

Brazilian Luxury Clothing Maker Looking for Rich Clients Overseas

Contributed by Marina Sarruf
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Clothing by brand Coven, based in the state of Minas Gerais, specialized in knitwear, is already exported to 15 countries, among them Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Over the last five years, the company grew more than 50% as a result of foreign sales, and now the Middle East is among its leading destinations.

"The Middle East is one of a few markets unaffected by global recession. In the face of declining consumption seen in countries such as the United States and even in the European Union, the rate at which the high luxury fashion sector has been growing there is amazing. The prospect is for our product to be well accepted," stated the export manager at Coven, Izabela Carvalho.

According to her, work with the Arab market started three years ago, when a showroom in London, which represents the brand in Europe, began taking orders from Arab clients. Now, orders for the Middle East are usually placed at the Tranoi fashion show, in Paris, which concentrates Arab buyers.

In order to boost sales, Carvalho wants to travel to the region and participate in some mission to the Middle East. According to her, the company was once invited to go on a mission to Dubai, but the trip was postponed.

"We are still studying initiatives along those lines in order to promote sales actions in the region," she claimed. Besides, clothing by the brand sold at the London showroom, Balbulaque, have also attracted many female Arab customers, thus leading Carvalho to believe that sales to the region still have lots of growing to do.

Founded 15 years ago in the city of Belo Horizonte, capital of the southeastern Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, Coven, which has 70 employees, started exporting in 2001, as the company entered Texbrasil, a program of the Brazilian Textile and Apparel Industry Association (Abit) in partnership with the Brazilian Export and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex) that helps Brazilian fashion companies enter the foreign market. Currently, approximately 10% of Coven's production is exported.

According to Carvalho, Coven works with a mix of women's clothing, knitwear being the flagship. The brand's collections, developed by designer Liliane Rebehy, involve knit items, exclusive fabrics, such as silk and tricoline (a light cotton fabric made of combed yarn) with special finishes.

"Coven's clothing is worn by the independent woman with a young soul who does not fear to dare, is successful at work and, above all, in life. She is a woman who enjoys wearing brand new attire and wants elegance and sophistication, without losing sensuality," she said.

With a production capacity of 30,000 items in each collection, Coven is expecting a 50% rise in exports of its 2009 summer collection. In addition to its own store, inaugurated last April, the company sells to multi-brand stores across the entire Brazilian territory.

Recently, the brand's clothing remained on display during the launch of the spring-summer collection at the United States luxury department store Henri Bendel, located in New York's 5th Avenue.

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