Famous Eco-friendly Fashion Manufacturer Now Available from Major Web Store

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Nov. 6, 2008 - PRLog -- The Viridis Luxe line of ethical fashion clothing is now available from www-fashion-conscience.com. The Viridis Luxe mission is to provide sustainable luxurious clothing to those who are making the choice to tread lightly on our planet, while continuing to enjoy fashion, luxury, and style. Viridis Luxe has reinvented one of the world's oldest cultivated fabrics, and launched a luxury brand of hemp clothing.

The Viridis Luxe aesthetic is the embodiment of effortless chic. Their signature organic fabric, exclusive to Viridis Luxe, is a revolutionary blend of the finest cashmere with long-fiber hemp. The Viridis Luxe line also includes exotic bamboo T-shirts and their exclusive sheer silk-hemp collection of jersey tops. Viridis Luxe is committed to making beautiful clothing using ethical, sustainable, eco-friendly methods.

With global warming and sustainable agriculture on everyone's mind, elegant clothing that benefits the planet is proving irresistible to celebrities like Amber Valetta, Uma Thurman, and Scarlet Johansson. They are just a few of the luminaries cossetting themselves this winter in enlightened luxury including lush wraps and sweaters adorned with the nifty VL embroidered logo. They are discovering the phenomenal qualities of hemp, and feel good about themselves as they enjoy this wonderful fabric which promotes a win-win situation.

Costume designer, Hala Bahmet, and producer, Amadea West, have made the environmentally friendly fabric the focus of their company and collections. Chic sweaters, sensuous tunic tops, figure-hugging skirts, and generous wraps in natural colors - cream, charcoal, and black - have been released under their Viridis (Latin for 'green') Luxe label based in Los Angeles.

It began in 2004 when West, who is from London, read a report about the pesticide-intensive cultivation of cotton. Horrified at what she learned, she decided to start a company to make T-shirts from recycled fabric.

Bahmet, who studied textiles in college in her hometown of St. Paul, MN, was cognizant of hemp's remarkable qualities. She was aware that the replacement of hemp instead of cotton globally, would increase fiber yield and free up an area of farmland the size of Florida, plus reduce toxic pesticides by 94,000 tons. Her work in Hollywood with environmentally conscious actors spurred Bahmet's enthusiasm.

Long-time friends, West and Bahmet decided to collaborate. They recognized that creating an environmentally friendly product in the fashion world would not be enough. "The clothes have to stand on their own," says West. "People won't buy something just because it's hemp. They'll have to love the hell out of it first."

With an original blend of hemp with silk, and hemp with cashmere, Viridis Luxe has cleverly conjured unusually soft yarns out of what is essentially a rustic material, elevating it to luxurious, must-have fashion status. "I think it's a romantic notion that we've taken something old, something historic, and are working with it in a new way," says Bahmet. A hurdle exists since hemp cultivation is a felony offense in the United States. The partners from the film world took the challenge and went to China to find suppliers. They spent more than a year convincing Chinese manufacturers to work with their combination-knit concept and invested in specialized equipment before factories would even consider experimenting with it.
Although they are flattered by their early celebrity following, that includes Anjelica Huston, Gina Gershon, Catherine Zeta Jones, Laura Dern, Ellen Pompeo, Fuchsia Sumner, Tracey Ullman, Ben Harper, Rachel Bilson, Eva Mendes, and Barbara Richardson (wife of New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson), their real hope is that the attention Viridis Luxe garners will go beyond fashion.

"People put it on their bodies," says Bahmet. "The clothing is sensual, tactile and personal. Then they understand it and can start to look at it differently. By glamorizing hemp we want to influence other industries to consider it as a really viable agricultural crop. Then we can start talking about hemp as bio-fuel and hemp as paper pulp. It will create more jobs."

These two committed women - mothers, and proven professionals in other spheres - tend to wax lyrical about the fabric's qualities. Here are a few hemp facts they love to flaunt:

• Hemp has anti-microbial properties and is highly resistant to insects. It never requires herbicides, pesticides, or chemical fertilizers.

• Unlike cotton, hemp does not deplete the soil of nutrients. This makes it cheaper to produce, eliminates groundwater pollution due to pesticide run-off, and curtails farming community exposure to toxic and cancer-causing products.

• Growing hemp reduces our dependence on petroleum products, such as petrochemical-based fertilizers.

• Hemp is a hardy, adaptable plant that can be grown in 85 to 150 days in most environments, including all 50 states.

If hemp were planted on only 12 percent of the European landmass, it would meet the world's demand for paper and eradicate the need to cut down trees for pulp. Prior to the 1860’s, virtually all our paper and cloth were made from hemp. One acre of hemp produces as much pulp for paper as four acres of trees.

In the U.S. about 1.4 billion cotton T-shirts are sold annually. If they were replaced by hemp T-shirts, the energy savings would be 3.5 billion gigajoules (a year's worth of household power for 92,300 people) and the water savings would be 1.3 trillion gallons which would satisfy the household water consumption for more than half the population of the U.S. for a year.

West compares their product line's environmental impact to that of a hybrid car. Bahmet expands, "It's not replacing all the other cars on the road overnight, but it's getting people ready for a different way of thinking about agriculture, petroleum, and their lifestyle. We want to move people gently in the right direction."

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