

Rediscovering Sopravissana Wool After the Earthquake

Roberta Cutillo (November 19, 2019)



Sease, the new brand by Franco and Giacomo Loro Piana, relaunches the use of an ancient wool made from sopravissana sheep, an almost extinct breed found exclusively on the Sibillini mountains, a part of the Marche region that is trying to bounce back from the devastating earthquakes of 2016.

In 2016, Franco and Giacomo Loro Piana of the renowned luxury clothing company launched a new sustainably-minded menswear brand called [Sease](#) [2], a name derived from the combination of the words “sea” and “ease” and influenced by their love of sports and the outdoors.

It's a “lifestyle” brand as the Milan store - part boutique, DJ studio, art gallery, record shop, and



bookstore - clearly illustrates. The sportswear inspired clothes are modern and high-tech but the fabrics maintain a traditional spirit and sustainability is a key focus.

The Sease website reads: “Our fabrics are selected for their quality, innovation and sustainability, and are 100% Made in Italy. Our sources, materials and processes all express the ultimate technology, also in terms of biodegradability, low emissions and recycling, resulting in an overall reduction of the environmental impact of each item.”

Now, for their latest capsule collection, the Loro Piana brothers propose items made out of sopravissana wool, which comes from an ancient almost extinct sheep breed that can only be found on the Sibillini mountains in the Marche region.

“The initiative,” Franco Loro Piana explains, “was born because two years ago, my father, along with other entrepreneur friends, decided to help the people of Visso by building a new facility in which to restart local artisanal activities, including restoration, called the company of master artisans.”

Located in the province of Macerata, the town of Visso was one of several heavily impacted by a series of violent earthquakes that hit central Italy in the Summer and Fall of 2016. The town suffered severe damage and, as aid failed to arrive and repairs lagged, many were forced to relocate their homes and businesses.

But local artisans and entrepreneurs were not ready to give up on their hometown. They came together to found the [Company of Master Artisans of Visso](#) [3], with the goal to bring work and life back to the town.

In September 2018, the center was inaugurated. A physical space for the company to meet, practice and promote their crafts, organize events, and interact with the public. Loro Piana patriarch Pier Luigi, along with the other entrepreneurs that supported its realization, attended the official opening.

It's while working on this project that the Loro Piana family first encountered sopravissana sheep, a breed derived from the vissana sheep, which were crossbred with Spanish and French merinos in the 18th century. These animals progressively adapted to living at higher altitudes by eating thorns and thistles. A few local shepherds discreetly perpetuated the tradition of breeding sopravissana sheep throughout the years, raising the animals in ideal conditions, where they have plenty of space to roam away from external stressors. These particularities are what makes their wool unique.

While in Visso, Loro Piana also learned about the small local activities still practicing an ancient natural dying technique, which relies on the use of the guado or Isatis Tinctoria plant to produce a dye known as “Italian Indigo.”

Uniting their desire to help the people of Visso relaunch their economy with their brand's dedication



to using sustainable materials and practices, Franco and Giacomo decided to incorporate both the use of Sopravissana wool and of Italian Indigo into a new Sease capsule collection, featuring ski jackets, trench coats and gilets.

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Links

- [1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/ottusajpg>
- [2] <https://www.sease.it/en/>
- [3] <https://www.maestriartigianivisso.com/>