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## IN CAPTAIN COOK'S FOOTSTEPS THE TRAVEL JOURNAL OF HIS DESCENDANT

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Jack Cook's journey through a spicy trail in Australia.  
Navigate through the sandalwood exploration with him.

The 1768-1771 expedition by British navigator, explorer and cartographer James Cook took him to the East Coast of Australia, where he was the first European to set foot. During the adventure, his ship, the Endeavour, ran aground on the corals of the Great Barrier Reef. The famous three-mast vessel was seriously damaged. It took seven weeks of repairs on the beach to get it back afloat.

The explorers and botanists on the expedition took advantage of the unscheduled pause to walk around the immense land they had just discovered. They came across Australia's aboriginal inhabitants and observed its abundant and diverse flora.

Today, Jack, the descendant of the famous explorer of this time, walks in Captain Cook's footsteps to discover this exceptional Australian plant life, which is the source of numerous essential oils with countless virtues. Let's follow him on his journey...



## FEATURE

Jack started his adventure by strolling through the wonderful forests of sandalwood. He discovered those magnificent trees and their delightful essence, which is sometimes referred to as "liquid gold". Effectively, its precious and olfactory qualities - it has a suave, balsamic, milky fragrance with remarkable smoothness and persistence - justify its high cost.

Jack had a chance to meet friendly aboriginal inhabitants with whom he got on. They spent a wonderful evening all together around the fire and shared their respective life experiences. He discovered that most of their families were working to produce sandalwood. Those people knew more than anybody else about this fragrant tree. They explained to Jack that the premium quality sandalwood was extracted from rare specimens over sixty years old, in which case the oil can be extremely expensive.

He also discovered that Australia was home to numerous species of sandalwood.

Originally from India, *Santalum album* has long been used to make perfume thanks to its smooth, creamy, woody notes. Today, this Indian species is cultivated on a wide scale in western Australia.

*Santalum spicatum*, commonly called "Australian sandalwood" is a tree that originated in the semi-arid regions of south and west Australia. Its raw, earthy notes make it an original and distinct ingredient for perfumers.

Not far away, *Santalum austrocaledonicum* grows endemically in New Caledonia and the Vanuatu archipelago.

Lastly, the most common of the "Australian sandalwoods" is *Santalum lanceolatum*.

In his turn, Jack told his new friends how, in the country where he came from, the essence of sandalwood was very much appreciated for its odour. He even revealed to them that sandalwood was used in the composition of the most delightful fragrances of the world.

That was an evening none of them would ever forget!





Jack continued his journey through the wild part of this huge continent island.

He discovered why the plant known under the botanical name *Melaleuca alternifolia* was commonly called tea tree and should not be confused with the tea plant (*Camellia sinensis*). Legend has it that his great, great, great grandfather, Captain Cook, came up with the name "tea tree" during his voyage around the world in 1768-1771, when sailors on his expedition used the leaves of a tree from the *Myrtaceae* family to substitute their favourite beverage!

He also learnt that Australian aborigines have been familiar with the medicinal properties of tea tree leaves for centuries. Traditionally, they used them to fight colds, fevers and congestions. They would crush the leaves and inhale the essence or infuse them to make a drink.

Jack was lucky enough to meet a generous local producer called Jarli who took time to share with him his passion for this amazing plant. Jarli taught Jack that it was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that essential tea tree oil was first produced in Australia from wild trees.

*"The leaves are harvested in the summer, starting from December"* explained Jarli. *"The trees are pruned when they are at their most leafy, which is when the leaves contain the maximum amount of essential oil. Careful cutting ensures that the trees can recover their foliage in two years."*

Then before leaving, Jarli made Jack smell the tea tree essential oil he produced. He discovered then a strong herbal, woody fragrance and kept in his pocket a small bottle containing this essential oil in memory of Jarli.





During his trip around Australia, Jack was surprised by this powerful scent, highly distinctive, combining camphoraceous notes with green and woody nuances. He quickly learned to recognise it, the smell of one of the most symbolic trees in the country - eucalyptus.

When he looked up, he was fascinated to see so many koalas in the branches of these nice-smelling trees!

Keira, a member of the Australian Koala Foundation - which works for the protection of these animals - explained to Jack that the essential oil extracted from eucalyptus leaves contains components that could be toxic. One exception is koalas, whose diet exclusively features these aromatic leaves!

*"This girl is so captivating"*, thought Jack. To be honest, she was not only interesting, she was also very pretty and charming. So, Jack decided to invite her for dinner. Keira was from an aborigine family. Her grandmother always taught her the faiths of these people to whom they both belong. During this enchanting evening, Jack discovered that aborigines have known about the antiseptic and disinfecting properties of the eucalyptus essence for a long time. They traditionally used the plant to treat respiratory infections and skin disorders. They also used eucalyptus as a natural insecticide.

Keira felt good with Jack and she told him a little more about her family and their traditions. She explained that her grandfather used to pick old eucalyptus trees hollowed out by termites to make didgeridoos, considered to be one of the oldest instruments in the world. The primitive sound of the didgeridoo could induce trances. For Keira and her family, it is a sacred creative object that was given to man to sing and create the earth, sky and stars...

Jack was definitively under the mesmerising charm of Keira...



*"Come with me Jack, I'd like to show you something..."* said the young lady the next morning. After a few minutes walking, they arrived in an incredible wild place. They decided to sit under a huge tree. *"The Blue Cypress is one of my favourite trees"* said Keira. *"We use it to refresh, calm and regenerate the skin, and to keep insects away"*.

*"... and I know that today, essential oil of blue cypress is widely used in cosmetics for its anti-age virtues."*

Jack was so impressed by the knowledge of this young lady.



The next day, Jack was invited for lunch with Keira's family. To welcome them, her mum offered them a nice refreshing beverage. Jack was surprised by this new taste he did not know previously. Keira explained to him that traditionally Australian aborigines appreciate the essential oil of lemon myrtle for its invigorating properties and use it frequently in cooking.

*"Lemon myrtle only grows in the Australian rain forests. Its Latin name, *Backhousia citriodora*, comes from the English botanist who discovered it, James Backhouse, and its delicate citrus scent"* said Keira.

*"The oil is a rich source of antimicrobial and antifungal active substances and was historically employed as an ingredient in deodorants and in creams to soothe and cleanse problem skin. We also considered lemon myrtle essential oil as ideal to purify the air"*.

Jack was really thrilled to discover Australia in such good company.





Finally, Keira told a last story to Jack...

*“When the Maoris landed in New Zealand after leaving their native Polynesia, the local environment was totally new to them. It was not long before they discovered the highly fragrant flowers and leaves of the manuka shrub and its numerous virtues. The manuka confirmed its irrefutable powers when Maori warriors back from bloody battles were treated with its leaves, flowers and bark. Many years later, the scientists accompanying James Cook confirmed that the manuka plant was an indispensable ally that can alleviate all kinds of everyday ailments...”*



Jack will keep a touching memory of his journey in Australia mainly thanks to the people he met. He thought it would be important to pay tribute to the culture of Australian aborigines, based on the spirituality residing in the earth, landscape, fauna and flora that date from the dawn of the world's creation. He understood that the aboriginal people realised that the riches of nature could bring us benefits a long time ago. And he realised that it is up to us to take care of this sacred land and the many essences it harbours.