

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Gucci debuts new plant-based leather alternative

June 17, 2021



Like leather, Demetra uses tanning processes. Image courtesy of Gucci

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Italian fashion label Gucci is introducing a new animal-free, plant-based material as it pushes for sustainable innovation.

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Made in Italy, Demetra is described as a new luxury material that is soft, durable, pliable and supple. Three sneaker models are the first Gucci pieces made with Demetra, but it is versatile enough to be used for several product categories.

"In our 100th anniversary year, Demetra is a new category of material that encapsulates Gucci's quality and aesthetic standards with our desire to innovate, leveraging our traditional skills and know-how to create for an evolving future," said Marco Bizzarri, president and CEO of Gucci, in a statement. "Demetra offers our industry an easily scalable, alternative choice and a more sustainable material that also answers the needs of animal-free solutions."

Demetra details

Demetra is the result of two years of research and development by Gucci technicians and artisans. By using the same processes as leather tanning, the material has similar characteristics despite its more eco-friendly origins.

According to Gucci, Demetra is up to 77 percent plant-based with renewable and bio-based raw materials including viscose, from sustainably-managed forest sources; wood pulp compound and bio-based polyurethane from renewable sources, such as 100 percent GMO-free wheat or corn from Europe.

The raw materials and processes were chosen for their low environmental impact.



The Rhyton sneakers are among the first Gucci products made with Demetra. Image courtesy of Gucci

To minimize waste and adhere to parent group Kering's sustainability standards, Demetra's manufacturing takes place entirely in Tuscany's Gruppo Colonna factory and the tannery adheres to international environmental, health and safety standards. Mindful cutting minimizes unusable material and scraps are upcycled through an extension of the Gucci-Up program, in support of a circular economy.

Since Demetra uses widely available raw materials and relies on a tanning process that is already used throughout the fashion industry, it has better scalability than other new materials being developed. It is able to be customized with unique finishes, making it a viable option for brand differentiation.

To this end, Gucci will offer Demetra to other Kering brands before making the material more widely accessible throughout the fashion industry in early 2022.

The Basket, New Ace and Rhyton are the first Gucci products available with Demetra. The sneakers which are animal-free and also contain organic cotton, recycled steel and recycled polyester start at \$790.

Demetra will soon be used for more sneaker models and other product categories including footwear, accessories, handbags and apparel, but it is not intended to replace leather across Gucci's collections.

As sustainability becomes more important to both investors and consumers, leather goods houses with decades of history are seeing the potential for a future without animal skins. In addition to Demetra, newer entrants such as Mylo mushroom textiles have also laid the groundwork for more acceptance of leather alternatives ([see story](#)).

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