

FASHION

Milano Unica Marks Record Growth, Shows Positive Signs for Second Half of 2025



The scene at the 40th edition of the Milano Unica textile trade show in Milan.

● Exhibitors focused on sustainable and creative solutions for spring 2026.

BY ANDREA ONATE

MILAN – The 40th edition of Milano Unica, the three-day textile trade show held here earlier this month, reported record growth in terms of both space and visitors.

The trade show saw a 12 percent increase in space in order to accommodate 723 exhibitors, and this “important milestone [...] with a record high in the number of exhibitors, should stimulate us even further to strengthen its leadership at the international level,” said Simone Canclini, president of Milano Unica.

The number of visiting international companies totaled 2,500 from 98 countries, an increase of 30.5 percent compared to the same edition last year.

Canclini continued by saying that he feels optimistic about 2025, both because analysts predict a rebound in the second half of the year and because he is confident that the Italian government will approve the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) European directive, which extends the manufacturer’s responsibility to include the management of the post-consumer stage, in order to help meet national or EU recycling and recovery targets.

A roundtable focused on the topic “Textiles: production is the real luxury” was held at Milano Unica, featuring Toni Belloni, president of LVMH Italy, and Alessandra Gritti, vice president and chief executive officer of Tamburi Investment Partners. The starting point for both was the unusual market situation that emerged after COVID-19. Belloni explained that during the last 18 months, the luxury industry has shown a sharp slowdown due to declining sales but increasing prices, and that all these factors ended up having a significant impact on the supply chain.

He contended that “70 percent of the world’s geographies will recover in 2025, thanks to local consumers, in America and the Middle East, or to tourists in Japan, Europe and South East Asia.”

“The post-COVID euphoria was generated by the previous deprivation which brought desirability, causing companies to increase prices beyond inflation. In 2024, consumers started making choices again and this caused outlet sales to grow by 7 percent, secondhand sales to grow double digits, the number of discounts to double and the trading-down phenomenon to widen, with an especially younger audience looking for brands that offer goods at lower prices,” Belloni continued. The solution is to be creative because “there is tiredness in the system. Everyone has done the same things, from a creative and collaboration point of view, such as hiring influencers and opening pop-ups. The companies that are original will find their customers,” said Belloni.

Gritti described this as a phase of consolidation and rebalancing of factors

and underlined the importance of supporting medium-sized companies, “to protect and keep alive the small dynamic and creative companies that will never be able to communicate” in the same way as the big established groups do.

The sentiment at the trade show was generally optimistic, reflecting the first positive signs seen at Pitti Filati at the end of January in Florence. Most exhibitors said they expect to see a recovery during the second part of the year when the measures and tariffs predicted by President Donald Trump are expected to be in place.

According to Confindustria Research Center estimates, in 2024, sales of Made-in-Italy textiles dropped domestically by 5.2 percent and outside of Italy by 8.5 percent.

Stefano Albini, CEO of cotton specialist Albini Group, confirmed the negative trend of the past year and a feeling of recovery at Pitti Filati. “The first half of 2024 was difficult due to the global geopolitical situation, but from July onwards there was an important recovery, with a closing of

the year and a beginning of 2025 on the rise,” he said. “We saw an increase of 5 to 7 percent in turnover.”

“Last year didn’t go well,” echoed Alessandro Barberis Canonico, CEO of the Vitale Barberis Canonico wool mill. While predicting a recovery in 2025, he admitted “there’s a lot of uncertainty due to the strong global instability given by the U.S. economic measures which are affecting the decisions of customers and end consumers.”

Franco Mantero, president of the Mantero silk specialist based in Como, Italy, confirmed last year’s slowdown. “We had a drop of 17 percent in revenues last year. At the end of the year, however, we closed with an EBITDA [earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization] of 7 million euros, which is still positive.”

Also, Mantero is continuing to invest in the supply chain. “In fact in 2024, among other investments, we acquired 70 percent of the Maglificio Ites, a knitwear factory with a turnover of around 10 million euros in order to diversify the product and enter the knitwear sector and become direct suppliers of knitted garments.”

