

*Colleen Harte*

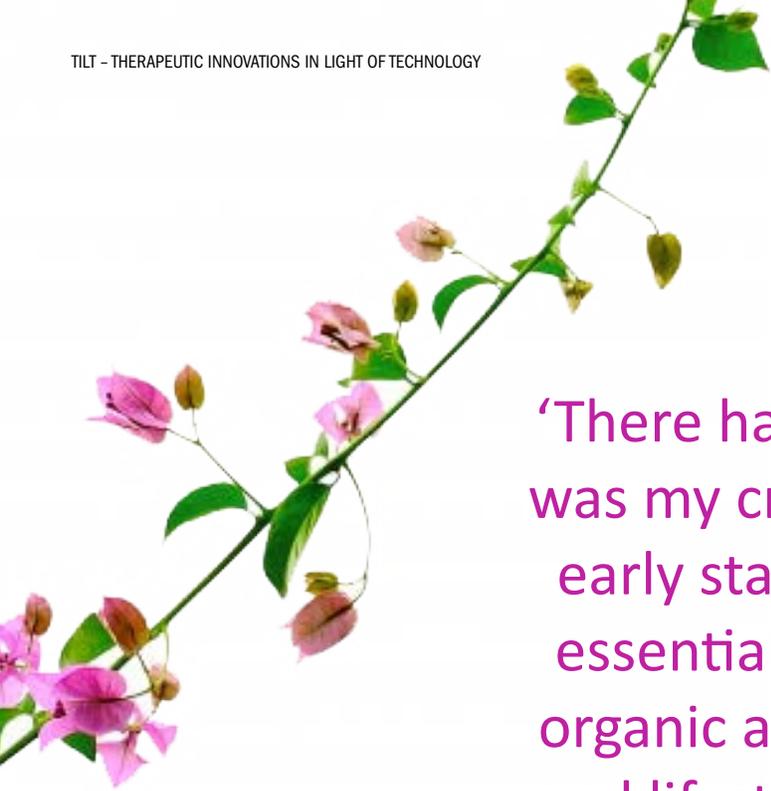


# Why Nature NOW Needs Technology

**The Creation of LabAroma**

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‘There has to be an easier way!’ this was my crying plea when I was in the early stages of developing the core essential oil formulas for my luxury organic aromatherapy-based beauty and lifestyle brand, ‘Lucy Annabella’.

I needed to find a solution to accurately deal with the time-consuming, complex mathematical process of essential oil formulations. However this thought was only second to the reality that as a start-up company with very-little-to-no cash, I could not afford for my formulas to fail the pharmaceutical testing which I was preparing them for. I had little option but to convince a dear friend to code a basic software program to tackle these chemistry calculations with accuracy and speed, while also providing me with the breakdown of the calculated chemistry for each formula.

Four months later and all my aromatherapy product submissions for Lucy Annabella passed pharmaceutical testing on the first try! I was delighted as this meant I would launch my labor of love ‘Lucy Annabella Organics’ but it was also the day I realized that I needed to share LabAroma with the world of aromatherapy. *(Figure 1)*

The two companies are so closely connected that we named LabAroma after Lucy Annabella. The ‘Lab’ in LabAroma stands for Lucy AnnaBella and ‘Aroma’ meaning that we blend aromas with the software. A further twenty months and after an

