

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Reverence for beauty, nature central to Loro Piana DNA

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Loro Piana is known for wool and cashmere luxury apparel. Image credit: Loro Piana

By SARAH RAMIREZ

MADRID When expertly leveraged, sophistication and exclusivity can still find an audience as luxury consumers continue to gravitate to heritage brands that are experimental and accessible.

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In a conversation with *Financial Times'* Milan correspondent Rachel Sanderson at the FT Business of Luxury Summit on May 21, an executive from Loro Piana discussed how the label differentiates itself in a crowded luxury marketplace. The Italian clothing company, which specializes in luxury wool and cashmere goods, remains committed to its understated elegance.

"We have a very unique brand and our customer is very defined in our eyes," said Fabio d'Angelantonio, CEO at Loro Piana. "They're very sophisticated in the sense that they are very discerning they know what they want, they know who they like."

Loro Piana pillars

Loro Piana was founded as a family business in northern Italy. LVMH acquired the brand in 2013.

Mr. d'Angelantonio was appointed as the label's CEO in 2016. He was previously the chief marketing officer of Luxottica, also serving as the president of the eyewear maker's retail business Sunglass Hut ([see story](#)).



Loro Piana's new, more sustainably manufactured fabric. Image credit: Loro Piana

"I had a privileged view of the brand," Mr. d'Angelantonio said. "I was a customer for a long, long time."

According to Mr. d'Angelantonio, there are three dimensions to the Loro Piana brand.

This includes "sensorial feelings," emphasizing the touch and feel of the natural fibers used for the brand's textiles, as well as balancing beauty and sensibility in what Mr. d'Angelantonio described as a "timeless and effortless feeling of elegance."

"We want our consumers to love our product long-term and in a functional way," Mr. d'Angelantonio said.



Known for its rigid standards of quality, Loro Piana sources the finest wool from around the world for its apparel and accessories. Image credit: Loro Piana

An innate sense of service is the final pillar that is central to the brand. The CEO reminisced on his own experiences with store associates when he was a Loro Piana customer.

Loro Piana operates more than 130 stores worldwide, primarily in Europe and North America. The label is looking to expand its presence in Asia, although it already has more than 30 locations in China alone.

Natural fibers

During the conversation, Mr. d'Angelantonio also touched on two trends impacting luxury fashion, including casual wear.

"Elegance is moving from formal to informal," Mr. d'Angelantonio said.

Luxury casual wear and streetwear have become fast-growing categories among affluent consumers, particularly millennials. With even the most formal corporations relaxing the dress code standards, brands in the menswear space must keep pace with shifting mindsets ([see story](#)).

Interest in sustainability is also driving the purchase habits of many affluent consumers. Mr. d'Angelantonio finds that ethical environmental practices are noticed by more customers than in the past.

Environmental efforts are of special important to Loro Piana, which has relied on natural fibers for its apparel since its inception.

In the past, Loro Piana released a multifaceted campaign centered around its eco-friendly fabric treatment that makes its clothing resistant to weather with minimal environmental impact.

The Green Storm System fabric treatment decreases the apparel brand's carbon footprint, uses less resources and still provide the same level of quality of protection. Loro Piana released a short film to promote the new process and a new collection of clothing made from Green Storm System-treated Tasmanian wool ([see story](#)).

"The philosophy of the company is very simple: we are clear that beauty and excellence originates in nature," Mr. d'Angelantonio said. "Our job is to select, transform, protect.

"We have the privilege to deal with a gift from nature, and we're very sensitive to that."

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