

TAPPING INTO LIQUID GOLD



Global price

- A 475ml bottle of Canaqua costs
- Dh10 in Dubai
- £3 (Dh20) in London
- €6 (Dh28) in Paris
- €4 (Dh18) in Italy
- \$7 (Dh26) in Japan

THE SOURCE

Canaqua comes from an underground aquifer spring in the coast mountains of British Columbia, Canada, 1,200 feet above sea level. The source, which flows at a rate of 2,200 litres a minute, is untouched by air or any living thing before it is hydraulically pumped up 180 feet to be bottled.

It will only run out if it never snows for 80 years in the mountains – an unlikely event in Linda Samis's lifetime.

You can buy a bottle of Canaqua at Harvey Nichols, in Mall of the Emirates, Dubai.

Visit www.canaquawater.com

The woman behind what is being dubbed as 'the most expensive water in the world' pays a fleeting visit to Dubai and tells us about her designer water

By I-Cheng Chan
Staff Reporter

I sip it at room temperature, alternating each mouthful with a gulp of water from the office brand, which I am using as a control. It has to be said, Canaqua does feel softer, smoother and thicker as it caresses my throat, coating it as it goes. And, it's reassuringly tasteless.

The spring water that has been on the market for less than two years is making waves across the world with big names clambering to get a gulp of the action.

DESIGNER WATER

Dubbed as "the most expensive water in the world", Harvey Nichols in Dubai has stocked it since it opened, and its London counterpart is also on board. Selfridges too has bottles of it on its shelves, and just last month Canaqua's founder, Linda Samis, signed a deal with the world-famous Harrods of Knightsbridge, in the English capital. Across the water in Paris, the ultra chic L'adurée is also keen to stock the designer water from Canada that is causing such a stir.

The flood of interest has left Samis breathless.

"I look at my arm, and I'm black and blue from pinching myself," she says. "I'm a big thinker but this has surprised me. All of a sudden it's like the whole world is discovering Canaqua."

While the mum-of-two has had belief in her product since the beginning, she could never have anticipated such widespread demand in such a short space of time.

CALCIUM RICH

The vivacious entrepreneur from Vancouver is animated as she remembers how it all began. She and her son Jordan were first inspired by a documentary on coral calcium, found in abundance in the waters around an island in Japan where people were living long after reaching 100. A business had realised its potential and began selling calcium pills as a result. But as she watched it, Samis realised it would be easier to consume if it came in a bottle of water.

Her doctor then put her in touch with a patient who had land with water, high in calcium, and wanted to market it. While the pair didn't end up collaborat-

ing, after much searching Samis found her own land with a source rich in calcium and, unusually, virtually sodium-free which was a rare and added bonus.

FAMILY INSPIRATION

"If I told you how much money we started this with, you would laugh out loud," chuckles the 55-year-old mischievously, giving nothing away.

"Most companies have a big marketing strategy and business plan. I turned to my son and said, 'What shall we call this water?' He took about 10 seconds and said, 'I think we should call it Canaqua.'"

Finding the face of Canaqua was an equal breeze. After badgering her daughter Taylor to send a photograph of herself from Copenhagen, where she was studying, a self-portrait finally arrived. As Samis copied it in the printing shop, one of the assistants said, impressed, 'Oh, is that your new marketing campaign?'. And after a moment's thought, Samis said, "Yes".

WRITING THE RULES

While adopting a seemingly haphazard approach, this is not the work of a naive businesswoman, wet behind the

ears. Samis has had several companies in the past including advertising on cars and a decorating franchise.

She may have thrown out the rule book on this venture but the enterprising divorcee is now expertly writing her own and, by the looks of things, to great effect.

DRINK THIS ONE

Unlike other products around the globe, Canaqua has to be paid for up front and the buyer foots the shipping costs. From source, the water is sold to retailers at the same price no matter who they are or how much they want. And it is up to them how much they then decide to charge the consumer.

"Everyone knows the bottled water industry, and if you have the real deal, you are going to be a hit," says Samis. "We need calcium big time. Calcium is what makes you sit up in a chair. It's good for the menopause, PMS and cancer, and the more calcium you eat, you'll lose weight."

"Your daily requirement is not in a bottle of Canaqua, but if you are going to drink a bottle of water, you might as well drink this one."

VAZHISOJAN/GULF NEWS