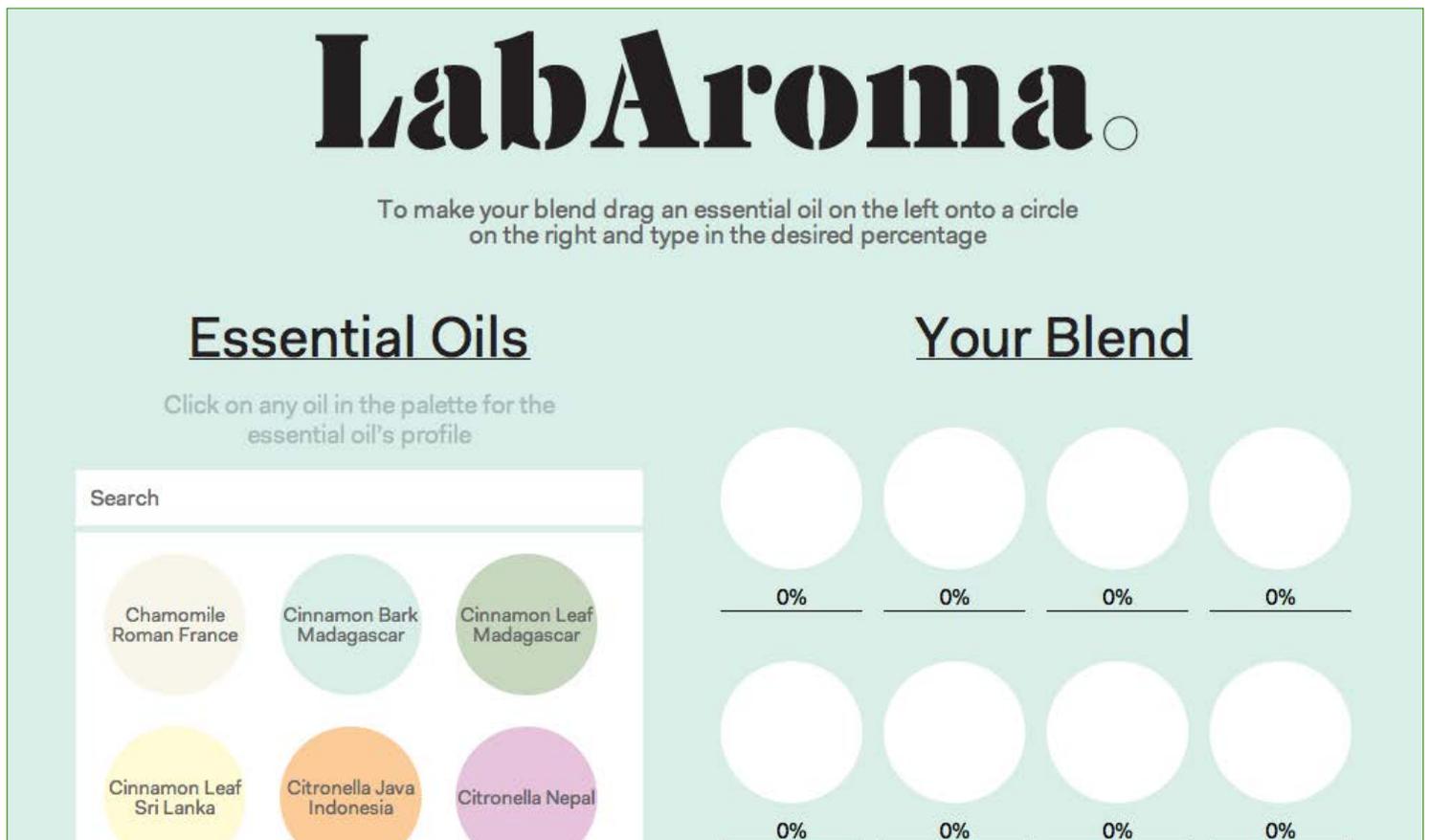
inconceivable amount of technical development and vast in-depth exploration of the world of essential oil chemistry LabAroma was born!

## FROM THE BEGINNING

Since we launched LabAroma our team regularly hear, ‘who is Colleen Harte? We have never heard of her.’ So let me take this opportunity to explain who I am and how I come to create an aromatherapy based luxury retail brand and an aromatherapy focused software tool.

