sage oil. Fry for 2 minutes, then add the beans, including their bean stock. Simmer until slightly thickened. Leave to cool slightly. Transfer to a blender and blend until smooth.

Plate up:
Spread the whipped beans in a generous swoosh on the serving platter. Place the hot glazed hasselback squash on top.

Brush with the remaining glaze. Scatter over the orange zest, thyme and crispy sage leaves.

ROASTED CARROTS WITH WHIPPED TAHINI AND HARISSA PINE NUTS

Serves 4 (as a side)

INGREDIENTS

For the carrots:
- 1kg chantenay carrots
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp cumin seeds

For the whipped tahini:
- 1 garlic bulb
- 120g tahini
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Cold water

For the harissa pine nut butter:
- 40g pine nuts
- 40g plant-based butter
- 1 tsp harissa paste

Garnish:
- Dill and parsley

Before you start
Baking tray; small frying pan; small bowl or jug; stick blender; serving platter; heat the oven to 200°C fan.

METHOD

Prep the garlic: Slice the top off the garlic bulb. Drizzle with olive oil and a pinch of salt. Wrap tightly in tin foil.

Prepare the carrots: Spread the carrots on a baking tray. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle over the cumin seeds, salt and pepper. Toss the carrots to coat in oil. Roast for 30 minutes with the garlic bulb until caramelised and tender.

Make the whipped tahini:
Squeeze the garlic bulb into a blender. Add the tahini, lemon juice/zest, salt and pepper. Add the olive oil and 4 tbsp cold water. Blend until it becomes pale, thick and whipped, adding more water until the desired consistency is reached. Spread on your serving platter.

Make the harissa pine nut butter:
Melt the butter in a small pan over medium heat. Add the pine nuts and sizzle for a minute. Stir in the harissa, bubble and take off the heat.

Assemble: Lay the hot roasted carrots over the whipped tahini. Drizzle generously with the warm harissa pine nut butter. Finish with chopped dill or parsley.



Find out more
For more plant-based recipe inspiration, head over to **bosh.tv**

THE BRIDGE

Stephen Byrne shares why, though music can build bridges, it also needs to make noise

For more than 20 years I have worked with communities affected by conflict, from Israel and Palestine to Cameroon and, more recently, Ukraine. Much of that work has focused on two things: peacebuilding, connecting people who have become divided and supporting vulnerable people living with the consequences of war. Those experiences have also left me increasingly frustrated.

Global leadership is failing. Wars continue, innocent people suffer and the international institutions created to prevent conflict too often appear incapable of stopping it or holding those responsible to account. We can't simply accept that.

THE BRIDGE really began in Jerusalem around six years ago. I had seen how politics, bureaucracy, suspicion and fear could strangle initiatives attempting to connect people across the divide. One evening I was invited to an intimate gathering bringing Israeli and Palestinian musicians together. Within five minutes of playing, something changed. The fear and anxiety began to disappear. Harmony lit up the room. The labels became less important; what remained were people, musicians listening to one another and creating something powerful together.

These were people who didn't want to hurt each other. They wanted what most of us want: a peaceful, ordinary life and a future for their families. That evening taught me something I have never forgotten: music can go places politics cannot. But as well as bringing people together, music sometimes also needs to protest.



ABOUT STEPHEN BYRNE

Stephen is founder of THE BRIDGE, a music-led entertainment company that produces powerful, inspiring content to promote peace and stand against war. It uses music and live stage experiences to give young people from conflict-affected regions (such as Ireland, Israel and Palestine) a collective voice.



Daraa, Syria – named 'the cradle' of the 2011 Syrian revolution

EXPLORING WAR THROUGH ART

Throughout history, artists have challenged authority, confronted injustice and given ordinary people a voice. Today, we need artists willing not only to sing about peace but to challenge war, poor leadership and the decisions that allow conflicts to begin and continue. That thinking is at the heart of DISARM, our theatrical concert project.

Around the world, more than 20 individual scenes, songs and stories are being developed by brilliant artists, songwriters and storytellers from different countries, cultures and musical traditions. We are asking them to use their own voice and vision to explore war: its causes and consequences, the resilience of those who survive it, our ability to resolve conflict and perhaps one of humanity's greatest challenges: our ability to forgive. Together, they will tell one larger story about our shared humanity.

WAR & CLIMATE CHANGE

This November, as world leaders gather in Antalya for COP31, there is another connection we should not ignore. War and climate change are two of the greatest challenges facing humanity, and they are not separate problems.

