

Green living, fashion coexist on the runway

High-end, commercial labels provide options to be eco-friendly and chic

By Dino-Ray Ramos
STAFF WRITER

As society becomes more environmentally aware, the words "eco-friendly" and "fashion savvy" are becoming commonplace in the world of fashion, introducing a new "green" wave of fashion that is both stylish and hip.

Socially conscious retailers, such as American Apparel, have jumped on the eco-bandwagon with a selection of organic cotton garments. More than that, top-tier fashion designers including Marc Jacobs, Stella McCartney, Diane von Furstenberg and others put their stylish spin on sustainability at the Earth Pledge Future Fashion Show at New York Fashion Week in February, using organic cotton and wool, corn fibers, recycled fabrics, natural dyes and other eco-friendly goods.

With the commercial and high-end world of fashion

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— Tierra Del Forte

joining forces to incorporate eco-awareness into style, the popular "itchy hemp" impression can be put to rest.

"I think the big (misconception) is that green fashion is crunchy and not flattering," says Tierra Del Forte, owner of the Berkeley-based eco-chic denim label Del Forte. "The new eco-generation designers are interested in doing something young and exciting. We are not focusing on the super crunchy customer.



GREEN TIPS

- 1. Fix It:** Rather than buying something new, give old fashions a second life by tailoring them.
- 2. Consider "Preloved":** Swap clothes with friends and pass your children's gently used items on to another family. It saves money, reduces the need for new materials and keeps clothing out of landfills.
- 3. Go Organic:** When you do buy new, look for organic, synthetic chemical-free fabrics, such as cotton, linen, wool or hemp.
- 4. Keep It Fair:** The next time you're tempted by a cheap \$5 T-shirt, consider the environmental and social costs required to get the price that low.
- 5. Recycle:** When you can no longer use a garment, give the gently used ones to a thrift store and turn the "holey" ones into household rags, quilt fabric or doll clothes. Or visit www.patagonia.com/recycle for details on turning worn out Patagonia or Common Threads clothing or any Polartek fleecewear into next year's line of fleece and cotton tees.

— Excerpted from "The Green Parent" by Jenn Savedge

on the classic jeans.

Beyond denim, the mass appeal of organic clothing has hit more mainstream stores.

Rogan Gregory, the mind behind Loomstate (another high-end denim brand), has created an eco-friendly collection for Target, available May 18. Perfect for the summer season, the affordable (prices range from \$14.99-\$44.99) wrap dresses and loose tanks are made from organic cotton, linen and other natural fibers.

H&M, the popular frugal fashion outlet, also has decided to go green by presenting a spring collection of organic cotton garments for women, men and children.

Designer Catriona MacKechnie also has made it possible to be eco-friendly when we sleep. With her label, Eco Boudoir, MacKechnie offers sleepwear fashioned out of biodegradable and naturally produced materials, free of chemical interference including hemp and natural silk, and Italian woven bamboo fiber.

Fashion

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In addition to the clothes on our backs, other fashion labels provide shoes and accessories that are eco-chic.

Jeweler John Hardy takes his eco-awareness to the next level with an assortment of limited-edition sterling silver jewelry that supports "John Hardy's Wear Bamboo, Plant Bamboo" program. The proceeds from each piece of hand-crafted jewelry sold pays for the re-forestation and planting of a certain number of bamboo seedlings on the island of Nusa Penida.

The classic shoe company Keds gave itself an organic makeover with shoes made out of organic cotton and recycled rubber. The new line benefits the Boston nonprofit charity Artists for Humanity.

Stores such as Buffalo Exchange, Crossroads Trading Company and Plato's Closet offer to "buy, sell and trade" clothing and accessories; providing a different kind of sustainability, but environmentally aware, nonetheless.

From organic fabric to reusable clothing, there are many accessible methods to have an eco-sensibility when it comes to fashion.

With so many options to be eco-chic, dressing "green" is becoming more of an everyday lifestyle than a short-lived trend.

Reach Dino-Ray Ramos at 925-945-4713 or dramos@bayareanewsgroup.com. For more on eco-chic fashion visit the Dressed blog at www.ibabuzz.com/fashion.

RED HOT AND GREEN ALL OVER: The Berkeley-based organic luxury denim brand, Del Forte Denim, proves that dressing with eco-sensibility can be fashionable.

She doesn't buy it."

As the popularity of high-end denim continues to flourish, green jeans are probably

one of the top (and most accessible) fashion items to have.

Fashioned out of certified organic cotton and using veg-

etable-based inks to print on their recycled paper labels, Del Forte is just one of the organic labels that give us an eco-twist

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