

## LuisaViaRoma Welcomes Cashmere Flakes to Its Sustainable Platform

The Como-based brand, which is a supplier to Armani, specializes in down jackets made of inflated cashmere flakes.

By [Fleur Burlet](#) on November 13, 2019



Francesco and Laurence Saldarini, founders of Cashmere Flakes.

Courtesy

**GOATS OVER GEESE:** After partnering with the Italian luxury market, Cashmere Flakes is all set to conquer Paris.

On Wednesday, the Italian brand co-hosted an intimate dinner at Les Ombres, a restaurant at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, celebrating both its upcoming projects with French designers and its partnership with Florence-based retailer [LuisaViaRoma](#)'s new sustainable platform, named LVRsustainable, for which it has created a capsule collection.

Launching Nov. 13 as part of the [LuisaViaRoma](#) web site, LVRsustainable is a curated platform of more than 170 brands in women's wear, men's, kids, beauty and home categories created in order to highlight initiatives that are eco-friendly, ethical and socially responsible.

“It has been a real journey,” said Maria Fernanda Hernandez, head of global projects and sustainability at LuisaViaRoma, who has a background in human rights and has been spearheading the retailer’s sustainability efforts, with projects spotlighting nonprofit organizations like Oxfam, Indian charity I Was A Sari or Swarovski’s lab-grown diamond collections with Penelope Cruz. “Our goal was to open a platform for a community interested in the planet, the people and luxury all at the same time.”

Cashmere Flakes, created by the Saldarini ready-to-wear group, is a sustainable alternative to traditional down jackets. Instead of geese feathers, their outerwear is filled with inflated cashmere fibers: Through a mechanical process involving air blades, the fiber — the brand only uses 100 percent Mongolian wool — is fluffed up and adopts the shape of a flake.

This innovation, which Cashmere Flakes patented in 2016, caught the eye of luxury power players: the brand partnered up with [Armani](#) in 2017 and will produce cashmere-filled outerwear for the brand for the next three years. Contrary to feathers, cashmere doesn’t spill out from garment fillings, meaning that product designers aren’t required to use coated, down-jacket proof fabrics — which is good news for couture and high-end ready-to-wear.

“We’ve received a lot of inquiries from board members and ceo’s of big luxury groups looking for sustainable alternatives to traditional down jackets,” said Francesco Saldarini, cofounder of the brand, speaking at the pre-dinner cocktail.

“Nowadays, there is really no alternative to feathers, unless you count unsustainable artificial padding made of polyester. Cashmere costs more or less the same price as premium quality feathers; its warmth improves with use; the innovation is patented so it gives brands a concrete certification; and from a marketing point of view, you are selling 100 percent cashmere products to your customers. It’s a winning novelty.”



Cashmere Flakes is made with fibers from the Mongolian steppes. Courtesy

Traceability and corporate social responsibility are also at the core of Cashmere Flakes' business model. The brand sources its cashmere fibers directly from the Nomad Herders Cooperative, the members of which comply with the code of conduct developed by the Swiss International Cooperation, and every fiber used is currently tracked by block chain. Mongolian wool is also cruelty-free: The goats are not shorn but brushed in spring during their natural molting season.

The cooperative is also actively engaged in preserving the Mongolian steppes. “Ten years ago there were 8 million goats in Mongolia, nowadays there are 28 million,” said Saldarini. “As a result, they are eating all the steppes. The cooperation is pushing the herders to move their goats every three to four months to regenerate the grass so as to preserve the ecosystem.”

Next up for the Como-based brand is reaching out to emerging talent to help them make their designs more sustainable. After partnering with young designer Marco Rambaldi in Milan, Cashmere Flakes has set its sights on a Parisian label for its next collaboration: The brand is teaming up with design duo Victoria/Tomas for its fall 2020 collection.