

With a goal of replacing fast fashion with consciously consumed fashion, Frances Austen's summer 2019 collection features 100 percent biodegradable sweaters made from sustainably sourced cashmere and silk.

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After many years in the fashion business, Frances Austen founder Margaret Coblenz was tired of seeing the trends in **fast fashion**, including a flurry of wasteful production and post-consumer disposal. With the clothing industry consistently falling into the highest-ranking waste production industries, she decided to do something about it with a very basic philosophy — make quality clothing that is versatile and long-lasting. Her goal is to encourage consumers to re-wear clothing, both because it's good for the planet and because they love what they're wearing. With that in mind, the luxury product line aims to be both trendy and timeless.

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“The lightbulb moment was years in the making,” Coblentz said. “After a decade of witnessing firsthand the overproduction of fast fashion that is not re-wearable, recyclable or re-sellable, we decided to do something about it. We saw amazing qualities in **luxury fabrics**, silk and cashmere, and envisioned game-changing clothing that is 100 percent sexy on you as well as the environment. If you want to help the planet, it starts by re-wearing your clothes, and our aim at Frances Austen is to make that easier for you. All our pieces are made to last, versatile for every occasion and comprised of biodegradable materials and are 100 percent cashmere.”



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Sustainability begins with the materials used during production, so the yarn comes from specialists in the industry, spun by Cariaggi in Italy. All of the yarn is Oeko-Tex Standard 100 certified, a certification only earned with chemical-free production and high international safety standards.



For production, the company partnered with Johnstons of Elgin, a family-owned factory in Scotland. In business for over 200 years, it is the largest employer in the small community of Hawick. Long associated with luxury and an emphasis on craftsmanship, Johnstons of Elgin is a name known for its socially responsible practices.



With reliable material and manufacturing partnerships in place, Frances Austen shifted focus to long-lasting durable designs in the **sweaters** themselves. Dedicated to using the finest fibers (15 micron), the goal of less pilling leads to durability and a softer feel over the life of the garment.



Hoping to meet the needs of a range of consumers, the **product line** includes crop designs, lantern sleeve, raw edge crew and a longer, reversible V-neck in a range of colors from citrine and kiwi to traditional charcoal and soft white.



As a result of my interest in writing about the sustainably focused 2019 summer sweater line, Frances Austen sent me a sample sweater to experience. The Reversible V in blush mauve is uniquely designed to allow a deep V front or a stylish V back and crew neck front. In my opinion, this adds to the versatility of the piece, giving it more value as a long-lasting article in my closet. The material is remarkably soft and comfortable on the skin. Time will tell the story of durability, but I'm excited to put it to the test as a staple of my wardrobe for many years to come.

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Images via Frances Austen and Dawn Hammon / Inhabitat

Editor's Note: This product overview and review is not sponsored by Frances Austen. All opinions on the products and company are the author's own.