Andrea Crespi, general manager at Eurojersey, added that 2024 ended with a turnover of 70 million euros, a decrease of 8 percent compared with 2023. Vasily Piacenza, co-CEO of the Piacenza Group, described 2024 as a year of adjustment, expecting to see a recovery in the second part of 2025, when the situation of uncertainty is expected to have mitigated.

Crespi also said “2025 will be a year of rebalancing, important to have a clearer picture of the positioning of the market in its uncertainty: the first six months will be challenging and difficult precisely because the market is still intent on safeguarding margins by sacrificing warehouse stocks given the financial instability. We expect a more encouraging and positive second half.”

Crespi added that the sports sector is expanding in China and the U.S. and that the most important markets for Eurojersey products are Northern Europe, including Germany and Holland, England and the U.S., Canada, China, and Japan. Albini confirmed the positive trend in the U.S. and a recovery in Japan, and Barberis Canonico predicted a recovery in China in the second part of the year and confirmed Japan as a market that is doing well.

In terms of trends for spring 2026, linen appeared in many collections, alone or blended with yarns such as cashmere, silk, wool and cotton. The collections hinged on high-tech fabric solutions which enhanced features such as lightness, stretchability, softness and comfort.

Loro Piana’s collection drew inspiration from Sergio and Pier Luigi Loro Piana, comprising a selection of pure linen fabrics or blended with cashmere, silk, wool, and cotton. Noteworthy was the newly added natural stretch effect on linen, which endows the fabric with fluidity, comfort and resistance to wrinkling. Textural artistries, like the seersucker effect, irregular bouclé, and honeycomb constructions were introduced in the collection. For spring, Loro Piana artisans focused on developing new textures and refined finishes also through Art Du Lin, crafted by Solbiati, the renowned linen specialist acquired by the brand in 2013. Furthermore, heavier and more compact constructions such as the double splitable were shown and deemed suitable for trenchcoats. ▶



Piacenza 1733’s fabrics.



Mantero fabrics.

Using AI-generated imagery, Albini 1876 presented its "Beyond Living" concept for spring, divided into three main themes, each inspired by a master of architecture: the "Balance Hub" theme by Le Corbusier, "City Escape," by Frank Lloyd Wright and "Studio" by Walter Gropius.

The fabrics of Balance Hub, with an eye on both work and leisure use, ranged from natural, lightweight ones such as muslin cotton to high-performing, comfortable textiles. Featured in the collection was 4Flex Formula, with four-way stretch and a high cotton content. City Escape explored the relationship between people and nature featuring high-quality linen fabrics available in various weights and designs, with more structured cotton or cotton-blend fabrics with Tencel lycell, ideal for shirts, lightweight jackets, and Bermuda shorts. The Studio theme focused on textile research, bringing to life experimental fabrics with unique characteristics and finishings such as "Crunchy," a crisp handle; "Salt," a dry handle achieved with sea salt, and more. Petrol green was selected to visually represent this experimentation.

A new range of fabrics was introduced by Lanificio F.lli Cerruti. Intended for suits, they were entirely made in RWS certified wool or combined with silk shantung. The Oxygen lineup reinterpreted tweed in a blend with linen and cotton in the new summer tweed bunch. Piacenza 1733 presented Light Twill, a refined blend of combed cashmere and Schappe silk. The new women's collection included double-face fabrics, a linen, and a mohair and wool fabric, while the designs were inspired by Japanese kimonos, made on a jacquard loom.

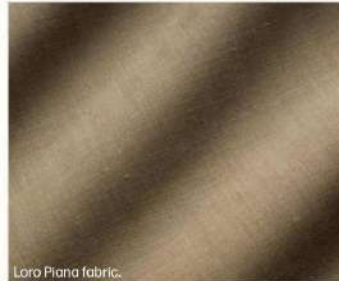
Reda celebrated its 160th anniversary by presenting a new technical poplin in merino wool, a fabric that combines comfort and performance. The addition of the Roica stretch fiber enhances its qualities. The total look was created by designer Massimo Monteforte. To describe this project, which takes its name from the date of the company's foundation, Reda presented the book "The sign of time - Art and mastery in the 160 years of Reda." The tome is a tribute to the history of the company and artist Pietro Terzini was involved to reinterpret the letters of the year of Reda's birth "milleottocentosessantacinque" (1865).

