

# MR. MARIO FERRARI: THE FUTURE OF LUXURY IS REGENERATED LEATHER

*While recycling, upcycling or eco-friendly practices are recent buzzwords of the fashion world, a company called Prodotti Alfa in Italy has been recycling leather since 1958*

By **Duyen Nguyen** on 03-08-2022 



Mr. Mario Ferrari at Sustainable Materials for Fashion and Interior Design conference, hosted by Harper's Bazaar Vietnam

Harper's Bazaar Vietnam recently held a conference on sustainable materials for fashion and interior design in Ho Chi Minh City. Joining us for the special occasion was a speaker all the way from Italy, Mario Ferrari. He is the Executive Worldwide Director of Corium, product of Prodotti Alfa, a company focused on recycling leather company in Italy. Per Prodotti Alfa, recycling leather is not only a better choice for both the environment and also the designers, but it is a true luxury product.

## Luxury is caring for the environment

High end fashion and beauty brands are now working on methods to reduce waste in their supply chain and minimize negative effects on the environment. However, just a few decades ago, this notion was non-existent. Luxury, then, was to use only the finest, rarest materials and discarding all that did not meet standards.

Since the last century, Italy was known for its high quality leather and tanneries. The waste generated by this industry was enormous. "Leather material waste was a problem in Italy. People used to built barriers, hid or threw those waste in landfills to solve that problem", Ferrari recalled.



Recycled leather from Prodotti Alfa

Prodotti Alfa was born from the question of how the leather industry could better manage its waste. “Since 1958, we are the first company in the world to start recycle leather.” Initially, the product struggled to take off as “at that time, nobody think about recycling.” However, the founders did not waver in their mission. “The topic of recycle was central in our company from the beginning”, Ferrari said. They refined the product while convincing clients that recycled leather was the future. And now, with many luxury brand their clients, Prodotti Alfa proved that caring for the environment is needed for a brand to thrive.

Luxury is Corium, the best recycled leather made from waste



Prodotti Alfa is known for their recycled leather, made from leather scrap, latex and natural cohesive elements. Leather scraps are collected from Italian tanneries, shredded and turned into powder, then mixed with additives and turned into a regenerated bonded leather.

Per Ferrari, “We have 4 types of materials: standard, soft, special, Corium. Corium is the top quality. At first, Corium was used as reinforcement for inside leather goods. Then, we develop it into leather-alternative products for outside of the bags, shoes... Corium has become very important because it is unique in the market.”

Corium has a smooth, natural surface that can mimic any type of leather, whether full grain cowhide or exotic. The only difference is that Corium is not soft enough to make clothing. However, it is better than natural leather to make accessories and furnitures, thanks to its consistency. “You can buy kilometers worth of Corium [but] its quality, thickness and color will stay the same”, Ferrari said proudly about his product. No imperfection means high quality products, less wastage during production and overall more workability.

## Luxury is a mindset, a lifestyle, a culture



A bag made from Corium recycled leather

Thanks to its exclusive regenerated leather, Prodotti Alfa gradually attracts and corporates and big luxury French, Italian brands. “You cannot think luxury is to waste resources and raw materials. Luxury must be in the culture.”

A mindset change is bringing about the next evolution in the luxury market, Ferrari said. “When I was young, luxury means crocodile. The old generations think if you buy crocodile leather, you are rich.” But this point of view is changing. “The new generation thinks that if you use crocodile leather, you are killing crocodiles.”

In fact, he points out that luxury was once the ability to live comfortably within your means. “In the past, we all had the habit of recycling. We used to recycle food, clothes, etc. and it was not synonymous with poverty.” Old clothes was used to make new ones. Gemstones from heirloom jewelry were reset into new designs.



(Left to right) Mr. Michele D'Ercole – Chairman of ICHAM Vietnam, Mr. Mario Ferrari, Ms. Tran Nguyen Thien Huong – Editor in Chief of Harper's Bazaar Vietnam, Ms. Trang Le – CEO of MultiMedia JSC, Mr. Michael Kokalari, Financial Analyst. Mr. James Huynh Maurer, Research & Development Director MERAKI FW., INC

*“It was a system of life, but we forgot this kind of behavior. [Wasting] will have bad effects on the future as we cannot exploit the raw materials forever.”*

He said, “The topic of recycling must be central in every developed country and in every production. Every citizen must think about recycling. This is our aim to come to Vietnam. Vietnam has a great history of production, great materials and skills. We want to cooperate with the designers because they are the life of the product. If the designers start [thinking about recycling], recycling will be a lifestyle.” And luxury is synonymous with lifestyle and culture”.



Mr. Mario Ferrari at Aquafina Vietnam International Fashion Week Spring Summer 2022

More information about Corium:

Website: <https://coriumrigenerato.it/en/>