War consumes enormous amounts of fossil fuel and resources. It destroys infrastructure, forests, farmland and ecosystems, contaminates water and soil and creates emissions not only during fighting but through the enormous reconstruction that follows. Estimates suggest the world's militaries may account for around 5.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

BUILDING PEACE

Last month, we returned to Ukraine on another humanitarian mission, travelling across Europe with ambulances, recovery vehicles and medical supplies for people living in a war zone. Our film crew joined us as we continued filming *Shoulder to Shoulder*, documenting the human consequences of war. On 17 October, we also staged a Concert for Peace in Lviv, part of which was live-streamed internationally through the ORIGIN Global Broadcast.

For me, all these things are connected. An ambulance can save someone today. Music can connect people and challenge the thinking and leadership that contribute to tomorrow's wars.

We need to create great music, grow audiences, build a profitable company and deliver returns to investors. Commercial success and social impact are not competing ambitions; one enables the other.

The more successful THE BRIDGE becomes, the greater our ability to support humanitarian work, build peace, protect our shared planet and give artists a platform. Music can build bridges, but sometimes it also needs to make noise. THE BRIDGE intends to do both.

Find out more

- Information about THE BRIDGE is at **thebridge.music**



Fashion, reclaimed

Upcycled bike chains, inner tubes & military canvas offer a perfect antidote to fast fashion

Fashion has always been about creativity, and the sector's growing increasingly inventive with materials as well as designs. Upcycled materials offer an antidote to overconsumption in the fashion industry – and when sourced mindfully they can help divert waste from landfill and tackle issues like air pollution in communities around the world. For Yen Wei Goo, founder of Paguro Upcycle, discarded tyres, bicycle chains, military canvas and electrical wires are just some of the hard-wearing materials that are perfect candidates for vegan, sustainable and slow fashion.

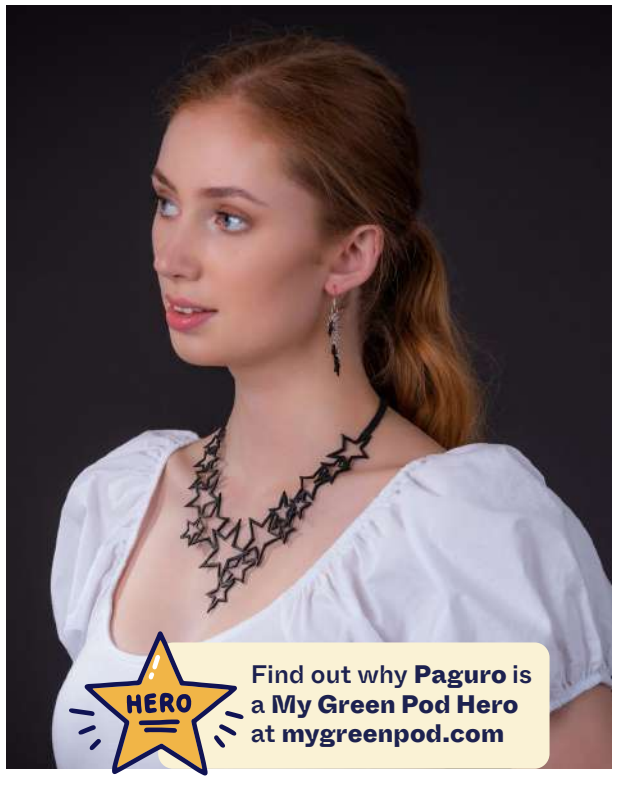
A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

While visiting Malaysia, where she grew up, Yen discovered a group of Indonesian artisans who had started making bags and jewellery from old tyre inner tubes. 'They'd watched tyre and rubber waste being burned in their local community and decided to do something about it', she tells us. 'I knew I wanted to build something around what they were doing.'

Yen's journey from accountancy to the fashion world began in that workshop visit, which reignited her passion for fashion. 'I've always believed accessories are a form of identity, a way of wearing confidence and individuality rather than just following a trend', she says. 'What put me off the mass-produced fashion market was exactly that – it felt like it had lost its soul. Learning directly alongside artisans who already knew their materials better than anyone gave me a way back into fashion that actually meant something.'

