

AUTOMOTIVE

Jaguar Land Rover introduces Econyl to interiors as push to sustainability intensifies

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The new Range Rover Velar Plug-in Hybrid. Image credit: Land Rover

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Jaguar Land Rover, the largest British automaker, has upped its commitment to sustainability with the decision to use recycled plastic waste in its cars' interiors.

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The Whitley, England-based company is working with Aquafil to use the synthetic fiber maker's Econyl nylon to create floor mats and trims for its next generation of Jaguar, Range Rover and Land Rover sedans and SUVs. The decision to use responsibly sourced and recycled materials is part of Jaguar Land Rover's Destination Zero goal to be eco-friendly.

"Our designers and engineers are committed to developing the next generation of sustainable materials that will feature on future Jaguar and Land Rover models," said Adrian Iles, senior engineer of interior systems at Jaguar Land Rover, in a statement.

"We place a great deal of focus on the creation of new sustainable materials, using the latest, most innovative techniques and textiles," he said.

Jaguar Land Rover, owned by India's Tata Motors, produces Jaguar sedans and an SUV, as well as Range Rover and Land Rover sport utility vehicles.



A virtuous cycle: The Econyl process. Image courtesy of Jaguar Land Rover, Aquafil

Floored by tech

Next-generation Jaguar and Land Rover models will showcase floor mats and trims made with Econyl fiber from recycled industrial plastic and fabric offcuts from apparel makers, as well as fishing nets from the farming industry and those abandoned in the ocean, also known as ghost nets.

High-end fashion, sportswear and watch brands use Econyl to create handbags, backpacks, swimwear and watchstraps. So does Safilo, a leading Italian manufacturer of eyeglasses and sunglasses under license.

Econyl maker Aquafil reclaims nylon waste globally. Each year, the company recycles almost 40,000 tons of waste, with the recycling process reducing the global warming impact of nylon by 90 percent compared with the material produced from oil, the company claimed.

For every 10,000 tons of Econyl raw material produced, 70,000 barrels of crude oil are saved and 65,100 tons of carbon emissions equivalent are avoided, Aquafil pointed out.

The recycling process is interesting.

Inside state-of-the-art treatment centers the waste is analyzed, treated and prepared to feed into a chemical plant, where the nylon waste is broken to its original raw material using a chemical treatment process, known as depolymerization. The raw nylon material is then turned into the yarn, known as Econyl.

Throughout the process, other by-products such as non-nylon, metallic materials or copper sulphate which is used for preventing seagrass growing on fishing nets are removed and sent to alternative industries for recycling, Aquafil said.

The resulting Econyl regenerated nylon polymer has the same chemical and performance characteristics as raw fossil material, allowing it to be processed into a fiber for carpet flooring and textiles.

This yarn can then be used to manufacture floor mats for future Jaguar and Land Rover models with the goal of using more environmentally conscious and sustainable materials while still providing customers with a premium and hardwearing product, the automaker said.



Range Rover Velar Interior made with Kvadrat, a material partly sourced from recycled plastic bottles. Image courtesy of Jaguar Land Rover

Green and clean

Indeed, the process is key to helping Jaguar Land Rover move towards a circular economy as affluent consumers expect more sustainable practices from brands they patronize.

Jaguar Land Rover earlier this year was certified for the second consecutive year by the Carbon Trust, confirming business operations across the United Kingdom have met the internationally recognized standard for carbon neutrality, known as PAS 2060. Together, these U.K.-based sites represent 77 percent of Jaguar Land Rover's global vehicle production.

Land Rover currently offers a premium Eucalyptus textile interior on Range Rover Evoque. The Evoque, Range Rover and Jaguar's all-electric I-PACE also boast optional Kvadrat, a high-quality material that combines durable wool with a suede cloth made from 53 recycled plastic bottles per vehicle.

"Minimizing waste, re-using materials and reducing carbon emissions sits at the heart of our Destination Zero mission," Mr. Iles said.

"This pioneering materials research is one of the key ways we'll achieve this and is an integral part of our design offering to our customers," he said.

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