

Trail blazers

Pushing performance to its limits is nothing new in the outdoor industry. But some of the technical possibilities available with textiles were attracting significant interest at the recent Outdoor Retailer Summer Market. **Kathlyn Swantko** reports from Salt Lake City

JUST AS THE US Consumer Confidence Index rose to its highest point (82.1) in the past three years, the outdoor market is also experiencing active growth, as was evident at Outdoor Retailer Summer Market 2013, held from July 31 to August 3, in Salt Lake City. The event drew approximately 25,000 attendees, sold out its usual exhibit space in the Salt Palace to over 1,000 exhibitors, adding an extra 275 new entrepreneur exhibitors and 95,000 additional square feet in its Pavilions@OR area, located directly across the street from the Salt Palace's north entrance.

The growth in the outdoor market was also pointed out by Julia Day, VP of sales and marketing for the Colorado-based Leisure Trends Group, in her "360 Degree View of the Outdoor Marketplace presentation. She said: "The core size of the outdoor market is a \$6.4 billion dollar business. During the economic downturn from '09 to '12, the overall market grew by only 5%. However, so far this year, business is already up by 9% overall. By category, apparel is up 12%, accessories has risen by 8%, and internet sales is growing by 17%, while the footwear market has remained flat."

The enthusiasm and growth in the industry was evident in the plethora of new product developments showcased at Summer Market 2013. Kenji Haroutunian, Outdoor Retailer show director, said: "We're excited to deliver the most compelling new product story ever seen at OR, as the pace of innovation is accelerating from an already fast pace set in recent years!"

Here, Future Materials reviews some of the new innovative textile products presented at the show.

KOMAFRAM, an Icelandic word meaning to "bring forward", is a new vertical manufacturer of sustainable performance wear. The line of innovative designs is described as made from a blend of alpaca and Tencel, advancing green technologies to create a lightweight, luxurious and odour-free fabric with thermoregulation qualities. Daniel Feuerstein, CEO for Komafram, explained: "Komafram is lighter than Merino wool, and we are exploring even finer count developments with our blends." The Komafram brand is made in the USA and adheres to strict green protocols in every stage of product development.

COOLCORE is promoted as the

industry's first chemical-free cooling material for the textile market. The material recently received patent protection as the only innovation that delivers three distinct functions - wicking, moisture circulation, and regulated evaporation to reduce the fabric's surface temperature up to 30oF. "The industry has said that 'dry is cool', but we disagree," said Ryan Drew, chief marketing officer. "Rather than a simple wicking function, Coolcore's moisture-activated cooling technology makes sweat work for athletes and on-the-go consumers." The new material is currently commercially available in performance apparel and wearable accessories and wraps.

CONCEPT III launched a new line of featherweight, Merino-based technical bonded, three-layer soft shell fabrics. This collection of textile combinations is produced through the combined resources of the Australian manufacturer, Merino State, and Dry-Tex Lamination, a specialised weaver and lamination supplier based in

Komafram is designed to be lightweight, luxurious and odour free



Southeast Asia. Customers can select from existing samples or design and develop their own custom creation from over 200 Merino knits and 300 woven and knitted synthetics.

INVISTA unveiled the new Coolmax product offering called Coolmax Air, which is designed to maximise wearer comfort through combining moisture management properties, breathability and faster drying times. "One of the key differentiators of Coolmax Air fibres from other standard wicking fibres in the marketplace is its patented cross-section that is propeller shaped," said Invista's global leader for activewear Heather Stefani. "This fibre shape allows for fabrics to deliver superior performance and comfort through the use of modified polyester fibres with special micro-channel cross-sections. The combination of moisture management and increased air permeability helps improve drying time so that wearers can perform at their best."

The technology is said to work by actively drawing moisture away from the skin's surface and dispersing it so that it can evaporate rapidly, thus keeping the wearer feeling cool and dry. This is done through the propeller cross-section, where the wicking channels within the fibre and between fibres can quickly move sweat to the surface of the garment where it is evaporated. Additional cooling can also be gained through the high air permeability, which results in the exchange of the microclimate, said Invista.

ADVANSA THERMOOCOOL with Merino Wool is Advansa's new Duoregulation fibre technology, introduced at ORSM'13. Through a partnership with the Südwole Group, the world's largest manufacturer of worsted yarn, Advansa now offers light, breathable, soft fabrics designed to keep the wearer thermoregulated and comfortable with effective odour control. Manufactured by Yarn in Motion (YIM), a brand of the Südwole Group, the new yarns consist of 50% Advansa ThermooCool and 50% Merino Wool, which are suitable for a variety of fabric constructions, including circular knits, flat knits, seamless garments and woven fabrics.

PYROSHHELL is the latest development from Schoeller Works, which was on show. With this technology, Schoeller aims to combine permanent flame protection with polyamide and polyester fabrics that comply with the most varied regulations and standards. Breathability, tear-out force, abrasion resistance, lightness, elasticity and ease-of-care are benefits associated with the new technology designed to make personal



ADVANSA ThermoCool with Merino Wool for outdoor apparel



CoolCore's Dr Cool Recover Wrap is said to combine cold and compression in one flexible fabric for Recovery-on-the-Go

protective equipment (PPE) more comfortable. The three-layer protective Pyroshell fabric needs no lining, and is available in two-way and four-way stretch versions, or in non-elastic qualities. When additional functions are required, Pyroshell can also be combined with other Schoeller technologies.

TEXOLLINI, the Long Beach-based knitter, featured three new fabric groups: True Indigo Knits; 100% Wool and Wool/Rayon blends; and Spacer Fabrics. The company believes the secret to developing True Indigo Knits, that mimic woven denim, is using the appropriate wash-house for finishing the fabrics. Texollini has developed the True Indigo Knits in a variety of fabric constructions, including: jerseys, french terries, slubs, fleece, ribs, thermals, prints, and bottom-weights. The wool and wool/rayon group was developed for American menswear, and is made using 45 singles compact-spun and worsted-spun yarns. The Spacer Fabrics group, which is called "knitted neoprene", are generating interest for jackets, bags, and medical. These fabrics can also be heat-transfer printed.

COVILLE used ORSM'13 to promote its completely vertical textile and apparel manufacturing organisation, based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The company offers "A La Carte" fabrics and apparel (i.e. cut, make & trim (CMT); finished fabrics; greige-fabric packages; commission knitting; and product development services). The company also offers full-package apparel, ranging from design to distribution and fulfillment.

EVENT introduced its third and newest waterproof and air-permeable film. The new film is designed to meet the continued demand for lighter weight and softer laminates, and is ideal for waterproof apparel for use in aerobicwear or moderate weather. The membrane is offered in three-layer laminates, made of a 15-denier face and 10-denier backing. Ten laminate options are available in the inaugural line. Internal testing of these new laminates show excellent results, including a higher air-permeability and MVTR (moisture vapor transmission rate).

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