Ecoalf enters consolidation phase and strengthens its network abroad

By Triana Alonso - 8 October 2018

Ecoalf, a Spanish company founded in 2009 by Javier Goyeneche, has managed to position itself on the international landscape with its products made from ocean waste. Key to its efforts: changes in the management after the arrival of a new investor amongst the shareholders, and the development of its distribution network: through El Corte Inglés and a monobrand Barcelona store set to open soon in Spain; and at Galeries Lafayette in France, as well as at the Nous concept store in Paris with whom it has collaborated for the launch of its new sneaker.

"We’re currently undergoing a period of great change at the company, renewing the management team, with a large expansion [underway], stockists throughout Europe, with 350 points of sale, and we’re selling to practically the whole world through our website," Ecoalf's general manager Marisa Selfa told FashionNetwork.com. Selfa, who has held the position since December 2017, carved out her career at brands including Levi Strauss, Adidas, Timberland, Cortefiel and National Geographic. Her arrival came just a few months after the Luxembourg Group investment fund Manor Group acquired 65.9% of the company's capital.

Recently the brand has also appointed Rafael Campos (formerly at Grupo Cortefiel) as financial director and Marcos Pérez (formerly at Lacoste and VF) as commercial director. Its president, Javier Goyeneche, wants one thing: "to manufacture the first generation of recycled fashion products of the same quality, properties and design as those that are not."

An ambitious challenge, that was born, according to Selfa, from a search for sustainable fabrics. An exploration that took its founder to the sea, where he was told that he would find the best possible nylon in fishing nets and where he felt an obligation to react to the huge amount of waste. Ecoalf collaborates with more than 3,000 volunteer fishermen in Spain and has expanded to Thailand, cleaning one ton of rubbish per day, from which the 10% corresponding to plastic bottles or fishing nets is recycled in order to to produce Ecoalf's garments.
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The company opened its first store in Madrid in 2012 with a second store arriving in Berlin in November of last year. The brand is already reinforcing this physical presence. "We just closed an agreement in Barcelona to open at the beginning of November," the manager explains. "And starting in September, we'll be looking at an expansion plan for the corners in El Corte Inglés." In autumn this year, the Spanish brand arrived at department store Galeries Lafayette as part of the sustainable fashion project Go for Good.

The entry should allow it to maintain a steady presence in Paris. "In the future we’ll be selling as much menswear as womenswear," says Selfa, noting that they have already signed for the autumn-winter collection and that the spring-summer 2019 is underway. The French capital has also been commissioned to host the exclusive launch of the brand’s new shoe model "Ocean Waste", which took place on Saturday September 29 at the concept store Nous, a multi-brand store devoted to sneakers and watches, founded by Colette employees after Colette’s closure last December. The most expensive shoe of the new offering stands at 120 euros.
"Currently, the market is insisting on sustainable fashion. It is a macro trend which everyone wants to get in on and which is responding to consumer demand," says Selfa. "Javier Goyeneche is a great communicator, the story is so good and so credible that we get incredible coverage without a marketing budget," she explains of the company's operations. As such, the United States has become the second largest market for the company, without even having its own store or having invested in advertising. Ecoalf, which does not communicate its figures, could reach a turnover of 7 million euros, according to Spanish newspaper El Confidencial. To date, the company has 38 employees, not including the staff employed at stores and corners, as well as 350 points of sale worldwide.