Chargeurs PCC Fashion Technologies presented an entirely new tech product, H2, a light three-layer textile. It's manufactured using the unique warp knit and weft insert technology developed by Chargeurs PCC's R&D teams at its historic Lainière de Picardie production site in France. The technology brings to the fabric warp stability, quality, breathability and resistance and it weighs 45 grams. This new product is named after hydrogen, the lightest and most sustainable element in nature and it marks a move into the outer fabric industry for the company.

Botto Giuseppe presented the Saphir, which is a blend of the GOTS-certified Organic Slowsilk with cotton, resulting in a fine slubbed yarn with a slightly shimmering look. Following the trend for new technical fabrics, Eurojersey introduced its Sensitive Fabrics crafted from nylon and elastomeric fibers that were breathable, wrinkle-free, and had stretch. They presented prints of weaves, micro-geometrics, madras and floral motifs, pastel shades, blues and grays and touches



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Loro Piana fabric.



Vitale Barberis Canonico's fabric.

of yellow, orange, and warm colors.

Mantero focused on the aesthetic fabric finishing of natural fibers such as linen, wool and nylon in its new collection Hypnosis. A key aspect was the use of single-component fibers, which simplify the life cycle of the materials. The collection also included fibers with low-water impact, such as linen, underlining a responsible approach to the use of natural resources. Dyes and prints were made in compliance with GOTS standards. The color palette comprised mineral grays, metallics, "brat" green, dark blue, jade and butter yellow shades and colors inspired by the Earth.

The partnership between Marzotto Group and Authentico by Schneider Group continues, guaranteeing wool traceability and transparency of the entire supply chain. For Milano Unica, they presented a wedding dress made for Ella Edwards, daughter of the owners of Bohara, a superfine merino wool Authentico verified farm in Australia. The dress was made with Authentico fabric from the Marzotto weaving mill.

Giorgio Toddesco, CEO of Marzotto Wool Manufacturing, said of the partnership renewal: "The companies of the Marzotto Group have done an excellent job in developing Authentico fabrics, which encourages us to continue on our sustainable path of transparency and traceability. And we are also encouraged by Ella Edwards' choice to ask our weaving mill, and consequently Authentico, to create the fabric for her wedding dress. It's important that each person involved in our processes truly believes in the values we share and acts as a spokesperson for them in their own way."

Vitale Barberis Canonico presented the Tropical Wool Silk range fabrics. One was a bi-stretch fabric made of 86 percent wool and 14 percent silk. It weighs only 210 grams and was offered in a color palette ranging from gray, aviation blue, and sage green to warm and cold browns. The other one was blended with linen natural stretch and was a 60 percent wool, 20 percent silk and 20 percent linen fabric weighing only 210 grams, boasting natural stretch qualities and a graphic matte surface. Its knitted fabric for blazers and outerwear stood out for its matte look, elasticity, and speckled surface, which was the result of blending silk and linen.

Companies presented their most recent

commitments to obtain quality and sustainable certifications with a focus on traceability.

In 2024, significant progress was made toward sustainability at the Botto Giuseppe's Valdilana and Tarcento plants. The water footprint was reduced by 8 percent, showcasing a reduction in water-related impacts, plus there was an increase in the use of certified raw materials, reaching 84 percent of the total, and a 55 percent increase in recycled packaging. Furthermore, 68 percent of the chemicals utilized comply with the highest sustainability standards as per the ZDHC Liv.3 protocol. The supply chain 4S trace system has been implemented and the ISO 45.001 safety management system certification was acquired.

Piacenza Group announced that, since 2025, Lanificio Fratelli Piacenza S.p.A. has become a benefit company, changing its name to Lanificio Fratelli Piacenza S.p.A. Benefit company. The commitment involves pursuing goals of common benefit, operating in a responsible, sustainable and transparent way toward people, the territory and the environment by integrating three new paragraphs in the company's statutes regarding community, people and supply chain. The duties for 2025 will include support for the local community through increasingly structured and solid partnerships with schools and associations that share an interest in promoting the area. ■



Chargeurs PCC's H2 interlining fabric.