NEVER GO OUT OF FASHION

For Paguro's upcycled products, Yen sources truck inner tubes, motorbike tyres, salvaged army tent canvas, broken skateboards and off-cut wood from Indonesia; bike chains and bike inner tubes from repair shops in the UK; reclaimed brass from artisan partners in Kenya and *totumo* fruit shells from Indigenous artisans in Colombia. Most of the materials used at Paguro would otherwise be burned or sent to landfill.



Bags and jewellery made from inner tubes are Paguro's most popular products; the rubber is hard-wearing, water-resistant and has a texture that mimics leather beautifully. 'People can't believe they're made from inner tubes', Yen shares. 'Our Star Inner Tube Necklace is a good example: hand-cut into a striking star pattern, it's a real head-turner but still practical, durable and lightweight enough to wear every day.'

Every Paguro piece is one of a kind because no two reclaimed materials are ever quite the same. 'You're not buying something mass-produced', Yen explains; 'you're buying something with a maker, a material history and a reason for existing. We design pieces that are classic enough to last – without ever going out of fashion.'

PRESERVING TRADITIONS

Yen only works with people who take genuine pride in their craft and want to keep it alive. Designs evolve collaboratively with artisan partners across the UK, Indonesia, Kenya and Colombia; Yen's role is to bridge the gap between their craft and the needs of a modern, wider market. She offers design inspiration while protecting the traditional craftsmanship that makes each piece possible.

'Artisan production is important because we don't seek to replace what our artisans already know', Yen shares; 'we build on it. Brass-working in Kenya, *totumo* carving in Colombia, inner tube handcraft and woodwork in Indonesia — these are generations-old skills, and contemporary design should preserve that, not erase it.'

The artisan partners run their own independent businesses and set their own pricing. 'We don't employ them or dictate terms', Yen says. 'It's a genuine partnership, not a supply chain. 'We all blossom together' is the philosophy behind everything we make.'

Beyond fair, independent trading terms, Paguro provided interest-free bridging loans to help artisan partners survive Covid and continues supporting costs where needed – not as charity, but as genuine partnership. The goal is to demonstrate that small, values-led businesses can build lasting relationships across borders, and that beautiful, considered design and reclaimed materials aren't opposites.

A NEW WAY OF LIVING

Attitudes towards upcycled products have changed enormously since Yen created Paguro 13 years ago. 'What once needed explaining is now something customers actively seek', she tells us; 'the 'crafty' stigma has largely faded. There's also a growing appetite for pieces with a story, not just a price tag. You can see it in the rise of vintage, too – fashion that has real identity, not something anyone else could be wearing.'

Yen is seeing a broader return to quality and craftsmanship in the fashion sector, and hopes Paguro is part of a shift back towards things made to last, by people who care. 'Every Paguro piece carries the maker behind it', she says; 'someone doing what they're good at, what they genuinely care about. It's about keeping traditional craft alive with reclaimed materials, in a new way of living.'

HEALING THE PLANET STARTS WITH US

Love Peace Harmony Foundation explores the consciousness behind collective action

What becomes possible when we come together with a shared intention for a better world?

As the world turns its attention to COP31 and the urgent need for meaningful climate action, one thing is increasingly clear: the challenges facing our planet are too interconnected, and too significant, for any one person, organisation or nation to address alone.

We need solutions, innovation and action – but we also need something that sits beneath all of these things: a willingness to come together, to listen, to share, to connect and to recognise our collective responsibility for the world we share.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

When people come together around a shared purpose, something can begin to shift. An idea can be shared; a new perspective can emerge and one person's action can inspire another. Connections can form between people who might otherwise never have met, and from those connections, new possibilities can grow.

We recently saw a beautiful expression of this in New York, when Love Peace Harmony (LPH) Foundation came together with OMMM and a diverse community of artists, musicians, change-makers and consciousness explorers to mark the International Day of Peace in Times Square.

In one of the world's busiest and most recognisable public spaces, people from different backgrounds gathered around a shared intention: to create greater peace, connection and harmony. There was music, collective participation, shared reflection and, most importantly, a coming together.

It may seem like a simple thing, but gathering with others around a positive intention can create a ripple that extends beyond the moment itself. A conversation can lead to a connection; a connection can lead to collaboration; a collaboration can lead to action – and action, when connected with the actions of others, can ignite meaningful change.

This is the power of collective consciousness: recognising that we are not separate, and that the things we create together can be greater than anything we create alone.

