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Revenge, The Environmental Way

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by Eileen Weber



You know the old adage, “Love is...never having to say you’re sorry.” Honestly, I can’t think of a single time someone done me wrong in which I wasn’t expecting an extra sweet apology at the end. Some flowers and a bottle of wine might be nice, too.

But take that same quote and change it to “Revenge Is...” Now apply it to the environment. That’s what Marilyn Barrett did with her company of the same name that sells T-shirts and reusable bags made from recycled plastic bottles. To Barrett, [Revenge Is](#)...wearing your plastic instead of throwing it out. She bases her company on the belief that the “best revenge is living well.”

Her passion about the environment has been heartily focused on reusing plastic bottles in her merchandise. The RPET bottles, or recycled polyethylene terephthalate, are broken down into chips and melted into molten polyester. It is then pushed through what looks like a showerhead and made into filament. The filament is then spun into fibers that are woven into fabric. All of this is done without using any further oil or oil by-product in the process.

Not surprisingly, the company’s biggest seller is the plastic bottle T-shirt. “We get a lot of feedback from people who love the material,” said Bill Schlueter, a public relations representative from LaunchPad PR Inc., a fashion focused marketing firm for Revenge Is... and other companies that use recycled polyester. “It’s made from plastic bottles yet it feels ultra-soft like cashmere.”

Schlueter went on to say that he has other shirts in his wardrobe made from sustainable materials that have not worn as well as the Revenge Is... shirts. “I have a bunch of bamboo T-shirts that I like, but they haven’t held their shape nearly as well as the RPET shirts.”

Schlueter also said that, while the company started out with just a few colors (black and gray), they are planning on offering other colors like fuchsia and green. The original shirts retailed for a little less than \$40. (Bamboo and organic cotton, however, retail for about \$20.) Their new line will include an Earth Day collection priced at \$32. Their older styles will be \$28. Kids' tees will be available as well for only \$22.

Barrett's company is not the only one using recycled plastic bottles. As of last spring, [Aaron Chang](#), fashion designer, renowned photographer and surfer, has pulled out all the stops with his recycled swim collection. With bold designs reminiscent of the sea and its surroundings, he also incorporates recycled polyester made from plastic bottles. The polyester fiber is used in swimsuits, board shorts and rash guards for surfing. All their cover-ups are made from organic cotton.

"Everything in our 'green' collection remains true to [our] identity and quality, and offers consumers a chance to get involved in this cultural shift of social consciousness. The organic cotton cover-ups and tees are the softest cotton you'll ever feel!" said Abi Huskey, Design Director for Aaron Chang International (ACI) on the company's web site.



"The recycled poly bikinis look, feel and dry the same as our previous poly suits, but consumers are doing something good for the environment when they purchase one," she said. "And the updated styling and silhouettes create a perfect match with our new fabrication."

[Patagonia](#) has been making their clothing, fleece pullovers, and T-shirts from recycled polyester, recycled nylon and breathable organic cotton for some time now. But the company goes one step further. They have their own garment recycling program. Any garment made from Polartec fleece (from any maker) or any one of their cotton or recycled materials can be returned for reuse. Along with their partnership with [1% For The Planet](#), they make good on their word to be environmentally-friendly.

Last spring, Coca Cola sprung their "[Drink 2 Wear](#)" clothing line made from a blend of recycled plastic bottles and cotton. They first launched the line in 2007 but partnered with WalMart to start selling the clothing in stores across the U.S.

"These fun t-shirts merge trend with consciousness, reminding shoppers that small steps – like recycling a few bottles – can go a long way towards helping to preserve our environment," said Stuart Kronauge, vice president, marketing Coca-Cola North America, in a press release. "If the

200 million Wal-Mart shoppers in the U.S. purchase these shirts, they will help us reuse and divert more than 700 million bottles from the waste stream."

Even Sears got into the act. Just before Father's Day last year, they launched a line of \$200 suits made from recycled plastic bottles. The suits were manufactured by Bagir, an Israeli company. The line of suits was subsequently dubbed "[EcoGIR](#)".

The Swedish clothing store H&M, primarily found all over New York City, also plans to sell clothing made from plastic bottles. Both [NBC](#) and [Treehugger.com](#) reported that the fashion giant will sell shirts, skirts, sweaters, and pants, among other things.

Using recycled materials is nothing new. But how they're used is. Another material, called Milkofil, is organic yarn derived from milk. A facility in Italy, [Filati Macclodio](#) located between Milan and Venice, makes the fiber from casein, the main protein found in milk. They weave it into two different forms of fiber, one blended with cotton called Milkotton and one blended with wood fiber called Milkwood. The company uses the fiber to manufacture bedding and clothing, including underwear. The milk fibers apparently are moisturizing for the skin. The company also boasts that because the material is milk-based it is sterile, good for blood circulation, and antibacterial.

Whatever the base component, more and more companies are finding ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. If there's a future trend in fashion, it's using old materials in new ways. I have a portable potty sitting around my house. Maybe I can make myself a new pair of pants.

Photos courtesy of Revenge Is... and LaunchPad PR Inc.

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