

# *Cartier* Women's Initiative Awards



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*The 2009 Edition*

A joint project with the Women's Forum

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**THE CARTIER WOMEN'S  
INITIATIVE AWARDS**

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**EDITORIAL**



Carol Chyau has her way, 2009 mark the first Year of the Yak the Chinese zodiac. Carol is co-founder of *Shokay*, which produces home furnishings, children's shoes, accessories and yarn from fiber. Carol is co-creating sustainable economic development in remote areas of Western China, Carol and founder Marie So purchase their fiber directly from the region's knitters and work with female knitters from rural communities. "I know, yak down has been overlooked by cashmere, alpaca and other premium fibers. Carol and Marie are seeking to change this. Most people don't realize how soft I warm yak down is," explains Carol. By rebranding the Year of Ox as the Year of the Yak, they hope to raise awareness of yak as a luxury fiber in the international fashion world.

France and Japan—two stock market products. Building on the successful 2008 opening of *Shokay's* flagship store in Shanghai, Carol and Marie have established a partnership with Esquel, the world's largest cotton spinner. Together, they are developing yak/cotton blend yarn to sell to major fashion labels.

"*Shokay* is style with a touch of humanity," says Carol. "We want to open people's eyes to this exotic, socially responsible luxury."

*Carol works with Martin Gatins, Senior Vice President, Wholesale Department, Cartier North America, and with Grace Hu, Associate Principal, McKinsey Germany/China, on how to scale up Shokay.*

## ALIA MALIK, SHANGRILA FARMS, CHINA

# Heaven's nectar: fair-trade, pure honey from small farms in China's Yunnan Province.



China may be the world's largest honey producer, but pure honey is expensive and scarce. Alia Malik is helping meet this need and bringing sustainable income to local communities. Her company, *Shangrila Farms*, cultivates affordable, pure honey in the pristine mountains of Yunnan Province. This beautiful area, noted for its abundant local wildflowers, is perfect for producing high-quality honey.

In 2008, Alia worked on a trial project, setting up 20 beehives in a local village. "It was very rewarding to see farmers, who had never raised bees before, using our materials to produce honey," Alia says. Over the next two years, she plans to expand honey production to other villages and set up a plant for quality control and bottling.

Although it is rich in biodiversity, Yunnan Province is China's second poorest region. Local subsistence farmers need extra income to pay for basics such as school supplies for their children. *Shangrila Farms* positively impacts these farmers' daily lives by helping them set up hives and packaging, marketing and reselling the honey they produce.

Creating a business that gives back to the community was a natural step for Alia, a development economist. "Working on development projects in Africa and Asia helped me understand what a powerful tool business can be for addressing poverty," Alia explains. "I wanted to help people by creating sustainable income sources."

*Alia is coached by Lillian Zhang, INSEAD MBA 08, and Esther Sutter, Fellow Associate, McKinsey, on the optimization of the business model and the improvement of the financial projections.*