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

One of the perspectives explored through Tao Science is the relationship between consciousness, information and the interconnected nature of life. From this perspective, transformation begins with awareness: it involves becoming more conscious of ourselves, our thoughts, intentions, choices and relationships, while recognising that we are part of something much larger.

The way we think influences the way we act, and the way we act influences the people around us. The way people act together can influence communities and, ultimately, the wider world. This does not replace climate science, policy or technological innovation; rather, it adds another dimension to the conversation: it explores the consciousness behind the solutions.

As the global community comes together around the climate challenge, we can also ask ourselves what kind of collective consciousness we want to bring to that challenge. Is it rooted in separation, fear and self-interest, or grounded in connection, responsibility, compassion and a shared desire to create a healthier future?

WHAT CAN WE CREATE?

A conscious collective approach begins with a simple recognition: I am part of something bigger than myself. Individual action matters, but when individual actions connect, they can become something much more powerful.

A person chooses to reduce waste; a family changes its habits; a school teaches children about sustainability; a community shares knowledge and resources and an organisation brings partners together. One action influences another.

This is the thinking behind Love Peace Harmony Foundation's Plastic to Purpose initiative, which was created in partnership with Save Living Foundation. The programme brings environmental education to life through three simple stages: Learn. Create. Transform.

In Atlanta, 45 children took part in the student launch, during which plastic waste was diverted and transformed through the LPH Press Machine. Rather than simply learning about plastic pollution, students could see discarded material transformed into something new. The amount of plastic may be small compared with



A connection made today may become an action tomorrow, and an action shared by many could become a movement for change



LEFT
Ancient Youth sang 'Love Peace Harmony' at the Times Square event to mark the International Day of Peace

OPPOSITE
Artists, musicians and changemakers connected at the Times Square event

the scale of the global challenge, but that is precisely the point: collective change doesn't begin at scale, it begins with participation.

A child who understands their relationship with waste may influence their family and a school may inspire another school. A local project can become a model for another community. In this way small actions become connected actions, and connected actions can become movements.

PEACE & THE CLIMATE CONVERSATION

While climate change is often discussed as an environmental or technological challenge, it is also a human challenge; there's a crucial link between peace, consciousness and planetary wellbeing.

Creating a healthier planet requires cooperation and cooperation requires connection, which begins with recognising that our wellbeing is not isolated from the wellbeing of others – or from the natural world that sustains us. This is why gatherings like the Peace Day event in Times Square matter: they create opportunities for people to step outside their individual worlds and experience something collectively. They remind us that we can bring different cultures, perspectives, talents and experiences together around something we share.

You never know what can begin from a single meeting, a shared conversation or a moment of collective intention; a connection made today may become an action tomorrow, and an action shared by many could become a movement for change.

THE LPHF SONG

There is perhaps no simpler illustration of this than the Love Peace Harmony song. What began as a single song has grown into a global expression, with the community version recorded in 26 languages and the song represented in more than 90 languages.

Delivering one message in different voices across multiple languages and cultures allows people to bring their own identity and creativity to a shared purpose. This is an important distinction for climate action, too; collective action isn't about everyone doing the same thing, it means many people contributing in different ways towards a shared future.

A scientist may contribute research; a policy-maker may create frameworks; a business may develop new solutions; a teacher may inspire the next generation; a community may restore a local environment and a young person may challenge an old way of thinking. Every contribution has a place. At Love Peace Harmony Foundation, this understanding is reflected in three interconnected areas: Nurture yourself. Support others. Heal the planet.

The first begins with awareness, the second extends that awareness into our relationships and communities and the third recognises that the planet is not separate from us – it is the environment in which collective wellbeing exists. Together, they offer a simple pathway from personal awareness to collective responsibility.

Perhaps this is the shift we need to embrace more fully; moving beyond 'what can I do?' and towards 'what can we create together?'

FROM INTENTION TO ACTION

This is where the message surrounding COP31 and the perspective of Tao Science meet.

Global gatherings create an opportunity to bring people, ideas and perspectives together, but the real opportunity lies in what happens beyond the gathering – when conversations become action. The environmental challenges we face are enormous; no single person can solve them, but no single person has to. Awareness can inspire intention and intention can inspire action. Action becomes more powerful when it connects with the actions of others. Perhaps the most important question is therefore not what governments, organisations or individuals can do on their own, but what we, collectively, are willing to create.

