

SA fashion brands lean into sustainable textile innovation

Sealand, the premium outdoor brand produced in Cape Town, and intimates label Jockey South Africa, which is manufactured in South Africa, have incorporated sustainable textiles Econyl and Modal respectively into their product ranges.



Source: Sealand

Fashion and apparel companies have been urged to use more recycled materials and environmentally-friendly textiles from natural regenerative sources to help combat the scourge of plastic waste.

Experts recently called for the United Nations to set a global target of zero new plastic pollution by 2040, and at the COP27 conference delegates also agreed that the management of plastic waste should be a core element of combatting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. Because most plastics are derived from fossil sources, they contribute to global warming throughout their production, consumption and disposal lifetime, as well as being a massive contributing source of ocean and land pollution.

Regenerated nylon from waste

Sealand recently launched its first range of gear made from Econyl nylon, marking the first time that a company in Africa will be using this innovative material in bags and outdoor gear.

Econyl is regenerated nylon that is made from collected nylon waste that would otherwise pollute the earth, including fishing nets, fabric and industrial carpet scraps, and industrial plastic. This nylon waste then goes through a regeneration and purification process that creates a new nylon product that is exactly the same as brand-new, fossil-based nylon. It can be recycled, recreated and remolded repeatedly.



Source: Sealand

Speaking about the new range, Sealand co-founder Jasper Eales explained: “Sealand was built around our love for the sea and the land that we live on. Our mission is to protect nature and the outdoors that we love, and to ensure that every decision that we make keeps the planet and its people front and centre. All of our bags and apparel are made from upcycled or recycled waste, or from responsibly and carefully sourced materials.”

“The launch of the product range made with Econyl is the biggest product and material progression that Sealand has made to date, and it takes our commitment to the planet one step further. It’s said that up to a million tonnes of lost and discarded – or ‘ghost’ – fishing nets enter the ocean every year, causing untold damage to marine life and habitats. To be able to use a fabric that can create value out of waste such as this, and which can play a role – however small – in removing it from our natural environment, is incredibly important to us,” he continues.

Econyl has been used globally in collections by leading global fashion names including Stella McCartney, Gucci and Louis Vuitton.

“This is a premium material, which is also incredibly durable and functional. It has a water retardant built into it, so it is also water-resistant. Our products are built for adventurous high-performance lifestyles, so these are a natural extension to our range,” continues Eales.

The new range made with Econyl includes four products - the Buddy S backpack, Rowlie backpack, Moon cross body bag and the Dune M duffel bag - in three colours.



H&M and wool supplier embark on regenerative farming and biodiversity restoration project

13 Dec 2022



Bio-based fibre from beech tree pulp

Jockey South Africa aims to contribute towards the 'greening' of the local fashion industry by introducing garments and upcoming ranges that use bio-based fabric Modal.

Deriving its origin from sustainably harvested Beech tree pulp, Modal is a soft textile is a natural semi-synthetic material made by transforming the liquid found in the Beech tree bark using an environmentally-friendly process.



Source: Jockey South Africa

General manager for Jockey South Africa, Bruce McMurray explains, “As a company we pride ourselves on being at the forefront of innovation to give our customers the best possible quality products that they love. Part of this innovation is ensuring that our products adhere to the strictest quality controls, as well as incorporating sustainable production methods in our factories. These measures have resulted in massive savings in electricity, water usage and wastage.

“We are introducing in our garment ranges the use of Lenzing Modal, a trademark brand that specialises in sustainable and environmentally-friendly production processes. Lenzing reuses and recycles about 80% of solvents used in the production process and converts them into non-toxic goods such as cleaning products. The emphasis is on clean manufacturing and sustainable harvesting.”

The textile has been used in Jockey South Africa’s latest underwear range ‘For Me’, which launched on 13 December. Aimed at South African women, this new environmentally-friendly collection utilises Modal as the main fabric.

Especially soft to the touch, Modal fibre is lightweight and flexible yet durable, preventing rigidity after washing. Modal yarn is also naturally breathable and 50% more water-absorbent than cotton. The benefit to this is that it keeps the wearer of the garment cool throughout the day and night and prevents sweating and moisture from being trapped which can cause skin irritation. Furthermore, it won't shrink like 100% cotton products, giving the wearer peace of mind that their garment won't lose shape.



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“There are so many benefits to using Modal to create an underwear range, which also includes allowing for all-day comfort because this fiber is naturally breathable and 50% more water absorbent than cotton. So, our shoppers will be kept cool and happy over the hot festive season while the modal fabric helps to prevent sweating and moves away from the skin which can cause unwanted skin irritation,” adds McMurray.

According to Jockey, added benefits of this breakthrough fibre are its superior durability over yarns such as viscose and rayon which are also created from wood pulp. However, they are not sourced from a specific tree type. With its ability to hold dye more easily, it will keep colours vibrant even after multiple washes. Modal can also be blended with other fibres such as cotton and spandex for extra strength.

The style of underwear available within Jockey’s ‘For Me’ range features thong, boyleg, brazilian, midi hipster and bikini silhouettes in six colours.

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