An ex-Topshop fashion director has teamed up with Versace interim CEO Cedric Wilmotte to launch a new lifestyle-loungewear label “with a higher purpose”. Called Peachaus and launching later this month, it's the brainchild of Gillian Ridley Whittle, formerly of Topshop, while Wilmotte is credited as ‘business partner’.

The company said Peachaus has been “conceived as an antidote to the current fashion system” with an “ambitious vision [that] has expanded far beyond underwear and clothing”.

The founder also spent 10 years at M&S (with one year as director of lingerie and beauty), as well as holding senior roles at Debenhams and Myer in Australia.

She’s joined in the launch by design and product director, Sophie Morgenthaler, who hails from Victoria’s Secret and Myla; and ops director Sarah Edwards, a board-level executive for over 20 years who also worked at M&S and Debenhams, as well as at ethically-oriented brands like Finisterre and Aspiga.

The collection of underwear, lifestyle separates and sleepwear they’ve come up with is made entirely from recycled Italian lace, ethically sourced cotton and sustainable bamboo, in line with the label’s positive-impact pledge. Pieces feature embroidered motifs of the peach blossom and Australian swallow, “symbolising softness, delicacy, renewal and, of course, hope”.

And new products will drop in “slowly — every six to eight weeks — placing a keen emphasis on quality and longevity”.

The label has a “fluid, ‘simply sized’ system that supports different body shapes and sizes” at launch, later expanding “to offer broader and more inclusive sizing”.

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Morgenthaler said: “The old conventions of sizing are outdated. Women’s modern needs are very different from 50 or 60 years ago. So, there is a unique opportunity to simplify and modernise fit, to remove confusion by introducing a relevant system that’s relatable to today’s customer. Bands are sized XS/S/M/L/XL and cups, 1-8, allowing every woman to easily understand her size.”

The company also said another point of difference is its approach to collaboration “and championing the underdog”. Its compact sleepwear offering is a case-in-point, designed by a recent fashion graduate and now permanent member of the Peachaus team. And a growing community of designers and creatives has “helped inform everything from the label’s embroidery and print designs to its branding”.

Its founder is actually part of the Creative Mentor Network scheme that “helps give hopeful creative sector newcomers a foot in the door of what has previously been a highly privileged industry”.

The products are manufactured in “state-of-the-art factories in Portugal and India, chosen for their pioneering social and environmental credentials”. Skin Intimates is its key underwear maker and also supplies PVH, Karl Lagerfeld and Organics Basics. FM Textiles produces its lifestyle range, while Bandana Ltd, makes its small sleepwear range in India, creates clothing for clients including high-end British label Lily and Lionel.

Items will be available for UK and worldwide shipping from March 23, excluding Europe initially, “with imminent plans to expand its delivery options”. Underwear is priced from £15 to £55 and lifestyle pieces, £35 to £110.

By Sandra Halliday

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