

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Stella McCartney reveals new green innovations as COP28 gets underway

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The brand is partnering with sustainability leaders like Protein Evolution, which has brought forth a parka, the world's first garment made using biological recycling. Image courtesy of Stella McCartney

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

British fashion house Stella McCartney is pushing forward its eco-friendly strategies.

As the world gathers for COP28, held in Dubai this year, a range of innovations is being revealed in partnership with 15 eco-materials companies including LVMH-owned Champagne maker Veuve Clicquot the U.K.-based brand also released its 2023 Impact Report just in time for the occasion, detailing company environmental performance for the 2022 calendar year. At a Sustainable Market on-site at the global climate summit, visitors and international leaders can peruse the fruits of Stella McCartney's collaborations up close, from grape leather shoes to the planet's first fashion item made using biological recycling.

"The future of luxury fashion, and fashion in general, must be sustainable," said Connor Lynn, cofounder and chief business officer of Protein Evolution, New York City.

"At its current production rates, fashion is responsible for up to 10 percent of global carbon dioxide output more than international flights and maritime shipping combined," Mr. Lynn said. "The sector produces some 92 million tons of textile waste annually, 87 percent of which ends up in landfills or polluting incinerators.

"Consumers are willing to pay more for more sustainable goods, and luxury brands have the opportunity to respond to this demand with thoughtful quality and attention to detail."

Greening the luxury landscape

COP28 is being held this year through Dec. 12.

The occasion is being attended by companies like French luxury conglomerate LVMH and people from around the globe. However, Stella McCartney is among the few individual companies participating in the event with its own programming, standing out and perhaps appealing to the growing wave of prestige customers who are putting their money where their values are.



The brand's installation brings together the work of its collaborators. Image courtesy of Stella McCartney

First launched at the summer 2024 runway show in Paris during the city's Fashion Week, the brand's Sustainable Market features the accomplishments of green collaborators.

"When you have a market at a conference that brings together world leaders and innovators to move climate action forward, you're sending a clear signal that you're an innovative and evolving brand," said Jasmine Bina, CEO and founder of **The Concept Bureau**, Los Angeles.

"It brings the high-level science down to a tangible, human-level experience," Ms. Bina said. "It also further cements the category of sustainable luxury."

Ms. Bina is not affiliated with Stella McCartney or its collaborators, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.



Stella McCartney herself is at COP28, emphasizing the importance of greening her industry and convening with world leaders. Image courtesy of Stella McCartney

The installation has been expanded since its debut, and in the year ahead, will be inclusive of a speakers series and workshops led by next-generation changemakers. At COP28, Stella McCartney's many partners in the environmental space are being celebrated.

Among them is fellow luxury maison Veuve Clicquot.

The duo collaborated on a grape-based material they are calling Vegea, which according to the brand, uses 50 percent less water than petroleum-based leather alternatives to make. The Champagne leather is comprised of 80 percent vegetal, renewable and recycled raw materials, and the elements are all solvent-free, metal-free and toxin-free.



From the soles to the straps, new shoes made in partnership with Veuve Clicquot use recycled materials. Image courtesy of Stella McCartney

Sourced from the vineyards, the grapes were grown regeneratively, the British brand making use of the byproduct for six accessories including three Frayme bags ([see story](#)), a bottle holder housing an edition of Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label and two Elyse sandals that use recycled cork for platform soles.

The items will be made available for pre-order on Dec. 11, with deliveries coming in March 2024.

"This collaboration with Stella McCartney embodies our commitment for a more responsible future," said Jean-Marc Gallot, CEO of Veuve Clicquot, in a statement.

"From the vineyards to our product innovations, our driving force is articulated around shared, opened and collective progress," Mr. Gallot said. "Reinventing a new circular material reusing the resources of our vineyards grown in regenerative agriculture is one of the key projects that demonstrate our climate entrepreneurship spirit."



The Champagne maker is lending grapes and corks to the fashion brand's Vegea creations. Image courtesy of Stella McCartney

Another big project that is on display at the Sustainable Market is Stella McCartney's collaboration with American biological recycling company [Protein Evolution](#).

The two companies have made a parka together, which is said to be the world's first garment made using the technology, called Biopure. The capability is made possible through AI-designed enzymes that make the raw elements of polyester using plastic waste.

"With Protein Evolution's Biopure technology we're able to source textile waste that would otherwise end up in a landfill or incinerator, and upcycle it into the building blocks of new polyester (which are indistinguishable from the petroleum-derived building blocks used in polyester manufacturing today)," said Mr. Lynn.

"We are not only solving the end-of-life problem for polyester waste, but we are solving the production problem eliminating fossil fuels from the equation to result in a low-carbon polyester of the same high quality," he said. "The Stella McCartney parka validates the Biopure technology, and is proof for the luxury fashion industry that we can reinvent the polyester manufacturing process creating new polyester from waste, rather than petroleum, without sacrificing the caliber of the material."



