

of merino with high performance synthetics, in particular polyester, continue to drive this trend's development. Evertex offered a merino wool/nylon/polyester, spandex blend in a 3-layer laminate, bonding a crisp woven with a checkered fleece, delivering thermal function and flexibility to garment designs due to the reversible aspects. The controller is removable and the fabric has a lifespan of 20 washes.

As textiles start to deliver more direct insulation than previous essential ingredients, companies that specialize in insulation are coming back strong with new developments. Polartec featured Power Fill, composed of 80 percent consumer recycled content. The proprietary insulation technology delivers warmth without added weight or bulk. A soft and pliable matrix of polyester yarns is engineered with a distinct fiber geometry. Forming thousands of small air pockets, the matrix continuously captures and contains heat. Due to its hydrophobic properties, Power Fill resists moisture absorption and dries quickly. The message conveyed is: If it is flat print we need to raise the optical surface appeal.

Surface effects uplifted the traditional compact delivery for outer layers, as mills start to realize that creativity is as important as the focus on function within a fabric. Classic structures featured, with Sunny Special leading the way with a high-performance cross hatch woven, revitalized with print on both the face and technical side of the fabric, taking a basic structure to a new design levels. Many mills offered contrasting woven/knit laminated together in

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contrasting structures, but again reaching out to designers in delivering a new way of working with a textile's versatility.

Sustainability continues to develop, advancing season after season. A new area has arisen in the form of microfiber pollution that the textile industry, along with consumers, must embrace. Pontetorte was awarded the Eco Performance Award at Performance Days for its Biopic, the world's first fleece fabric with a brushed back, with fibers that are biodegradable in marine water. Its eco-credentials are further enhanced as the smooth exterior of the fabric uses 100 percent recycled polyester for the face

and brushed Tencel on the inner side. The performance of the fleece isn't lost, as it offers good climate control and moisture management from the inclusion of Tencel.

What is clear from Performance Days is that the creative input is much more balanced between textile suppliers and brands than in the past. Today, mills understand the importance of being able to differentiate from the competition and deliver collections that designers can't wait to get their hands on. ●

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