

MIDSUMMER

MILANO

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2023

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**“There must be a better way to make the things we
want, a way that doesn’t spoil the sky,
or the rain or the land.”**

- Paul McCartney





What sustainability means to us

While for many companies in the furniture space sustainability comes as an afterthought after decades of cost-cutting and industrialization, Midsummer Milano has been founded around the core-idea of being a respectful, low-impact, cruelty-free manufacturer of high quality products for the bedroom. Since the founder has a personal history of engagement in animal welfare, the topic of sustainability was effortlessly embedded in the brand's key values since its very conception, and is still a main driver in its development.

The very core idea of our company was creating a product offer that, besides stunning quality and design, ensured the welfare of our customers; a goal that cannot be achieved without aiming at superior performances and durability, and that, for us, could only be achieved through processes and materials which are naturally sustainable.

To achieve the very best result, we do not compromise in our choices, and that unavoidably leads to animals living in the best conditions, processes which are held without shortcuts and product lifetime extended as much as possible, without playing with product obsolescence to incentivize repurchase, but aiming at creating dreams that last for a lifetime.

For us, sustainability is not a goal to achieve explicitly while compromising the value of our product, but we have a certainty: whatever choice we make that somehow does not comply with the rhythms of nature or that does not valorize local communities, it will never allow us to offer the best mattresses in the world.

Our commitment to natural materials

Using natural materials is a choice that unlocks a level of performances which is absolutely unmatched by any kind of oil-based padding: foams have subpar transpiration properties and, despite every effort of limiting damages by creating lateral openings to ensure air circulation, foam mattresses will unavoidably be too warm or too cold according to season. Moreover, foams lack in resilience and tend to get crushed under the customer's weight after prolonged use, irreversibly losing their original support function. These damages lead customers to throw away their mattresses after just few years of usage, creating a huge problem of waste disposal: in the United States alone, more than 20 million mattresses are thrown away each year, a dramatic figure.

On the other hand, natural materials such as wool or cashmere solve these problems. A carefully designed blend or layering of natural materials can create a mattress that fully adapts to the bedroom's microclimate and the customer's need: materials such as cashmere or camelhair will keep the customer warm in winter while preventing sweating, and fresher one such as linen or cotton will grant optimal transpiration in summer or warmer climates.

All of this, with a way longer lifespan: carefully layered natural material do not tend to crash, and, even if, they can be carded in a process that restores their plushiness and extend their lifespan to decades without causing any loss of performance. At Midsummer Milano, we decided to make this restoring process, deeply rooted in the tradition of local mattress makers, available to an international clientele: when needed, our mattresses can be shipped from all around the globe back to our craftsmen, restored to their original integrity and then delivered back to their owners; a unique customer service that makes our products a never ending dream.

Why natural materials are intrinsically sustainable

Together with these superior performances, natural materials come with being naturally sustainable. Compared to oil-based foams, which comes with higher levels of emissions, damages to the environment due to the chemicals used in production processes and deleterious impact on the biosphere if improperly dispersed, natural materials grant a superior level of sustainability due to their origin and properties.

In particular, precious fibers such as wool, cashmere or alpaca are obtaining by sheering animals, a process which, if done correctly and according to the highest standards, is totally harmless to the animal and actually grants its welfare by keeping the length of its mantle fit to seasonal climate. Our incentive is to aim at using the best fibers on the market, only available in small farms that dedicate significative time to animal welfare: the better life condition are, the better the fiber is in terms of quality, the better the performances are. And, no need to say, the more sustainable the fiber is.



Beyond sheering, processing is kept to the bare minimum: processes of cleaning, bleaching, washing and dyeing are often based on solvents and other chemicals that will eventually be dispersed in the environment. Hence, we carefully select products where these steps are held with superior attention: we favor suppliers that grants us fibers where the passages from raw materials to staple fibers to the final carded one are held with as little use as chemical as possible, without compromising performances.

Moreover, natural materials' prolonged lifespan unlocks another dimension of sustainability, namely the minimization of waste: a mattress that will last for decades without being substituted, if compared to an industrial one which has to be changed way more frequently, saves a considerable amount of material from being wasted or dispersed in the biosphere.

Conscious sourcing and processing can be applied also to materials that are not usually associated to sustainability: for example, materials such as linen and cotton, which are usually associated with water waste and low ethical standard, can be actually sourced from suppliers that use recycled fibers to ensure circularity, or that operate by sticking to the most severe legislation on the matter of sustainability and ethics.

Our business model keeps environmental and social impact to a minimum

Compared to the usual approach that furniture makers adopt, our business model intrinsically keeps waste to a minimum. Usually, our competitors produce furniture in a made-to-stock approach, building finished products or modules in advance and stocking them according to demand forecasts which will unavoidably lead to unsold goods. Moreover, these processes are often heavily automated, leading to alienating and utilities-intensive processes which keeps the human factor in a marginal role.

