Supima on the allure of Hyères

By Godfrey Deeny - 30 April 2018

If fashion has any honey pot it is surely Hyères, which manages to attract a unique blend of hipster stars, clever insiders, cabinet ministers, curious CEOs and a new generation of talent. And it is the latter which in turns lures another unique blend – a selection of sponsors that can vary from upper echelon Chanel; crystal manufacturer Swarovski; Premiere Vision, the world’s leading fabric fair based in Paris; fashion college Marangoni and, this season, Supima, the hyper quality American cotton that is grown in the desserts of the American South West.
Supima will give the winners of this year’s fashion award winners - Rushemy Botter & Lisi Herrebrugh, Marie-Ève Lecavalier and Sarah Bruylant - the chance to create their own looks, which will then be presented at Supima Design Lab debut edition during Paris Fashion Week in September. Four finalists used the fabric in the Hyères runway show: Linda Kokkonen, Manuela Fidalgo, Jeff Montes and Ester Manas, whose Big Again collection won the Galeries Lafayette award, meaning it will be produced and retailed by the famed Paris department store.

We caught up with Buxton Midyette, Vice President of Marketing & Promotions of Supima, which was founded in 1954, to discover his take on the Hyères festival.

**FashionNetwork.com: Why is Supima in Hyères?**

**Buxton Midyette:** This is our first year but we feel a real genuine aspect to the partnership. We are joining a family that cares deeply about creativity, and are extremely excited about it. People who have been to our events in Paris can understand – the core value of Supima is to support young designers, sources of creativity and innovation. We have had our program for 10 years in the Petit Palais – and for the last three years in Paris.

**FNW: What help do you provide young talent in Hyères?**  
**BM:** We first met them at Premiere Vision in February in Paris, when Jean-Pierre Blanc (the founder and director of Hyères Festival) brought them to our stand. We were very excited that so many liked our fabrics. Each of the four winners will create one look in Supima fabrics, which we will show on September 30 in the Hotel Talleyrand at Place de la Concorde. It’s part of Supima Design Lab, to select young talent to work and supply them with Supima fabrics.

**FNW: Who owns Supima?**  
**BM:** The board is composed of the cotton growers of from western American states - California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Supima is descended from Sea Island cotton. It’s an ancient variety from Peru originally, then brought to the Caribbean and then to Savannah, Georgia in the 1780s by the British, where the sea islands’ sandy drainage was great for growing, before it moved to deserts of the American West. It has a really lovely journey – it’s just one percent of cotton in the world. Its fiber is longer and twice as strong and very fine. It’s the cashmere of cotton.

**FNW: Does Supima operate like Woolmark?**  
**BM:** We modeled our competition on the Woolmark Prize, as it’s such a beautiful program. Though we focus on earlier talent – and we have partnerships with design schools like Parsons, FIT, Rhode Island School of Design, Scan in Savannah, Drexler in Philadelphia, Kent in Ohio, the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in LA. It’s a national competition. It’s not a commercial program – purely to discover, support and develop new talent. And Hyères is very purely about new talent which is why we are so happy to be here. We have found the perfect partner! Plus, I love the absolute beauty of this place. The relaxed atmosphere and the way it connects so many leaders in fashion. One can have lovely conversations with different brands, companies and people. It’s the perfect debut for Supima.

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