

WWD

FASHION / TEXTILES

Milano Unica Feels Coronavirus, Australian Bushfires Pinch

In response to global economic uncertainties, exhibitors upped the ante on sustainability, performance and stretch fabrics.

By [Martino Carrera](#) on February 14, 2020

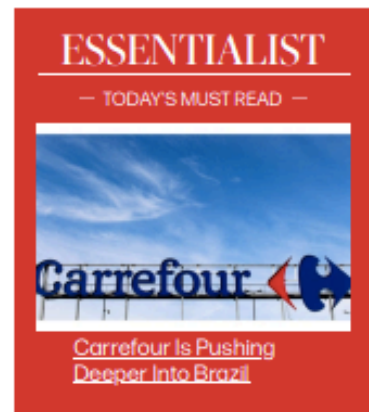


© The scene at the 30th edition of the Milano Unica textile trade show. Courtesy Photo.

MILAN — The mood was uncharacteristically gloomy at the latest edition of textile [trade show Milano Unica](#), which closed here last week registering a 2 percent contraction in the number of visitors compared to the same edition in 2019.

Textile entrepreneurs voiced their concerns over the coronavirus outbreak that could potentially impact sales of end products and consequently fabrics and the Australian bushfires and drought conditions that are expected to damage the quality of wool, especially in the second half of the year.

According to preliminary figures released by Confindustria Moda, the textile sector is expected to post a 4.7 percent contraction in sales to 7.57 billion euros in 2019 impacted by a flat internal expenditure and decreased exports, down 3.8 percent. “We’re not kicking off the new year enthusiastically as



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Europe registered a slowdown. In the former country especially, where the company has a few big clients, “soaring prices for raw materials and the streetwear trend led to a reduction of orders.”

Silvio Botto Poala, ceo of storied wool mill Botto Giuseppe, was worried about the impact the health emergency might have on both luxury sales — thus affecting the performance of the company’s high-end offering — and direct sales of textile to China as the country represents the firm’s third most important market after Italy and the U.S.

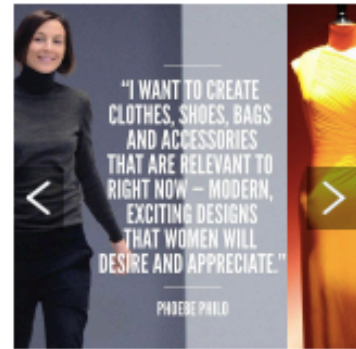
On the other end, Botto Poala forecast the negative outcomes of the Australian severe drought conditions to emerge between April and May and expects them to affect the yarns quality, resistance and fineness. “Luckily enough, the farms we work with have not been affected but we know those on Kangaroo Island were destroyed,” Botto Poala said.

For next spring, the firm continued to bank on its hero products including the Naturalis Fibra collection, to which it added the Slowstretch range of wools elasticized using a biodegradable polymer by Japanese company Asahi Kasei.



Botto Giuseppe’s naturally elasticized cashmere from the spring 2021 collection. Davide Maestri/Courtesy Photo.

In 2019, Botto Giuseppe posted sales of 64 million euros, in line with the previous year thanks to a varied offering, which includes knitwear yarns and jerseys, all assessed according to the RWS certification. “We’re small and nimble, that’s our strength. We can absorb the ups and downs each category might face,” the ceo said.



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Phoebe Philo is returning to fashion. WWD reported yesterday that the English designer is launching a new collection and has been reviewing designers. One of the most admired designers of her generation, Philo earned her name during a 10-year tenure at Celine. After her departure last season, she minted low-key knit clothing and handbags and built an incredibly loyal fan base. Philo said the above in an exclusive interview when she joined the site in 2008. Report: Miles Socha & the Conti — #wwdfashion #phoebephilo

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