We decided to break this system: while our competitors strive to offer a wide range of stock products, we shaped throughout the year a stable collection of items, where products were slowly updated and refined to get to their actual configuration, and that we produce exclusively on demand with a strong level of customization. By doing so, we manage to keep our warehouse to a minimum, by stocking only the materials which we use diffusely, and buying customization-related elements, like special upholstery, only after the customer requests them.

This allows us to minimize waste all-round: not only we totally avoid the problem of unsold finished goods (which would be sold however due to the stability of our collection), but we do the same for raw materials, since they are ordered only if we absolutely know that we are going to use them.

Moreover, our processes are mostly carried out by skilled artisans which play a crucial role in the realization of each bed or mattress: most of the processes are carried out by

hand or simple machines, with limited use of consumables, chemicals, fossil fuels or energy-intensive tools. This contributes even more to reduce the impact that our products have on the environment: waste, emissions and dispersion of polluting agents are naturally minimized.

Control over supply chain

While we strive to ensure the highest sustainability standard for our internal process, we know that our commitment cannot stop there, but has to permeate the whole value chain we are part of. That starts in our procurement processes, where we ensure that our suppliers share our values of superior quality and timelessness. To do so, the implementation of our projects or designs comes to a point where we carefully search for the materials that can comply with our vision: we only rely on the few suppliers that can offer the quality standard that we require; non-natural materials, aggressive chemical finishing and fibers bonded with oil-based compounds are excluded *a priori*. This encourage us to build long-term relationships with trusted suppliers and artisans which share our same values.

Knowing that transparency along the value chain is crucial in order to convey the qualities of our product to the final customer, we are aware of our role of final responsible to ensure that the customer's expectations and needs are matched: not only we operate a continuous process of control over our suppliers, ensuring that our materials' characteristics and performances stay high and true to our promises, but we constantly explore new options to improve our final product; our suppliers offering us a new quality of superior wool or new materials to ensure better comfort are also an opportunity to upgrade our sustainability standards even more.



To ensure the best quality of materials, we carefully monitor their sourcing: we select wool coming from countries where our supplier coordinates the efforts of small farms to give us a traceable product, ensuring compliance to determined standards. As an example, our commitment to reassure our customer that our wool is absolutely cruelty-free led us to look for an alternative to Australian Merino wool: large Australian farms adopt the practice of mulesing, which physically mutilates sheep; to avoid this, we instead rely on a network of European small farms which grants a superior animal welfare.

Similarly, ensuring that products are sourced in sites of excellence (such as Mongolia for cashmere) ensures that the customer will get the very best from the finest fibers on the market, benefitting from superior performance and being sure that animals do benefit from the standards which are necessary for such a superior quality.

Social responsibility: supporting artisans and communities

In our pursuit of sustainable, high quality product, we do not merely focus on the environmental element of sustainability, but we strive to grant that our operations do ensure that every involved stakeholder is treated with fairness and respect, starting from our precious artisans.

Midsummer-Milano was born as and forever will be a company whose roots are deeply linked to our local communities: our activities are not held in industrial facilities or offshored to countries where lower costs can be pursued at the expense of quality and workers' rights, but are carried out by a small group of professionals, often based in the Italian countryside. Our artisans work in slow manufacturing, since only without the pressure of having to deliver big volumes in small times, they can truly express their talent at their best.

This unavoidably leads to longer and more complex crafts, but we truly believe that this kind of approach is crucial to grant a superior and long-lasting product. At the same time, relying on these realities allows us to support local communities that would otherwise lack the volumes and demand to express their craftsmanship at their best, and save them from slowly disappearing. Moreover, this creates benefits for the whole collectivity: not only this kind of processes have a minimum impact on the environment in terms of pollution and emissions, but relying on a small, interlinked network of professionals manages to create other positive externalities, such as limiting the emissions that a more globalized network would create.

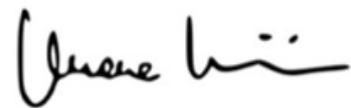
Where we want to be

Despite our commitment, we are aware that, being still a young and developing company, we still have huge margins of improvement to explore in order to be more

committed to sustainability in all its shapes. In particular, our position within our value chain tasks us with the duty of spreading more and more awareness about this topic among its members, especially among the ones that, due to their lack of structure or exposure to the pressure coming from the final customer, do not consider sustainability and transparency as priorities.

To do so, we are committed to continue our efforts to sustain our long-term suppliers, while exploring the options of more sustainable materials (like certified or organic fibers) that can grant even higher standards, and, at the same time, ensuring suppliers' renewed compliance to our growing standards and their commitment to increase their level of transparency: this passes through an increased upstream control, which does not stop at direct suppliers, but goes even further back to previous stages of the value chain, ensuring, for example, the sustainability of specific yarns.

Chiara Mennini
CEO & Founder

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chiara Mennini', written in a cursive style.



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