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Nudie Designer: “A tribute to the history of denim craftsmanship”

By Melanie Gropler – 30 Oct. 2015

Left: Maria Erixon Levin, Co-founder and Creative Director of Nudie Jeans

Today, Nudie launches its new Lean Dean ‘US Selvage’ denim. The limited edition of 1,000 pairs made of 14.75 oz. dry organic selvage denim are produced with Cone Mills fabrics and manufactured at the Last Denim Shop in San Francisco. It is the first denim made in USA out of 100% US grown organic cotton for Nudie Jeans whose production predominantly came out of Italy since 2001. ‘US Selvage’ will be available through a handful of select retailers in North America including American Rag and Mildblend. Every pair will be sold in an organic poplin cotton duffel bag. Here, Maria Erixon Levin, Co-founder and Creative Director talks about the collaboration and the excitement of the denim business in general.



What was your motivation to start a collaboration with Cone Mills?

There wasn't so much a premeditated motivation to chase collaboration as such. It came about quite organically when I met Cone Denim during a trip to Los Angeles back in 2014. In some past collections, we used Cone Denim fabric before in production, but never an entire style or story conceptualized. With my own personal denim appreciation and history colliding together with an iconic denim manufacturer (Cone Denim), it was this energy spark – denim magic if you like(!) - when the idea of a collaboration was born.

In what terms does the collaboration fit your philosophy?

Producing with organic cotton and with suppliers where all people along the production supply chain are treated fairly are paramount and non-negotiable along all Nudie Jeans' production. This has been a vision and structured framework if you like since day one. Alongside this, creating timeless, durable and original product is such an important philosophical and brand identity aspect. ‘Lean Dean US Selvage’ is a 14.75 oz. dry rigid selvage, traditional 5-pocket jean, each personalized with a number 1-1000. This really is a tribute to the history of denim craftsmanship itself and where it all started – in USA. I like to think of it as where our forward thinking yet humble Swedish sensibility

and steeped American denim history connect, and that contrast and marriage is a beautiful thing.

Do you plan to extend the collaboration with Cone Mills? Maybe a whole collection of US Selvage Denim? If yes, can you specify?

Looking forward into spring 2016, I am happy to say there will be Cone Mills denim introduced into the mainline denim collection, however our main denim suppliers have been in Turkey, Japan, Italy and have been pretty much with us on our journey since we started in 2001, so our core sourcing will remain loyal there. We think of our suppliers like family though, and it's nice to have Cone Mills be a part of it.

Firstly, the style will only be sold in the US. Will you extend it also to Europe and Asia?

With only 1000 units produced it would be impossible to sell through our retail partners on a global level and adequately fulfill demand and properly represent the project. With North America, 'Lean Dean US Selvage' will be available at a handful of our strong retailers as we think from a domestic retail perspective, this is a perfect product to showcase given the domestic production. Of course, we know this would be a fantastic product to introduce to Europe and Asia, so we have thought ahead and allocated a small portion of the 1000 units for our webshop.

What do you think about the denim business in general?

Current denim business and climate is exciting! From a product development and design angle it is exciting, exploratory and energetic. From an originality angle it is exciting to work with suppliers like Cone Denim and from an innovation aspect we have exciting things in the pipeline. