

Winter Warmers

Want to keep cosy and dry while looking stylish? These outerwear brands have you covered

BY SHERI RADFORD

“Sustainability is the permanent trend focus.” That’s the opinion of Alexandra Franco, design director of Judith & Charles. “Consumers are not only more aware but more concerned about how outerwear is made, whether it’s ethical and safe and how they can invest in something that feels luxurious without impacting the environment.”

The Quebec company has a new collection of wind- and water-resistant coats that are PFC-free, cruelty-free and filled with down that’s been upcycled. Franco says, “We’re able to make a premium sustainable product by reducing global waste and upcycling recovered material. Down is a fully sustainable natural material with the highest performance in terms of breathability, warmth and lightness.”

Arc'teryx is also concerned about down. The Vancouver company makes sure products like its high-performance Agrium hoody (which also features a plant-based liner) and breathable bomber-style Kole jacket meet the Responsible Down Standard.

“We challenged ourselves to create a down product that had the same durability and performance as our existing products while using responsible materials and constructing them in a way that is more easily repairable, for years of use and enjoyment,” says design director Greg Grenzke. “Designing our products for longevity is always one of our top priorities ... and we know this can help to reduce environmental impacts significantly over the lifetime of the product.”

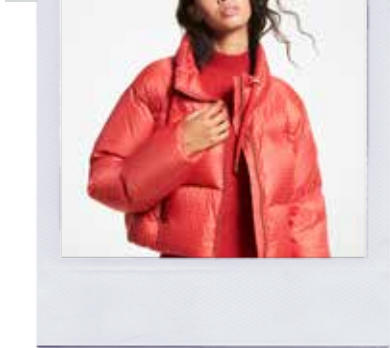
Another Canadian brand focusing on sustainability is Norden. Baked right into the Quebec company’s ethos is a commitment to having as small a carbon footprint as possible. All materials used are recycled and repurposed, including polyester, nylon, insulation and zippers. Norden’s also embraced materials like Polartec Power Fill, which delivers maximum warmth and durability while using all recycled PET plastic, with the aim “to redefine outerwear.” Fortunately, the PETA-certified label hasn’t had to sacrifice style or comfort, as evidenced by its new minimalist parkas and puffers for 2021.

Cosiness is the perpetual theme for winterwear, and this year is no different. Hunter has tweaked its popular vegan Rubberized Puffer collection to boost sustainability, using upcycled plastic bottles to make the padded insulation and recycled polyester for the lining. Also, check out the new puffer jackets from Michael Kors and Burton, the subtly stretchy Tracadie coat from Moose Knuckles and The North Face’s blast-from-the-past 1996 Retro Nuptse jacket, with oversized baffles for warmth and ripstop fabric to keep out water.

Two beloved American brands teamed up to produce a collection of instantly iconic pieces, including the Coach x Schott N.Y.C. shearling coat. Ideal for layering, this oversized number marries Coach’s craftsmanship with Schott N.Y.C.’s rugged style, and the end result is unforgettable—and simultaneously soft and cosy.

Another memorable newcomer is the infinitely adaptable McKenna jacket from Canada Goose. It has an adjustable hood and waist belt along with interior backpack straps for hands-free carrying over your shoulders if the temperature climbs, and features new “performance satin”—a versatile fabric that feels silky but is designed for durability.

Vallier’s latest collection features several parkas. The Quebec brand effortlessly blends urban essentials with the innovations of outdoor technical clothing, all while using organic, ethical and sustainable materials such as textiles



certified to meet the Standard 100 by Oeko-Tex (which tests for harmful substances). “We prefer to revamp classic styles versus follow trends, making it easier for us to focus on performance,” says product manager Simon Pelletier Marcotte. “Buy better is the motto here.”

When investing in a quality outerwear piece, timelessness and longevity are key—for the sake of both planet and pocketbook. Embrace the magic of the mountains with a retro-chic jacket from the DiorAlps capsule collection, or evoke the vibe of a ski holiday mixed with cool Parisian chic with a statement coat from the Chanel Coco Neige range. You can’t go wrong with a cuddly, oversized Teddy Bear Icon Coat from Max Mara.

Cody Gowanlock, North American account manager at Nobis, has noticed some small style changes since last winter. He observes that, in 2020, “consumers had longevity on their minds and were seeking investment pieces with timeless silhouettes.” Now? “As we start to emerge from the pandemic and return to some semblance of normalcy, we’ve noticed consumers refocused on more fashion-forward pieces, as they cautiously get back to socializing out on the town.” Trends he notes include “oversized and exaggerated silhouettes alongside vivid prints.”

Even for pieces that boast eye-catching patterns, Nobis still focuses firmly on the technical aspects of its outerwear, ensuring everything—including its below-the-knee parkas, oversized cocoon jackets and reversible puffers—is windproof, waterproof and breathable.

On the West Coast, a mere rain jacket can be enough on many winter days. From Lolë, the waterproof Piper jacket packs down to almost nothing, making it perfect for tucking in a bag or briefcase. From Vancouver’s own Lululemon, the StretchSeal relaxed-fit long rain jacket features the brand’s new proprietary fabric, which moves and breathes with you while keeping out wind and wet.

If it’s a wee one you’re outfitting for chilly days, choose a waterproof, breathable snowsuit from Quebec brand Souris Mini, which features backpack-style straps inside. For rainy days, opt for a waterproof Puddle Jumper jacket—complete with a cosy Sherpa-lined hood and jersey-lined sleeves—from Vancouver company PK Beans. And, if you’re feeling the seasonal blues, just think: isn’t it wonderful that the frightful winter weather leads to such delightful winterwear? V



Walking in a Winter Wonderland

Keeping your tender tootsies toasty warm is crucial for staying comfortable when Mother Nature wields her worst. Quebec’s Anfibio focuses on durability, and makes a no-frills aesthetic look pretty darned appealing. Two examples are the Karina, made from waterproof leather, and the Ines, crafted from waterproof suede. Both boots boast natural wool lining and a functional-size zipper (key for frozen fingers). Ontario’s Baffin emphasizes performance. Styles such as the adaptable Yellowknife and the stylish Telluride have leather uppers and a sturdy rubber base. According to Mark Hubner, SVP, brand, “Slip resistance continues to be a strong trend. With climate change we are seeing more freezing and thawing occurring in the fall and winter and, as such, consumers are looking for better protection from the changing elements.” Amen to that!