

# Peru Moda 2009

Article and photography by Janet A. Jacobs

## THE SPECTACULAR NATURAL BEAUTY OF PERU MADE AN INVITING SETTING FOR THE TWELTH EDITION OF PERU MODA, THE FOREMOST INTERNATIONAL TRADE EXHIBITION OF LATIN AMERICA.

Expertly organized by the Peruvian export promotion agency Prom Peru, the annual event showcased an outstanding selection of apparel, accessories, footwear, and jewelry collections. Peru Moda 2009 welcomed more than 7,000 visitors from 10 countries, a significant increase over last year's show. There was a particularly strong showing of childrenswear companies, especially focused on the younger size ranges. Baby and layette clothes are well suited to take advantage of the region's super soft natural fibers and unique hand crafted touches. Color palettes range from subtle neutrals to vibrant brights. The premium quality of Peruvian fabrics is recognized worldwide; Pima cotton, Tanguis cotton and baby alpaca are silky soft and very appealing for children's clothes.

The current appreciation of organic fibers made Peru Moda of special interest to American and European buyers. Peru Naturtex Partners is a long established manufacturing company that produces over 150 different eco textile products, including Pima cotton and naturally pigmented Pakucho yarns, knit and woven fabrics, and low impact, organic vegetable dyes. Naturtex offers a full package approach including a large selection of original designs for organic baby clothes. Company founder James M. Vreeland says, "We are the first Fair Trade and organic company in the Americas! Naturtex supports several projects with Indian farmers and artisans in the jungle and desert." Naturtex was founded in 1997

to revive the naturally pigmented cottons and alpaca from near extinction. Vreeland says, "These naturally pigmented fibers are extremely durable, soft, and are said to have anti-inflammatory properties." The versatile company also produces organic denim woven in two colors. Earth-Tots, a new participant at the event, attracted lots of attention with their unique line made of the finest Peruvian organic cotton. Their naturally colored organic cottons are extremely pure, making them ideal for kids with allergies or respiratory problems.

Nazca Green offers a smaller but lovely collection of organic Pima cotton tee shirts and onesies. Owner Susana Carillo says, "We use only vegetable dyes from plants, indigo for blue, cochinitilla bugs for red, etc. We specialize in a Japanese style tie dye called Shivor which uses very small knots." The word "Nazca" means "to be born" in the indigenous Quechua language. Subtle outline artwork depicts interesting Inca symbols and such historical sites as Maccu Piccu.

New Expo specializes in kidswear with lots of fun whimsical details like pom poms, crocheted flowers, bows and tassels. The company has its own cotton fields and a segment of the collection is one hundred per cent organically produced. Founder Lily Rivera Baldoceca explains, "We work with local women in Pisco to teach them hand-made techniques. We help men and women develop as business people, as if they have their own businesses in their homes." New Expo takes pride in a special project to help children. Rivera



Hand making hat demonstration



New Expo



Danielle & Diego by Knitting Peru



Amazing embroideries



Colorful yarn display

says, "We 'adopted' 75 kids and give them breakfast every day." The company's motto, "The Best of Us for the World," expresses its desire to help others, combined with an upbeat design aesthetic.

American designer/owner Regina Bell exhibited her company Alexandria Couture under the umbrella of the LK Group. Her unique use of elegant fabrics and classical styling truly justifies the name "couture." Douponi silk, subdued colors and ultra dressy silhouettes create signature looks that Bell suggests mixing with jeans and boots.

Also with the LK group, Petit Bambini uses a special type of Pima cotton that is treated to look and feel like silk. Owner Valerie Saenz says, "It gets smoother every time you wash it. We combine this fabric with hand crocheted trim made in Switzerland." The dresses are simply elegant and really special.

Sweater knits are another area that Peruvian companies excel in. Cotton or baby alpaca sweaters have a very high quality that is appreciated for its fine hand and lustrous color range. Claver is a well known company that presents an extensive collection of colorful intarsia sweaters for boys and girls. Motifs featuring poodles, frog ballerinas and pirate puppies are popular in the United States and around the world. This season's color palette highlights pinks, green, and brown for girls and blue, brown, and russet for boys.

Knitting Peru presented two lovely knitwear collections for infants and toddlers: Dani Dani and Danielle & Diego. These mix-and-match, head-to-toe sweater knit pieces are made of a high quality, fine knit gauge of cotton. The warm color palette is bright and cheerful and the collections are decorated with just enough trim: crocheted flowers, delicate embroideries, and interesting intarsia designs for boys.

The edgy and contemporary Baby Rock collection of music themed tee shirts and onesies is also environmentally sound, using toxin-free vegetable dyes and the softest cotton for babies' skin.

Lively runway fashion shows, demonstrations of indigenous handicrafts, informative displays about machinery and trims added to the exhibition. Next year's edition of Peru Moda, scheduled for April 2010, is already being eagerly awaited by savvy and sophisticated international buyers. ■



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