

Active nation

New laminates, lighter weights, alternatives to traditional down and functional finishes were the highlights at the recent Outdoor Retailer Winter Market. Kathlyn Swantko reports from Salt Lake City

THE OUTDOOR MARKET in the USA is alive and strong. This is according to Leisure Trends, an NPD Group market research company, reporting that for the last 12 months ending December 2013, retail sales in the outdoor sector were at \$6.9bn, up 6% year-on-year. This represents the largest full year dollar total on record.

According to the report, chain stores totalled \$2.7bn (+4%), speciality stores were at \$2.4bn (+4%) and online sales recorded \$1.7bn (+14%).



Guilford Cationic007

Each January, all the major players in winter outdoor gear gather at Outdoor Retailer in Salt Lake City to present their latest developments for the season. OR Winter Market, has become the platform for launching just about every ground-breaking textile innovation for winter apparel and gear that is coming to market.

"Today's active outdoor industry suppliers continue to showcase the newest technical materials that make apparel products not only look good, but also perform flawlessly in extreme conditions,"



Outlast fibre balls

said Kenji Haroutunian, Emerald Expo vice president and OR show director.

This season, lightweight textiles continue to be an important trend in the outdoor market. As electronic gadgets continue to add functionality to apparel, they also add weight. So, manufacturers are continually looking for lightweight fabric developments. Here are a few highlights from the show.

Allied Feather & Down launched its new FX Down, which was three years in development. Through its proprietary machinery, Allied has successfully blended fibre with down to create a product that performs like down. In addition, Allied has partnered with Celliant to enhance the down and convert radiant body heat into infrared energy that gives the body a measurable boost. FX Down is as warm as 100% down fill, is water-resistant, and can be blended in a variety of ratios that cater to specific performance and cost requirements. The product is also available in a range of Fill Powers, blended with both white and grey duck and goose feathers.

Concept III and Dry-Tex announced a new generation of creative, lightweight, stretch laminates, targeted towards the outerwear category. These developments use two- and three-layer softshell fabrics that are made from stretch wovens and knits, which are made possible through Dry-Tex's acquisition of the latest air jet looms, along with its sophisticated lamination machines. Since the new looms use less air, water, and energy, Dry-Tex has been able to move from C8 DWR chemistry into 100% C6 for DWR, thus offering totally PFC-free DWRs. Dry-Tex is Oeko-Tex approved.

Concept III has also teamed up with ABMT Australia in the development of a new collection of Merino wool/nylon blended circular knit fabrics. The nylon gives Merino a sturdier hand, and makes the fabrics easy care.

Cotton Inc announced the adaptation of its patented performance technology, TransDry, for cotton denim fabrics. This



Booth activity

technology transfers the moisture from the inside to the outside of the fabric for increased comfort and performance, while maintaining the softness and breathability of cotton denim. Cotton Inc also introduced the compatibility of TransDry with two different antimicrobial/odour-controlling chemistries for performance apparel: 1) TransDry with Agion Active, a finish utilising Agion (an antimicrobial silver, copper and zinc) combined with Sciessent Lava for odour-control, both from Sciessent; and 2) Polygiene, which uses natural silver salt from recycled silver, from Polygiene AB.

In addition to its existing warp knit capabilities, Guilford Mills announced its expansion into circular knit fabrics with its acquisition of 36-cut machines. At the show, the company featured a 5 oz. lightweight circular knit, utilising cooling poly/nylon yarns from Hyosung's Aqua-X and Nilit's Breeze in a selection of 40 and 70 denier fabrics. Guilford also showed its new Pulsar circular knit fabric in jersey and mesh constructions, utilising cationic and disperse-dyed 98% polyester/2% cotton heathered and co-mingled yarns from Amtex.

Outlast Technology featured an expansion of its climate regulating phase change materials (PCMs) with the introduction of its new PCM fibre balls product. This PCM fiberfill, which has a better loft than traditional fiberfill, takes the form of little polyester fibre balls that are ideally suited as a filling material for bedding products such as pillows, comforters, duvets, and sleeping bags.

Sanuk, a global lifestyle brand known for its funky footwear, featured an eclectic mix of interesting patterns, materials, and sleek



Outdoor Research Bullwheel Jacket

silhouettes for its fall 2014 collection. Two new product innovations for the season include: Instaplay, developed to combine comfort and water-friendly performance, and Thinnovation, created for those who prefer a slimmer look, but still demand the comfort of Sanuk's classic Sidewalk Surfers. Key fabrications for the season include rich suedes mixed with interesting soulful print patterns adapted from multi-cultures around the globe, waxed canvas combined with printed felt, boiled wools, and faux shearling liners.

Schoeller introduced its new Cool Fabrics and Warm Fabrics with Schoeller-PCM technology (temperature-regulating phase change material). Applied to a collection of elegant woollen fabrics and sporty comfortable soft-shells, Schoeller-PCM actively and permanently regulates temperatures in changing climatic conditions. Through dynamic climate control, the wearer is neither too warm nor too cold, enjoying a perfect personal comfort climate. The fabrics also maintain a high level of breathability and moisture regulation.

The use of either the Cool Fabrics or Warm Fabrics is determined by the end-use application.

Sympatex Technologies introduced its new lightweight Phaseable, a 3D apparel technology utilising a lightweight 2.5-layer laminate, as opposed to the



ABMT



Thermore Aria

traditional 3-layer version. The fabric incorporates a 3-dimensional half-layer on the inside, and only touches the skin with foam dots. The new laminate is as durable as a 3-layer laminate, but lighter in weight. In addition, Phaseable is 100% waterproof, comfortable, highly breathable, and 100% solvent-free through an ecological coating process.

Thermore showcased its new lightweight Thermore Aria, a synthetic alternative insulation to real down feathers that mimics the look of down when quilted with suitable fabrics. The new insulation, which is 98% air by volume, is ultra-light, weighing only 60 grams/metre. Thermore's proprietary finishing process prevents migration and preserves the long-term appearance of the garment. In addition, Aria is a soft, efficient, high-loft insulator that is hypo-allergenic and is PFOS and PFOA free. This lightweight insulation is being used by manufactures like Outdoor Research and The Gap, as an interlining for a new shirt jacket category of outerwear.



Sanuk AMBURRR

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