Pitti Connect: Herno trumpets sustainability; Oscar Farinetti expounds on Green Pea

By Godfrey Deeny - 15 January 2021

Pitti Connect took a novel turn with Herno CEO Claudio Marenzi presenting the brand’s latest eco sustainable ideas in its line Globe, before tag-teaming with Oscar Farinetti, the founder of Eataly, who has launched Pea Green, the new Italian eco-retail concept.
Pitti was born and is held in Florence, but due to the pandemic this week’s novel Pitti Connect is being staged throughout the peninsula — from Herno’s showroom in Milan to Green Pea in Turin.

“Herno has a vocation; to make collections that have zero impact. Like our recycled wool collection where sweaters must be selected for colors, as we do not dye them after. We want to be part of a proper circular economy,” stressed Marenzi.

Models, all wearing masks, paraded around inside the Herno showroom in monogram project spy trenches starring Herno’s hooked ‘H’ logo; silk cashmere puffers or bitter lemon puffers in a new gloss theme.

“After 18 months of sadness and darkness, there’s a need for color… Anyway, the darker the clothes the less sustainability as dark nearly always include chrome,” noted the Herno CEO.

Sustainability evident in nylon made from the 6.6 Amni Soul Eco polyamide yarn, an international exclusive of Herno. A material landfilled in a five-year anaerobic degradation process compared to 50 years for common nylon. Allowing it to decompose into organic matter and biogas to produce energy from waste. Seen in hooded bombers, vests and a parka, all padded with biodegradable down.

Parading before a backdrop featuring the tagline: 'What if you were wearing clothes that will stay on the planet longer than you?'

Other looks featured padding from recycled feathers taken from old duvets, used in classic car coats and parkas. While a selection of techy mountain boots with an urban twist; thermal soldered puffers and a high-tech minimalist bicycle made for a store window that then “sold like crazy,” explained Marenzi, emphasizing the house’s increasing range.

Herno has attended Pitti since its first edition a half century ago. “Now I am the honorary president,” chuckled Marenzi, who opened his presentation with a discussion with Pitti CEO Raffaello Napoleone.

“Thanks for opening your house in this moment. We believe Pitti Connect has become indispensable,” expounded Napoleone, both gents speaking in Italian.

Quite why the action occasionally shifted to a rooftop and an absurdly amateurish live shoot with two surly models was hard to fathom. But Marenzi revived the momentum with the appearance of Oscar Farinetti, Italy’s green entrepreneur of the moment.
“I am very happy to meet entrepreneurs who fight at this moment. I am inside your space in Green Pea, and if you hear a noise it’s because clients are buying. This is an anti-depression project,” beamed the ebullient Farinetti.

Born in Alba, the truffle capital of Italy, Farinetti has built Eataly into a huge Italian success story and a global retail phenomena, as anyone who visits their concept spaces in Paris or New York can attest. His new project Green Pea opened in December in Lingotto, site of the giant former Fiat factory, and boasts five floors featuring brands like Zegna, Borbonese and Herno; with a third floor with sustainable beauty lines. The space bristles with 2,000 trees, and includes a roof top club, named Creative Leisure, features a swimming pool with views of the Alps.

“We are living through the emergency of our life. It will take up to 50 years to solve: compatibility between the planet and people. We send too much rubbish into skies and destroy too much the ice. We create too much bad air; and we don’t recycle enough. But, in fact, Italy is quite advanced, since about 50% of our energy is renewable. And we are the world’s best at recycling wood,” opined Farinetti, in a speech boosting Made in Italy.

“Sustainability arrives from the word 'sustain'; from how a piano makes notes last. Thus duration is the key concept. So, we expect that in future there will be guarantees from fashion on how long every product will last. So, for me, there is no greenwashing at Herno,” said Farinetti, standing in a Herno store made of recycled composite chipboard walls.

The mission of Green Pea is defined by its motto, 'From Beauty to Duty,' he stressed.

“Designers have a duty to teach the world that they can make beauty in harmony with our world. It’s like what we do with Eataly. If you don’t start from healthy agriculture – you won’t find a healthy dish,” insisted Farinetti.

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