

The first sneaker ‘digestible’ by nature

Silvateam’s new Ecotan Shoes concept goes a step further in the circularity of footwear.

It’s been over a year since Italy-based tannins producer Silvateam launched Ecotan, its innovative programme of next-generation bio-circular leathers that, at the end of their life cycle, return to nature as a fertiliser for organic agriculture, feeding the planet in a truly sustainable way. Tanned with formulations combining plant-based and synthetic tannins, these leathers are fully metal and glutaraldehyde-free, offering both tanners and brands a performing and sustainable alternative to traditional tanning methods.

While the project gained a lot of traction as a new way to close the loop, the need to disassemble leather articles, such as shoes, in order to separate leather from other components like plastic and stitching, made recycling quite a complex process to put in practice for brands. Now, Ecotan is changing the game as products are designed to be entirely recycled without being torn apart.

With its new Ecotan Shoes concept, Silvateam has joined forces with fashion designers who inspired a revolutionary design philosophy that promises to bring the first fully shreddable and recyclable leather sneaker to the market.

Ecotan shoes: the first sneaker fit for rebirth

The fashion industry creates over 25 billion pairs of shoes worldwide – 20 billion of which are sneakers – but over 95% of these end up in landfill. “It was obvious to us that the current footwear life cycle is not sustainable in the long term,” states Antonio Battaglia, director of Silvateam’s Leather BU.

“That’s why we decided to bring to the market a technology that could help rewrite the whole concept from scratch, one that does not need stitching or plastic components.”

In order to do so, the company combined Ecotan leathers with a groundbreaking layered structure that avoids any stitching or plastics that could cause problems in



Ecotan leather sneakers can be more comfortable than ones made with synthetic materials, they will last years, not months, and will look better with use.

the recycling stage at the end of the shoe’s life cycle. This design philosophy enables brands to create fully shreddable leather sneakers while reducing the carbon footprint, cost and complexity of the process, ultimately making the prospect of returning the resources initially taken “on loan” from the planet a reality.

Additional benefits: better for us and the planet

On top of the obvious benefits for our planet, the tanning technologies employed in Ecotan shoes maintain the inherent health benefits that define Ecotan leathers.

“The high hygroscopic and breathable properties of leathers treated with natural tannins make them ideal for producing uppers, linings and insoles. This is because they create an environment inside the shoe capable of maintaining the natural bacterial flora of the foot unaltered, avoiding the proliferation of bacteria responsible for the formation of bad odours and promoting the well-being of our skin,” states Battaglia.

Thanks to this, wearing shoes made with Ecotan leather should translate into a more comfortable experience for the user, helping keep their feet dry and fresh throughout the

entire day. On top of this, the complete absence of substances that could harm the user or the environment coupled with performance levels of leathers promises to bring to consumers shoes that last a lifetime, thus proving a safe, clean and healthy solution for consumers.

“Thrills for the feet, Ecotan sneaker stuns with its stylish and modern look and feel, becoming an attractive and trendy footwear for people who want to play their part for the planet every day,” continues Battaglia.

The objective: lasting quality and beauty

“With Ecotan, we wanted to offer brands a way to answer the call of the circular economy through the use of a new class of leather articles that can return back to nature sustainably,” states Battaglia.

“Now, thanks to Ecotan shoes, we hope that brands can see that the concept is not only possible, but easily put into practice simply by combining sustainable tanning methods with a revolutionary yet feasible design philosophy.” ●

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