The answers will be found in schools, communities, homes, businesses and everyday choices as well as in global conferences. They will be found in the partnerships we build, the knowledge we share, the young people we empower, the environments we protect and the way we choose to see one another. While science, innovation, policy, investment and action will deliver some of the practical solutions we need for a healthier planet, we also need something deeply human: a willingness to recognise our interconnectedness and then to act from it.

At Love Peace Harmony, we believe that healing the planet is part of a wider journey towards greater wellbeing, compassion and harmony. It begins within and extends outward. When our individual journeys connect, they have the potential to become something much greater.

The future of our planet will be shaped not by one conference, one organisation or even one generation: it will be shaped by the consciousness, choices and collective actions of us all – and healing the planet can begin with remembering that we are already connected.

Find out more

- Information about Love Peace Harmony is at **lovepeaceharmony.org**

Turning inward

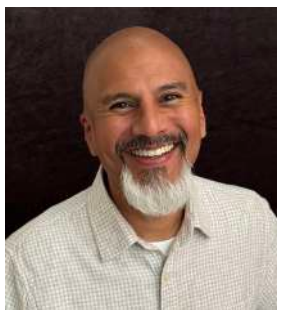
OMMMbassadors **Ignacio Diaz, Jr** and **Sanjeev Verma** explain how our experiences help us to make sense of the world

As the year draws to a close and the seasons shift, nature invites us to slow down and take time to reflect on the experiences – collective and individual – that have unfolded over the course of 2026.

While the darker evenings encourage a retreat into our physical space, this is also a time to look inward and reflect on our inner state.

OMMM, an organisation dedicated to raising consciousness through meaningful experiences, has a network of wisdom keepers who help to extend its impact all over the world. We asked 'OMMMbassadors' Ignacio Diaz, Jr, Director of Music Strategy at Monroe Institute and Sanjeev Verma, founder of Alchemi-e, to share how music, tech, sound and a daily practice can help everyone to build strength from within.

The atmosphere of discovery, by Ignacio Diaz, Jr



I've spent more than 40 years teaching music and more than 50 years exploring consciousness. In that time, I've become increasingly interested in how people learn, how we experience the world and how the way that we understand ourselves changes when we're willing to explore something beyond what we know.

Something I've come to realise is that you can't give someone an experience. You can share information, offer guidance, introduce ideas and create opportunities, but ultimately, the experience belongs to the individual. It is subjective in the truest sense of the word.

A lot of my work today, whether it's through music, composition, teaching or my work at the Monroe Institute, a global leader in the exploration of consciousness, is about creating the atmosphere and opportunities for people to explore and discover things for themselves.

EXPERIENCE & UNDERSTANDING

There's a difference between knowing something intellectually and experiencing it. I can explain a musical concept to someone, demonstrate it and give them all the information they need, but there's a moment when they hear it, recognise it and understand it for themselves. That's when something shifts. Something changes.

We can read books, listen to other people's experiences and develop ideas about what consciousness might be or what might be possible. All of that can be valuable, but there's something very different about having a direct experience. This is one of many things I appreciate about the Monroe Institute; the emphasis is on exploration, so participants are encouraged to discover for themselves rather than simply accept someone else's perceptions and experiences.

I'm not particularly interested in telling people what they should experience or believe. I'm much more interested in encouraging them to explore, ask questions and develop their understanding – and, most importantly, their own truths.

CURIOSITY IS ESSENTIAL

Curiosity continues to be a driving force throughout my life. I've explored meditation, intense breathwork, remote viewing, psychokinesis, expanded states of awareness and many other methods of consciousness exploration. Some experiences have been subtle and others quite remarkable. Many have left me with more questions than answers – and often, nothing happens. That's a very natural part of this practice.

I don't think we have to explain everything immediately. Sometimes it's more interesting to remain curious and see where an experience leads; it's important to be open for discovery to unfold.

What happens if I approach something differently? What happens if I change my attention or let go of an expectation? What else might be possible? Is this something I am supposed to know? Is this helpful for me at this moment? These are the kinds of question that continue to motivate and inspire me in my work.

I also think curiosity is something that we expand and develop. We can learn to become more observant, more open to possibilities and more willing to experiment and explore without needing to know the outcome in advance. That applies to consciousness exploration, but it also applies to music, creativity, teaching and our work. More importantly, it applies to life itself. It's very simple: we were born to live. Be curious about life. Engage life.

MUSIC, SOUND & CONSCIOUSNESS

Music has always been an important part of how I understand the world. As a pianist, composer, sound designer and audio engineer, I'm fascinated by how sound can influence our attention, emotions, perception and how we experience time and space.

