

FASHION

# Gap x Atelier & Repairs Capsule Focuses on Sustainability

● “...Our intention as a brand is to continue this movement and create a bigger impact,” said John Caruso, Gap’s head of men’s and women’s design.

BY BOOTH MOORE

On Sept. 6, Gap will debut a small capsule collection with a big message.

The San Francisco-based brand has collaborated with L.A. upcycling shop Atelier & Repairs to reimagine 500 Gap heritage garments from the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties – including color-blocked anoraks, logo Ts, rugby shirts, carpenter pants, denim jackets and jeans – in a step toward resetting the brand as a fashion leader with a focus on sustainability.

“It’s not one shot, it’s part of a long-term program for the brand of which Atelier & Repairs is the pinnacle,” said Alegra O’Hare, who started in February as Gap’s new chief marketing officer, and previously was with Adidas. “We want to connect with unique product going forward that’s more for the top-tier, fashion-forward consumer.”

Atelier & Repairs’ founder Maurizio Donadi has emerged as an eco-guru of sorts for heritage brands looking to reclaim their cool, working with both Candiani Denim and Levi’s Dockers in recent months on capsule collections using selvage denim, chemical and water-reducing production methods, and artful chambray patch details. For Gap, he personally scoured the company archives, eBay and flea markets for pieces that would resonate with vintage collectors, and that could be embellished, repaired, restitched or reinforced.

“Old Gap clothes, generally speaking, are a really good match for what we do giving clothes a second life,” said Donadi, a veteran of Benetton and Levi’s who started his L.A.-based upcycled brand in 2015 on the idea of circularity instead of disposing of old clothes. “They deliver an excellent price point for the quality of production they have. The pieces last...and they give an interesting window through the decades into Gap heritage,” he said, spotlighting color-blocked cotton smock jackets with marsupial pockets, women’s high-waist harem pants and first-generation Gap jeans made from Cone or Burlington denim as being among the most highly collectible pieces in the capsule.

John Caruso, head of men’s and women’s design at Gap, had been following the work of Atelier & Repairs for over a year before contacting Donadi. “We wanted to start this in a smaller way but our intention as a brand is to continue this movement and create a bigger impact. It’s the idea of collecting Gap vintage, or extra stock samples or colorways we create, and breathing new life into those pieces to sell them, all in an effort to not put more things into the world...Atelier is a glimpse into how we are going to be incorporating sustainability into the design process going forward, and how we can use collaborators, give them a platform as a global brand and give them a voice,” Caruso said, noting that Gap will be building a separate platform for collaborations next year.

Gap Inc. has been more vocal about promoting its sustainability efforts since president and chief executive officer Art Peck suggested in an earnings call in February that Gap brand could be working toward becoming a B Corporation.



Two looks from The Gap x Atelier Repairs collection.



“I don’t have any comments on that beyond Art’s,” said Michele Sizemore, senior vice president of production at Gap. But she did underscore the design team’s commitment to making best choices: “When a designer or an R&D team is designing a product, they can choose a virgin or recycled fiber and when you are using a recycling fiber, how do you design into that?...There’s an example of our women’s puffer coat for holiday where the team designed into the [idea of sustainability] using internal components and fibers, and that is something the team will be sharing out as we get closer...We’ve been working on a lot of these sustainability programs for a long time. With our scale and size we have the responsibility and accountability to do this work and we need to start telling our story.”

The Atelier & Repairs capsule collection will be available in three markets, and just a handful of stores,

including the newly redesigned Flatiron boutique on Fifth Avenue in New York, locations in Ginza and Osaka in Japan and Oxford Street and Brewer Street in London. It follows the brand’s 50th anniversary Denim Through the Decades kickoff in July, and another challenging financial quarter ending Aug. 3, when the \$16 billion brand reported that earnings declined to \$168 million from \$297 million in the year-ago period, while comparable-store sales fell 4 percent.

On the earnings call Peck said he was optimistic about Gap zeroing in on its heritage and making “a vintage play,” telling investors, “I’m not sure there is a big resale market opportunity for us, but our eyes are wide open and so we’re looking at it. Clearly, sustainability is a huge issue and we’re increasingly seeing that as we talk to our customers. We think we have an excellent sustainability record and we know we can do a lot more and we intend to do a lot more.”

BEAUTY

# Vapour Beauty Re-brands

● Under investor Nicky Kinnaird, the 11-year-old organic makeup brand has gotten a makeover.

BY ELLEN THOMAS

Vapour Beauty, an 11-year-old line that has historically been known for its organic products sold at natural beauty retailers, has reinvented itself for the modern, clean-beauty-curious consumer under the guidance of investors Nicky Kinnaird and Lori Perella Krebs.

The Taos, New Mexico-based brand has been entirely reformulated and repackaged as a luxury clean makeup line with a mix of 23 new and revamped sku’s, including foundation, brushes, lipstick, blush, mascara and eye shadow quads. New products are set to go on sale at The Conservatory at Hudson Yards on Sept. 5, and later will roll out to The Detox Market, Credo and six Neiman Marcus doors.

The products, once formulated with a minimum of 70 percent organic ingredients and marketed as such, have been reformulated to incorporate new botanically based ingredients and technologies, said Vapour cofounder Kristine Keheley. While they may occasionally feature some organic ingredients, the overall brand is no longer considered organic. Prices range from \$24

for a lip conditioner to \$60 for a Gentle Illuminating Primer.

The shift is reflective of what Kinnaird sees as growing consumer demand for clean beauty, in particular efficacious “clean” makeup in the luxury category. Historically, makeup considered to be clean – Vapour’s new formulas are made without a slew of ingredients, including parabens, phthalates, synthetic fragrances and even silicones and dimethicones – has not been considered efficacious, but technologies have been improved to the point where items like non-irritating natural mascaras are possible to make, said Keheley.

Vapour’s Mesmerize mascara, \$28, made with lash-conditioning acacia flower wax, jojoba oil and amino acids and formulated without carbon black, is one of Keheley’s personal favorite products because of how hard it can be to get the formulation right on a “clean” mascara. “Mascara is a tricky thing to break. It’s almost a holy grail [of clean beauty],” said Keheley. “We’ve all tried natural mascaras. There was one month I tried five different mascaras and got five different styes.”

Other products expected to be heroes include the High Voltage Lipsticks, \$35 each, which come in four matte shades and eight satin shades. The high-pigment lipsticks are made with jojoba oil, shea butter and sunflower wax, and without petroleum, silicone and dimethicone.



Keheley and Kinnaird are also betting on the Luminous Foundation, a stick formula that retails for \$46.

Ancora Investment Partners, a venture between Kinnaird, Krebs and private equity firm Winona Capital, invested in Vapour in 2018. Ancora’s first investment was Indie Lee, a clean skin-care brand, in 2017.

“Clean has increasingly become the norm, especially in skin care,” said Kinnaird. “It’s only a matter of time before the consumer turns and realizes that

actually, she doesn’t have to compromise on her color cosmetics [either].”

Kinnaird and Krebs were attracted to Vapour because of the “authenticity” of Keheley and her cofounder Kryisia Boinis, who live in and are inspired by the creatively inclined city of Taos. Keheley and Boinis have been working in clean beauty for nearly two decades each, and they are also founders of natural deodorant brand Aer. Vapour’s packaging re-brand, done in an array of soft and muted jewel and earth tones, was inspired by the light in Taos.