

## Kingpins New York Spotlights Denim Innovation

July 31, 2014 by [Angela Velasquez](#)

The denim market's crossover into activewear was evident at the 10th anniversary edition of Kingpins New York held in Manhattan last week. About 50 premium denim and denim-related brands showcased new product innovation in blends, color-lasting technology and sustainability—and as always—softness ruled.

Overall exhibitors said the show was full of good energy, which was no doubt fueled by a lively industry party to celebrate Kingpins' decade of denim on the first night of the two-day event. As Cone Denim vice president of design and marketing Kara Nicholas, reported, "We had a great turn out. We were able to meet with key brands, which was perfect because we were very excited to show them a couple of new innovations we released at the show."

While activewear styles—from indigo dyed sweaters and T-shirts to jogging pants—offered freshness to brands, new technology served as a reminder of what forward-thinking minds can achieve even in an industry as old and worn-in as denim.

Here's a round up of the buzz-worthy innovations and most-talked about trends on the Kingpins NY show floor:

Cone Denim presented its ConeTouch fabric, a soft denim made with Unifi's Repreve post-consumer recycled polyester content fibers and yarns. Each pair of jeans made with the fabric contains an average of eight recycled plastic bottles. The material, which Nicholas said has all the benefits of a synthetic fiber, including great recovery and the ability to withstand aggressive washing, is available in women's stretch and a mid-weight stretch for men.

Prosperity Textile's main women's story was stretch and denim with a soft hand. Also, expect to see more whisker and blasted details from the mill. For men, the company is seeing a demand for light color denim shirts with vintage finishes.



Twin Dragon Marketing is working to improve the longevity of black denim with Forever Black. Its colorfast denim is made with a combination of recycled polyester, spandex and Lenzing's Modal. The permanent colors are added to the fiber during the solvent stage, requiring less water to produce than traditional black denim made with sulfur dye. The denim reportedly stays in pristine condition even after 20 washes.

Adding versatility to women's wardrobes, Tencel is exploring the potential of reversible garments. The company showed day-to-night jeans with bold and vibrantly printed denim on one side, and non-printed denim with a fluid, soft touch on the other side.

AMC played with colored wefts. Highlights in the men's collection included green on green, gray on gray and indigo with black wefts. The company's objective for its women's product was to create silky soft, high-density black denim also using black weft.

Brands are blurring the lines between men's and women's fashion. Tencel is expanding its range



of unisex fabric as companies like G-Star and Zara begin showing uber soft materials with an almost pajama-like hand across both categories. Look for more indigo knits to hit the market in the shape of winter sweaters à la Tencel, which showcased knits in varying degrees of indigo, as well as combinations of knits and wovens.

Lycra merged traditional denim with knit to add a sporty look to jean jackets. It also showed a range of relaxed woven "jog jeans," which Rita Ratskoff, Lycra

marketing manager of ready-to-wear, said hints to the market's trend for "wovens that look like knits, and knits that look like wovens."

Artistic Fabric Mills' EverDark and ForeverWash impressed with its color-lasting technology. After 30 home laundry tests, which director of product development and marketing Henry Wong noted far exceeds the industry standard of 3 to 5 test washes, the garment's color remains clear and crisp. The technology is especially applicable to women's jeggings, as it won't fade at the knee.



Jacquards from Dynamo packed a statement-making punch in the women's category. Overall, the company is seeing a movement toward structured materials, including corduroy and wool product with a denim look and oil-like coating stories.



Special finishes inside jeans, like plush velor, and contrasting colors add visual and textural interest to Tai Yuen Textile Co.'s range of denim. The company showcased its cooling yarn for warm temperatures and its winterized waterproof denim, as well as a range of collagen-injected denim that helps keep skin soft during dry weather months.

Arvind Denim Lab noted a demand for deep indigo fabric and corduroy. The company focused on spun-quality fabrics, woven knit and brushed materials to create a vintage

look. It also presented its 65 percent stretch fabric coined "Boomerang."



Artistic Milliners presented Tencel-based denim with a soft knit-like feel. And in seeing a surge for men's stretch product, the company is adding 25 to 27 percent stretch to its men's denim.