

Go With the Flow

Eugene-based eco-attire imitates nature BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

If you want some panties that are sexy and sustainable, Eugene's Xylem Clothing Company has just the underwear — and skirts and shirts — for you. Xylem's designs are sewn from soy and organic cotton so you can clothe yourself from top to tush in Xylem's elegant tofu byproducts and hemp creations.

Danielle Nelson and Jazzi Januari have been sewing and selling clothes since they were 16 years old. Five years ago, after years of peddling their wares at Saturday Market and around town, they decided to combine their sewing and designing skills with an eye towards enviro-sustainability and start Xylem, a clothing company that makes fashion "organic and elegant."

Nelson and Januari are artists as well as designers and seamstresses, and their flair for

fashion is informed by "nature and the way things flow," says Nelson's husband and Xylem's marketing director Donald Brodsky.

The tops are often asymmetrical and the colorful dresses and skirts wend their way around the human form. A lot of eco-conscious fashion can be "typically boxy," says Brodsky, and Xylem's design team wanted to make "clothing that fit your body and made you look good."

The materials include "vegetable cashmere" which Brodsky describes as a byproduct made from the leftover pulp from tofu and other soy products. Their products are also made from hemp; organic cotton, which is grown sans pesticides; and Tencel, which is made from tree fibers — primarily eucalyptus. Some of the fabrics are blended with wool and silk as well.

The designs, from pants to panties, tops to skirts, are all made in Eugene. Januari and Nelson design the clothing and choose the fabrics, and until recently they sewed all the clothing themselves. These days they are "swamped with orders," according to Brodsky, and while they still color all the fabrics themselves with low-

impact dyes, the sewing is mainly done by a local seamstress and her employees. It's more expensive to produce the clothing locally, says Brodsky, "but it's important to support the local economy."

It's not as easy to buy Xylem's clothing line locally,

though Xylem is trying to fix that problem through upcoming trunk shows at their warehouse.

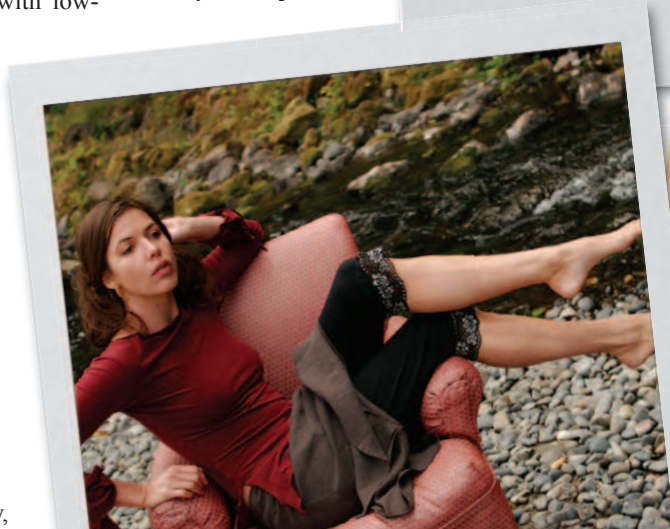
The company spends a lot of time featuring its products up and down the West Coast at eco-conscious events, including Eugene's Oregon Country Fair and the Faerieworlds Festival. They are members of Co-op America, says Brodsky, which has strict guidelines for socially just and sustainable products.

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Check out Xylem's flowing eco-friendly fashion at www.xylemclothing.com



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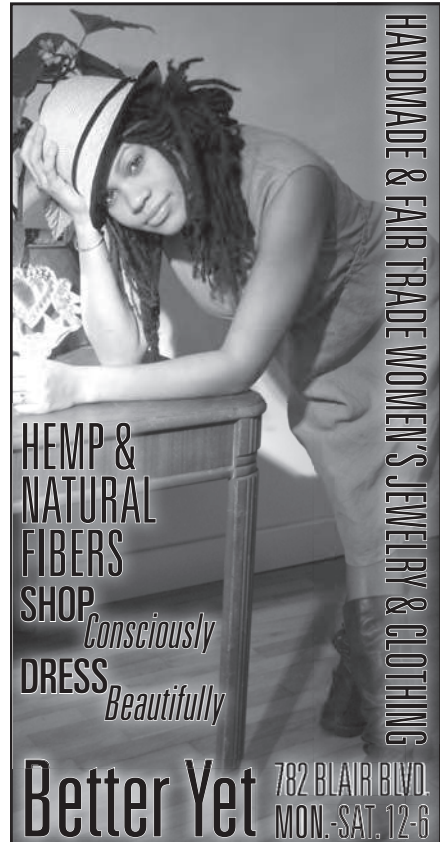
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