A futuristic and sustainable parka is being unveiled at the British brand's COP28 space. Image courtesy of Stella McCartney

This decarbonized invention is now unveiled at COP28, making Stella McCartney's involvement noteworthy. The namesake founder herself designed the jacket from packaging refuse and industrial textile strappings, with Protein Evolution processing the otherwise thrown-away materials.

"Anybody who knows me knows that I hate waste, which is why I am so thrilled about our collaboration with Protein Evolution," said Ms. McCartney, in a statement.

"Through my SOS Fund, we were among the first to invest in their pioneering biological recycling technology; one that has the potential and power to transform the world's plastic waste into infinitely recyclable polyester," she said. "Over the last year, Protein Evolution has taken unused fabrics from my past collections to test and prove their textile-to-textile circular process.

"This allowed my atelier to design and create the beautiful, airy parachute parkas made from biologically recycled polyester that you can see today at our Sustainable Market at COP28."



With a range of green developers like Protein Evolution, Stella McCartney is revealing the luxury fashion of the future. Image courtesy of Stella McCartney

Other companies and their dually-created fashion items on show at the climate summit space include Illinois-based circular solutions company NFW, Californian renewable bioproducts company Mango Materials, North Carolina climate solutions company Keel Labs and Californian climate tech firm Brimstone. Each of these startups will benefit from the \$200 million SOS Fund that the brand set up this year.

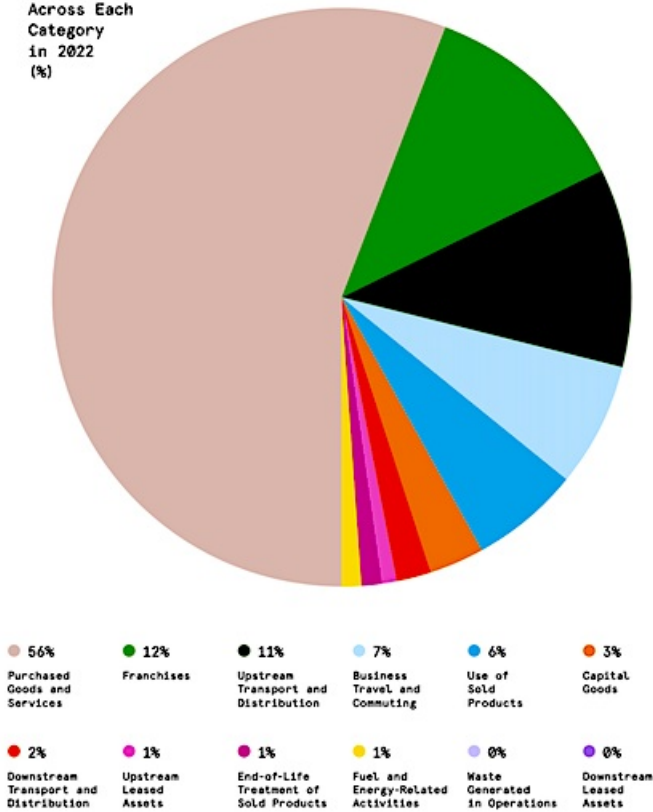
Standing partnerships with LVMH, Radiant Matter Biomaterials ([see story](#)), Nativa regenerative wool and others are also revealed at the Sustainable Market with their own dedicated stalls.

Reporting for climate

Released just in time for the COP28 gathering, Stella McCartney is further charting a sustainable course with its new Impact Report.

The findings are based on the company's environmental performance during the 2022 calendar year. Goals for the future are also included.

> Scope 3 Emissions Across Each Category in 2022 (%)



Most of the brand's Scope 3 emissions seem to be coming from a few categories. Image courtesy of Stella McCartney

Stella McCartney aims to be net-zero by 2040, cutting emissions across supply chains by 46.2 percent by 2030. The brand's investments in low-waste and raw materials (see story) are also worked into the report, which is divided into five main sections: "Where We Came From," "Governance," "Environment," "Social Responsibility" and "Forward Look."

In 2022, Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions from the company decreased by 76 percent compared to a 2019 baseline. Renewable energy powered 68 percent of all sites falling under Scope 2 during the same period, which puts the brand on track to only use the green fuel source by 2030.

Scope 3 emissions fell by 22 percent compared to 2019. Overall, most areas of the business were able to shrink their impact.

However, some sections saw increased emissions, such as "Business Travel and Commuting," "Upstream Leased Assets," "Downstream Transportation and Distribution," "Use of Sold Products" and "Franchises." The two biggest increases for Scope 3 came from "Waste Generated in Operations" and "End-of-Life Treatment of Sold Products," which jumped 4,400 percent and 1,050 percent, respectively.



This year was spent funding and supporting a variety of bio-material projects like that of Veuve Clicquot. Image courtesy of Stella McCartney

Throughout the report, Stella McCartney outlines concrete solutions and steps it is taking to do better and keep doing what it is already doing well, centering transparency along the way.

As it activates at COP28 alongside the release of the publication, it appears that the British house continues to show support for the green future of the industry and the innovators that are making it possible, from funding their cutting-edge research to advertising their biotechnology in the form of fashion.

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