I started my aromatherapy

FIGURE 1



career 12 years ago in a quiet little area of north Belfast where I was taught the spiritual elements of aromatherapy from a very interesting ex-nun. However my clinic work directed me to specialise in Complementary Therapy and Clinical Aromatherapy. In 2005 while working in the sector of cancer care with therapy I stumbled across a weekend course with Rhiannon Lewis - that weekend was the beginning of everything I have become now. For the next 8

years I spend all my training time in Rhiannon's care where she took me and her adored students through the complex but vitally important aspects of clinical aromatherapy and essential oil chemistry while always relating these lessons back to the practicalities of aromatherapy in the field.

I ran my private practice from 2002 until the launch of Lucy Annabella in 2012 when I decided to close my appointment book to focus

on my life ambition – to get aromatherapy into the hands of the wider world. However my other realization at this time was that the more the chemistry of essential oils seeped into my blood the more I felt there needed to be a better understanding of the science behind our precious plants. Our world is becoming so digitally dependent and technologically driven, it made sense to me to bring this knowledge to the aromatherapy world in a practical tool via technology



“calculate”. LabAroma gives you a complete chemical component breakdown of essential oils. LabAroma+ has the added feature of giving you a warning if the blend you just created breaks any legal pharmaceutical restrictions in the EU, US, Japan or Australia. This LabAroma+ feature which highlights which chemical components in your blend has breached international pharmaceutical laws is fascinating to me, as this tool ensures you are accurately guided when formulating if you are creating products to be sold internationally. (Figure 2)

The effect your blend has on the physical body is also highlighted. The effect of your

blend is broken down into 10 body systems by level of the most affected, ensuring that if you are blending for a specific physical condition you can be confident that you are successfully blending for that condition (as LabAroma will indicate which part of the body will be most affected). For example, image 3 shows the body system results for my repetitive strain blend. This is my favorite feature within LabAroma: as an aromatherapist it is so important for me to know that my blend is successfully targeting the body system I am working on. LabAroma will also allow you to print or save your blend. (Figure 3)

We support the software with

the LabAroma site which offers blogs with great blend recipes for lots of conditions and detailed oil profiles to help drive your learning experience. More updates will come in time, but for now we are happy with all the functions and features. The future options are endless and we love hearing from our growing aromatherapy community on what they want to see added to LabAroma in the future.

### ‘WHY DOES NATURE ‘NOW’ NEED TECHNOLOGY?’

I’ve explained the story of LabAroma’s creation, its uses and how I created a career in aromatherapy, but the question

FIGURE 3



we are looking to answer here is 'Why does nature 'NOW' need technology?' I believe this answer is very simple, we are a rapidly evolving digital generation and the next generations of genius aromatherapists are set to be so much more digitally dependent.

We are in a digital revolution that is more powerful than radio or TV ever had the ability to be. It took less than 12 months for facebook to sign up 200 million people compared to the 13 years it took TV to reach just 50 million people. Another staggering fact about facebook is that in terms of size, if it were a country it would be the 3rd largest just behind China and India. These social media statistics are

fascinating but this rate of growth is also reflected in how we use technology today. The US department of educators states that online students are out performing those receiving face-to-face instruction! This alone explains why technology is so important in today's world, especially today's professional and learning worlds. The future aromatherapists who are sitting in lecture rooms or more likely taking a webinar in aromatherapy and essential oil chemistry today demand technology, because they understand the speed, accuracy and beneficial necessity of it.

As an industry we are lacking this level of professionalism and digital growth. I believe that technology is essential for growth and development, and LabAroma is a bridge to this gap in the aromatherapy industry.

Not only do our next generations expect technology but we, the aromatherapists of today need it

in order to stay ahead in our industry, to be the best we can and to do justice to nature's gifts, our essential oils.

We can embrace our ipads and tablets as well as our bunches of lavender and patchouli - we need the two to survive in this rapidly changing world.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Colleen Harte** is the founder and director of Lucy Annabella and LabAroma. She is proud to be the Irish ambassador of Botanica 2014 International conference on plant therapeutics and clinical aromatherapy.

Learn more about LabAroma, sign up for a subscription, and follow them on their social media sites!

