

Trend Snapshot: Menswear



New York – Grunge slowly trickles throughout menswear. But not in a just-rolled-out-of-bed fashion; it's luxe with cashmere striped sweaters and buffalo plaid. Big grandpa sweaters function as outerwear for Fall 2011, says Stylesight's Sharon Graubard in her presentation at NYC Direction. Snug turtlenecks, mohair sweaters, toggle coats and turtlenecks give mod a nod. Open knits and collarless shirts in mud, clay, olive and stone provide rustic warmth, along with corduroys and vests. Motorcycle jackets and trench coats are silhouetted to the body. Beloved Dr. Martens make a comeback. Pendleton wool sweaters and Fair Isle knit caps provide a softer touch. ●

FABRIKOLIGIST | KARLA MAGRUDER

Do you have information about Cupro fibers and their environmental impact? Also, I've heard that copper fibers have healing properties. Is this true?

Cupro was a trade name for Asahi Kasei's cuprammonium rayon. There is a copper fiber called Cupron. Actually there are several copper fibers — Cupron, CuTec and Angelina Copper Metal Fiber are a few examples. The interesting thing about copper is that it is required by the body to live. At the same time it functions as an anti-microbial. The fibers mentioned are different from one another in how they are made. For instance, Cupron permanently binds a proprietary copper compound to textile fibers. CuTec has a proprietary copper master batch which is extruded in a nylon or polyester carrier creating a filament yarn. Angelina Copper Metal Fibers comes in two forms – a 100 percent copper fiber and a coated polyester fiber – both in spun form. Each of the copper fibers included here make specific claims about the performance properties. For example, CuTec management says that the fiber “improves hygiene and controls odor while promoting skin texture, tone and wellness.” ●

For more information you can contact each of the companies to learn about specific performance claims and environmental impacts. If you would like more information on copper you can find it at www.copper.org

OUT OF CONTEXT

an intriguing stew of outdoor fabrics . . .

the outdoor industry continues to ride the tech fabric wave. almost all of the fabrics used in this industry are a half bubble off center, exotic in some way. hyper-technical fabrics routinely share space with an array of green and sustainable 'sportswear' fabrics. it is an intriguing stew these fabrics make, a mix of technical sophistication, high performance and sustainable values. and while on a season to season basis it is hard to see anything but minor evolution, take a step back, and the amazing use of fabrics in the outdoor industry is profound.

an emerging star in outdoor fabrics is cocona. the new accelerator 3.5 layer shell fabric legitimizes the technology and allows it to be used skin to shell, a claim few others can make. the carbon content of the cocona's knitted fabrics, while small, drastically changes the interaction with moisture, and speeds drying time. the application of the same technology, in higher concentration, to the inside of the waterproof / breathable shell adds to the effect exponentially and the total becomes more than the sum of the parts. i have a couple of friends who are avid skiers, and they tell me using a cocona based system is noticeably different, being drier and warmer than the expected norm. it is always a good sign when the enthusiasts are pleased.

made in america is a groundswell felt underfoot. i know one factory owner who recently purchased a closed apparel plant in Pennsylvania. i could almost hear him rolling up his sleeves as he told me that he was getting ready to make clothing in the USA again. he went on to explain that right now a lot of the production seamstresses are still around, and their industrial knowledge and culture can be passed on. i know someone else who wants to make blue jeans in a decaying mid-west megalopolis, and sell them to the chinese. but far and away the best take on the 'made here, made now' trend is liberty bottles in yakima washington. their promotion of stewardship, and all that that entails, will make your hair stand on end. it is a powerful message.

lastly, the outdoor show was full of fun and happiness. this is an industry in love with itself, and it shows.

—kurt gray