

MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

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materials from Japan and Sweden, CYC's facility is in high demand with buyers from Japan and North America.

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The Cowichan sweater *Knitwear*

The Cowichan sweater is known for its heavy knit, shawl collar, and depictions of eagles, fish, buffalo and horses across the chest and has influenced designers such as Visvim and Number (N)ine.

Over the past two decades, the Cowichan knitters have become nearly extinct (the sweaters must be knitted in the Cowichan valley to rightfully take the name Cowichan), as the youth have lost interest in carrying on the traditional art.

However, two companies have begun to recreate the Cowichan-style sweaters in Vancouver's outskirts by using the knitting patterns, and updating the fit and materials used. Kanata Knits and Granted make warm and stylish sweaters and have won an international clientele.



Granted's wish

Minoru Hirano has learnt from his father's 30 years in the sweater business and now runs the company alongside his mother and sister. The firm has been producing hand-knitted sweaters for decades, but the most recent in-house label, Granted, is now in its second year and starting to be recognised for its high quality wool blends and West Coast aesthetic. After two successful collections with Victoria's Four Horsemen store, the brand is looking to grow substantially this autumn.

How long have you been working with your father?

My father has recently retired from the business but I have been assisting this company since I was a teenager. In total about 10 to 12 years now.

How important are environmentally friendly materials and methods?

Our wools come from sustainable farms that practise ethical land management. We try to use materials from suppliers that use non-harmful dyes and chemicals when producing our yarns. Almost all of our trimmings come from local sources. Also, we only use salvaged yew wood for our wooden buttons and zipper pulls.

How long does it take each sweater to be knitted and finished?

Most of our sweaters take about two to three days to produce. Our knitters have been with our company for many years and they are highly skilled.

What is unique about Granted's products?

Our designs are inspired by our experiences travelling abroad as well as locally. All our items are hand knitted here in Vancouver BC and if you look carefully no two items are exactly the same. I believe that by using our traditional methods from my parents' company has taken Granted Clothing to a whole new level. These traditional designs and knitting methods are something that the new generation can appreciate and be proud to wear. It is a true Canadian clothing company that I plan to share with the rest of the world.