GAME CHANGERS: CINDY MCNAULL

The global brand and marketing director of Cordura, whose 'durability-plus' fabrics are in demand among outdoor apparel and backpack companies and, increasingly, also among workwear, denim and footwear brands, says making sure products will last a long time is an important way of making the outdoor industry more sustainable.

Made to last

Where are you from and what is the path that led you to the job you do now?

I've been interested in textile innovation from a very early age. My father worked for DuPont in a variety of performance fibre applications that took us through Virginia, Delaware and North Carolina. My grandfather worked for Burlington Industries (Klopman Division) and my mother and grandmother were both excellent seamstresses. It was a very tactile childhood involving lots of fibre and fabric heritage (not to mention bolts of cloth); a very useful experience because now in my current role we are seeing a trend for 'back-to-basics' (with a technical spin) as consumers are demanding more and more integrated performance solutions. I went on to major in chemical engineering with a minor in biomedical engineering at North Carolina State University. One of my favourite summer internships was at the Lycra fibre manufacturing facility in Waynesboro, Virginia, a facility owned by Invista today. Following graduation, my first job was with ICI Colors and Fine Chemical, which gave me a solid grounding in knit and woven textile formation, dyeing, and chemical finishing. I was also fortunate to work with a leading non-wovens company, Polymer Group Inc, which helped to expand my knowledge of the many and varied fabric formation technologies and applications. I joined Invista [owner of the Cordura brand] a little over eight years ago and have been living the durable journey ever since.

What does your job involve?

It involves determining unmet needs, seeing the trends, as well as crafting and marketing innovative durable solutions with the help of a dedicated and talented global team. This applies to multi-market segments for the brand, including military and tactical, workwear, and performance outdoor gear and apparel. Younger generations have grown up with performance expectations in their everyday lifestyle. Our brand team addresses this with a 'durability-plus' motif, focusing on long-lasting performance solutions in



Cindy McNaull has a lifelong interest in the different ways of forming fabric technologies.

Cordura

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A selection of Cordura fabrics, offering 'durability-plus'.
Cordura

addition to other 'hidden science' benefits such as moisture management, thermal regulation, and comfort stretch. The brand has a legacy in durable fabric solutions for bags, packs, workwear and military applications. In recent years, we've expanded our portfolio into segments demanding the "softer side of durability" such as performance, endurance, and lifestyle apparel. Our Cordura Combat Wool merino blends, Cordura 4EVER Fleece (and Cordura 4EVER Flannel debuting at Outdoor Retailer Summer Market in Salt Lake City) are examples of our recent platform expansion. And I can't say enough about our Cordura Denim Authentic Alchemie collection. True to our core of durability DNA, our fabric technologies are designed to enable our customers to go anywhere, do anything, take on the world, lose themselves, find themselves, push themselves forward and, ultimately, be confident in their purchase decision because it is built 'Cordura tough'.

What part can durability and the longevity of textiles and garments play in making out - door clothes and footwear more sustainable?

As part of our brand ethos, and fundamental to our Cordura Cares sustainability programme, we believe sustainability begins with a product that lasts.

What is the particular contribution that you believe ingredient brands can make to this discussion?

You should begin with great-quality ingredients that are made to last and are the product of thoughtful design and incorporate a 'reduce, reuse, recycle' mindset. On a related note, Invista has a forward innovation platform focused on bio-based fibre technology solutions. Watch for new and exciting things to come in the future.

Away from work, if you could show our readers one place in the world, where would you take us ? How would we get there? What would we see? What would we need to wear?

In today's fast-paced world, our lives are super-busy with constant ties to technology that always leave us feeling 'on'. I remember back to a time between graduating from university and starting out in the work world when there was a feeling of being able just to go and explore, without boundaries. Recently, I realised I long to have some of that innocence back. Last summer, my husband and I flew to Croatia. We pre-booked a few hotels, but also allowed time to go on our own journeys, to be a little lost, to follow our passions and to follow local people's advice. This led us to truffle-hunting with dogs, seeking out world renowned cheeses on the island of Pag, climbing the narrow wooden steps of medieval bell-towers, exploring the Roman ruins and deserted hill-towns of Istria, cycling through the national forest in Rovinj, and of course, wearing a lot of durable Cordura fabric.

And if you could take us to one bar or restaurant to unwind, which one would you choose?

Hands down, Bar 10.7 on the island of Formentera, in the Balearic Islands in Spain … my latest durable adventure.

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