In my work with the Monroe Institute as both a trainer and the Director of Music Strategy and Development, I have the unique opportunity to bring together the two most important aspects of my life: music and consciousness exploration. Through composition, immersive audio and cutting-edge neural entrainment, called Monroe Sound Science®, I explore how sound can be used to support different experiences and states of awareness.

When I'm composing ambient music, I'm often thinking about how to create an environment rather than a traditional musical composition that constantly directs the listener's attention. I hover between creating enough interest to maintain a listener's attention, but not enough to become a distraction. This is a very blurry line, if the line exists at all.

I might use slowly evolving harmonies, sustained textures, subtle movement or spatial sound to create a sense of openness. Sometimes very little needs to happen musically for something interesting to happen experientially. I find that challenging, inspiring and fascinating. For me, music isn't about telling someone what to feel or experience; it's about creating an atmosphere that supports their own exploration and intention.

BEYOND INFORMATION

My approach to teaching has changed considerably over the years. Early in my career, I spent more time trying to find the best way to explain something; through experience, I've become more interested in helping people discover the answers themselves. That doesn't mean information or instruction isn't important – it's crucial. But I've found that asking someone a question can sometimes be much more valuable than immediately providing an answer.

What do you notice? What do you hear? What happens if you try something different? What do you think is happening? These questions encourage people to become active participants in their own learning. I use a similar approach when facilitating consciousness exploration programmes; I want participants to feel comfortable and safe exploring their experiences, asking questions and considering different possibilities without feeling that there's a particular experience they're supposed to have. Everyone approaches exploration from a different place, and I think there's tremendous value in that.

DOING THE WORK

Ultimately, I do this work because I enjoy exploring, creating, learning and sharing those experiences with others. I want everyone to have the opportunity to explore the amazing experiences life has afforded me. There is so much more to us than we allow ourselves to know, and when we open to possibility, life truly begins. We transcend the ordinary and become extraordinary.

I love seeing someone discover something they hadn't considered before. I enjoy watching a musician recognise a new possibility, or a workshop participant gain a different understanding of their own experience and about who and what they really are, which is at once extremely complex but also quite simple. Pure awareness exploring the very nature of that awareness: those moments are meaningful to me.

One idea I often return to is that impossibility is a belief system. I don't mean that there aren't real limitations or that anything we imagine is automatically possible; what interests me is how often our beliefs and assumptions influence what we're willing to explore in the first place. Sometimes we decide something isn't possible before we've even considered investigating it. I think there's value in questioning those assumptions.

A STATE OF DISCOVERY

My work is about bringing together music, creativity and consciousness in ways that encourage exploration and understanding, for myself and for others. I'm still learning. I'm still experimenting. I'm still asking questions – lots of questions. And after all these years, I find that there is always something new to explore. That's what keeps me interested, and it's what I hope to inspire in others.

Stay curious, explore for yourself and remain open to what you might discover. Be in a constant state of discovery, and life will remain brand new in every moment. You will soon begin to realise and to know that your personal discovery is the very nature of creativity itself.

Growing up with tools for life, by Sanjeev Verma



For 25 years, my work has brought me into the lives of people going through difficult times. We work together on understanding what they are feeling, the patterns they carry and how they can begin to respond differently. Again and again, I have found myself thinking: what if they had learnt some of this as children? How much easier might their journey have been? That question stayed with me; eventually it became Alchemi-e.

Look at the world our children are growing up in. There is always something against which to measure themselves: appearances. Marks. Achievements. Someone else's life on a screen. Even as we prepare them for their future, the future keeps changing. And in the middle of all this is a young person trying to understand who they are and whether they are enough.

I want us to give that child something they can actually use when life becomes difficult. When a friendship hurts. When they make a mistake in front of the class. When they have worked hard and the result is disappointing. What can they do in that moment? How do they take the next step with steadiness?

This is what excites me about bringing Vedic and yogic psychology into education. These traditions hold a deep interest in how the mind works, how we experience emotions and how attention and breath can become part of daily practice. My passion has been to make that understanding simple and usable; a child should be able to experience it in a way that makes sense.

RECOGNISING FEELINGS

Imagine a group of young children lying comfortably with their classmates, each with a teddy resting on their tummy. Their teacher invites them to watch the teddy rise and fall as they breathe. There may be a little laughter; they are with friends, in a familiar place, with an adult helping them to feel safe.

