

Sustainability is the new luxury

John Smedley and better thinking ltd bring sustainable design to luxury customers

Spring 2008 will see the launch of a new joint-branded John Smedley/better thinking Luxury Redefined t-shirt. Made in Derbyshire from organic, Fairtrade, extra-long staple Peruvian cotton with an exceptionally low water footprint – the Luxury Redefined concept takes sustainable design and communication to a new level. Supported by a product brochure and web site that tell the story through beautiful, evocative photography, the t-shirt combines the ultimate in luxury with the ultimate in sustainability.

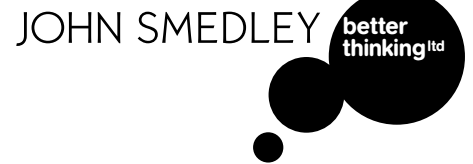
Better thinking ltd – a sustainable strategy, design and communications consultancy – has considered every aspect of the t-shirt’s environmental and social impacts since initiating the project in October 2005. Mike Betts, better thinking Director, sees the launch as a milestone in sustainable product development. “The Luxury Redefined t-shirt will help to define the sustainable luxury sector. It’s the first time that the full story of a sustainable product has been shared with consumers, not just by documenting the problems, but by showing in a concise and engaging way how we have found the solutions to these challenges.”

Through the product brochure and website, customers can learn, among other things, why Peru is the best source of sustainable cotton – it’s virtually the only place on the planet where the peak rainfall and sunshine occur at the same time of year, allowing the t-shirt a very low water footprint compared to most other cotton-growing regions in the world. Consideration has also been given to the garment’s colour, it will be left undyed and unbleached, as this is the least harmful solution for the environment. “This approach to colour will give the Luxury Redefined t-shirt a unique quality” explains Dawne Stubbs, John Smedley’s Brand Manager, “in that due to the action of most modern detergents, the garment may become slightly brighter and whiter during the first few washes. Though of course, we recommend washing it at 30°C with Ecover non-biological washing liquid or powder.”

John Smedley is very pleased to have partnered with better thinking to make the Luxury Redefined shirt a reality. “It was clear from the first time we spoke with better thinking that we shared the same values around craftsmanship and innovation – and a passion to create a sustainable product without compromising quality in any way” says Dawne. She adds “Sustainability is actually part of how John Smedley thinks and works in general, we always try to minimise our impact on the environment in everything we do, and all our garments are designed to be loved and treasured far beyond next season”.

John Smedley Limited
Lea Mills
Matlock
Derbyshire DE4 5AG
www.johnsmedley.com

better thinking limited
Unit 23, Links Yard
29A Spelman Street
London E1 5LX
www.betterthinking.co.uk



From the outset of the project, planet and people have been put on an equal footing with profits, which has allowed sustainability to be taken further in many ways. But when it comes to bringing sustainability to the luxury consumer, a very particular approach is required. Although the garments are made from naturally irrigated, fair trade, organic cotton, neither Fairtrade nor organic logos feature on the product label – though they are clearly visible in some of the photographs in the brochure and web site. According to Mike, this is because “for the typical sustainable luxury customer, it’s important that they know the provenance of the products they buy, but the communication of this has to be managed in a very sophisticated way. These are, after all luxury garments – they’re for people who care, but who don’t want to wear their ethics on their sleeves. Ultimately, they’re for people who understand the true meaning of luxury in the 21st Century.”

The need to make an ethical garment without comprising on quality or style was one of the factors behind the decision to make the garment in the UK. Having sourced the ultimate in sustainable luxury cotton yarn in Peru, better thinking ltd’s next challenge was to choose a manufacturer that could turn the yarn into the ultimate luxury garment. John Smedley, with its heritage of manufacturing fine knitwear in England for over 200 years, was the perfect partner. “We believe that John Smedley’s craftsmanship in t-shirt construction is unparalleled anywhere in the world, and the opportunity to work with a UK manufacturer that has been run by the same family since the birth of the industrial revolution was something that really appealed to us.”

The Luxury Redefined t-shirt will be available online and from John Smedley stockists in Spring 2008.
www.luxuryredefined.co.uk

Further information: Business Press

Nina Rennie: Sustainable PR
Telephone 0044 7736 272 224
nina_rennie@yahoo.co.uk

Further information: Consumer Press

Caireen Wackett at Yellowdoor
Telephone 0044 207 580 0707
caireenwackett@yellow-door.co.uk

About John Smedley

Founded in 1784 and located in Derbyshire, England, John Smedley is considered the authority on luxury knitwear. This iconic British brand, combines a heritage of over 200 years of expert craftsmanship, with an enduring desire for design innovation and assured quality. Using only premium textiles, John Smedley looks to become true fair trade pioneers, with a socially-responsible policy of openness in its manufacture of some of the world’s finest knitwear.

About better thinking ltd

Formed in June 2005 by three founding partners, Mark Holt (ex-Director 8vo), Mike Betts (ex-strategic planner North Design) and Richard Learoyd (photographer and brand imagery consultant), better thinking ltd is a sustainable strategy, design and communications consultancy. Better thinking ltd has worked with national and global brands in the telecommunications, retail, finance and fashion sectors.