



THE MEANING OF SUSTAINABILITY FOR RAPHAEL

It was in Valsessera Mountain Community that Pierluigi Fileppo, after gaining great experience as a fabric designer in other woollen mills in the area, decided to set up his own activity, driven by his desire to freely express his creativity. During the following years, between 1975 and 1982, the establishment was joined by the founder's wife and brother, Wilma and Bruno, and his sister-in-law Cristina. In 1990 the company moved to Via Noveis 19 in Pray, in the Province of Biella, where the headquarters are still found today. In a small municipality – situated in the North of Italy, in Piedmont, in Val Sessera, which is rich in a long and uninterrupted wool tradition. Pierluigi's two sons – Franco and Gianluca – and his nieces – Claudia and Paola – have inherited and carry on the trade, respecting what is now an ancient family tradition.

Raphael prides itself on years of experience and the collaboration of well-known stylist in order to constantly improve and renew its fabrics, adapting them both to classical and more modern design. The starting point of our production, which specializes in various types of fabric, is the choice of raw materials. This are always of top quality, both the pure wool and the more sophisticated fibers, and we mix them in order to obtain the best ratio of price to quality.

The ethical-social sustainability is accompanied by the enhancement of the territory and its natural resources, fundamental points within the company mission, as well as the precautions to reduce the environmental impact, such as the use of clean energy deriving from solar panels which, as well as guaranteeing environmental protection, they allow significant energy savings for the company, as does the transition to an LED lighting system. To improve energy efficiency by reducing the carbon footprint, Raphael joined the project promoted by Apparel Inpact Institute, with the involvement of prestigious brands, to identify critical issues in the consumption of environmental resources in order to reduce the production of clothing fabrics more and more sustainable. This research identified six interventions that deliver over 60 percent of the necessary reductions to align with a 1.5°C scenario: maximizing material efficiency, scaling more sustainable materials and practices, accelerating the development of innovative materials, maximizing energy efficiency, eliminating coal in manufacturing, improve water efficiency and shifting to 100 percent renewable electricity. The sector must find solutions to deliver the balance.

The global standards that adhere and subscribe to allow us to reduce the impact of the textile industry on the environment: Raphael is certified FSC (viscose), GRS, GOTS, RWS, ZQ, NPF, and on the occasion of the important milestone of the first 50 years of activity, it will adopt the ZDHC Roadmap in an increasingly incisive way to help achieve the global zero emissions target.

Tree-based fibres currently constitute less than seven per cent of the global fibre market. This growth is driven by the increasing demand for renewable and sustainable raw materials in the production of textiles. However, these materials can sometimes be sourced from high risk areas where deforestation or poor forestry practices are common. As the world's most trusted sustainable forest management solution, FSC labelling tells customers that the materials used originate from sustainable and legal sources.

The Global Recycle Standard (GRS) is promoted by Textile Exchange, one of the most important international non-profit organizations for responsible and sustainable development in the textile sector. The standard recognizes the importance of recycling for the growth of a sustainable production and consumption model, with the aim of promoting the reduction of resource consumption (virgin raw materials, water and energy) and increasing the quality of recycled products. Raphael uses qualified and certified suppliers able to produce recycled fibers through pre / post consumer upcycling processes. The recycling of waste often aims at introducing material of a lower quality than the original raw material into the circular economy market: upcycling, on the other hand, allows the rehabilitation of waste, giving the same quality as the original product. Therefore, discarded garments (post-consumer) but also processing waste from the textile supply chain (pre-consumer) can go back to being a fine

Raphael srl – 13867 Pray (BI) Via Noveis, 19 – Telefono +39 (0)15.76.79.96 – Fax +39 (0)15.76.7.9.97 E-mail info@lanificioraphael.com
Partita Iva/Codice Fiscale IT 00208850024





quality yarn, able to give the fabric the same characteristics as the original one, despite being produced from waste or waste material. Thinking about it, the art of upcycling already inhabits the ancient tradition of the mountain valleys in which Raphael is inserted: here, everyone has always recycled clothing or scraps to create other products for daily use.

Raphael was born and raised (and is growing up) in an uncontaminated landscape and natural context, surrounded by woods and mountains: for this reason she is attentive to the use of natural fibers of biological origin. We therefore joined the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). This standard stipulates requirements throughout the supply chain for both ecological and labour conditions in textile and apparel manufacturing using organically produced raw materials. Organic production is based on a system of farming that maintains and replenishes soil fertility without the use of toxic, persistent pesticides or synthetic fertilisers. In addition, it includes welfare standards for animal husbandry and prohibits genetically modified organisms.

The wool tradition of the Biella area, then, immediately sensitized us in the choice of wool from responsibly managed farms in compliance with stringent criteria for animal welfare and for the reduction of environmental impact, and the maintenance of long traceability the entire production process. These are the criteria that led Raphael to join the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS).

The use of natural fibers and a careful Chemical Management plan, supervised by the Textile and Health Association (partner of Ministry of Health), in addition to reducing the environmental impact in the use of chemical products, also guarantees the health of consumers, thus avoiding the use of toxic or potentially dangerous chemicals. The problems do not arise from the fibers but from what is used to color them, soften them, dress them ... that is, by the chemical treatments to which they are subjected or by the scarce breathability of the fabric. The origin of the pathologies is often linked to the presence of substances on textiles for some time now prohibited in Italy and Europe (dyes, pesticides, heavy metals, flame retardants...). Import products turn out sometimes treated with non-compliant chemicals. We therefore undertake to subject our production chain to strict laboratory controls on the quality of the chemical products used, trying to reduce, replace or eliminate even those potentially harmful, in order to create a quality Made in Italy not only as regards the product but also the protection of human health: Raphael is proud to be certified "Tessile e Salute", because it believe in beautiful and healthy fashion!

IN SHORT, RAPHAEL WANTS TO CREATE AN AMAZING, COMFORTABLE, SAFE, ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIALLY CORRECT PRODUCTS.

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