Something as ordinary as breathing becomes visible. As they breathe in, their diaphragm moves down and their tummy gently rises; as they breathe out, it settles. The teddy helps them notice that movement. They begin to explore an easy, unhurried breath and what it feels like to settle. There is no perfect performance to get right.

Later, when a difficult feeling arrives, that experience gives them something familiar to return to. They may notice their breathing has become hurried, or that their body feels tense. With support, they can pause and try the gentle breathing they have practised. Recognising a feeling is a beginning; having something to do with it is where confidence can start to grow.

IT STARTS WITH TEACHERS

The teacher matters enormously. Imagine a teacher noticing that a child is overwhelmed and quietly offering a moment to reset. The child has someone beside them who recognises that they are struggling. Over time, we want children to recognise that need in themselves, and to feel comfortable asking for help. This is why Alchemi-e begins with teachers. We support them with training, practical activities and guidance they can return to. I want this work to be useful in their own lives, too. A teacher who has felt the value of a pause brings something very real into the classroom.

TOOLS FOR LIFE

Schools are where children make friends, face disappointment, discover strengths and learn how to be with other people. These are the moments in which this work belongs. A few minutes at the start of the day. A pause before a test. A conversation after a disagreement. A story that helps a child find words for a feeling.

The intention is for these practices to become a quiet, familiar part of school life, without another subject to study or another mark to earn. As children grow, the practices grow with them: from naming feelings and learning to settle to handling comparison, relationships, responsibility and uncertainty.

I find that possibility deeply exciting. A child can grow up knowing that a difficult moment is something they can learn to meet. They can pause, understand a little more of what is happening and choose what to do next. They can reach for another person when they need support.

That is the hope behind Alchemi-e: to give children tools they can carry into their lives, long after they have left the classroom. I would love for what so many adults discover later to become something our children grow up knowing.

Find out more

- View the full and growing network of OMMMbassadors at **ommmpresents.com**
- Browse Ignacio's discography on Spotify; information about Alchemi-e is at **alchemi-e.com**

COMPETITIONS

We've got our hands on a bunch of prizes from fantastic companies that are doing things differently. We love them all and we want to give you a chance to get to know them, too – so we're running these competitions so you can have a go and see for yourself!

We've handpicked this selection of green pearls – including upcycled accessories, award-winning skincare and even your Christmas lunch! – to help set you on a path to a lighter lifestyle.

To enter and view any Ts & Cs, visit mygreenpod.com



THE COLONEL BACKPACK FROM PAGURO UPCYCLE

We're giving away this vegan, water-resistant backpack with laptop compartment, handmade from 70% reclaimed military tent canvas and 20% reclaimed truck inner tube rubber.

Deadline for entries: 30.11.26





UPCYCLED ACCESSORIES FROM PAGURO UPCYCLE

One reader will win a set of hard-wearing upcycled accessories: the Star Inner Tube Necklace, Recycled Bike Chain Bracelet and Recycled Motorbike Tyre Vegan Belt.

Deadline for entries: 30.11.26



WIN

LES CHEVALIERS DE L'ASTRÉE LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Five readers will receive a membership that connects them to a real, mapped plot in an area dedicated to biodiversity havens, where people of different nationalities and generations can share skills, ideas, friendship and harvests.

Deadline for entries: 30.11.26





WIN

YOUR CHRISTMAS DINNER!

This prize contains a 4.5kg Packington Free Range Christmas Cockerel (for 10-12 people), Packington Pork pigs in blankets and a £50 Waitrose voucher.

Deadline for entries: 30.11.26

WIN

A £500 HAMPER OF PASTA FROM CORNWALL PASTA COMPANY

One winner will receive £500 of organic, British, artisan pasta produced using locally sourced, fresh ingredients by Cornwall Pasta Company.

Deadline for entries: 30.11.26





WIN

GOLD EARTH DAY & NIGHT RITUAL

One lucky reader will receive Gold Earth's award-winning Day & Night Ritual: the Phoenix Radiance Day Oil (60ml) and the Laila Aura Night Oil (60ml).

Deadline for entries: 29.01.27



WIN

GOLD EARTH GOLDEN BODY ESSENCE & KINGS RITUAL

Treat the face, beard and body with this Gold Earth set, created for the man who wants something simple, luxurious and different.

Deadline for entries: 29.01.27



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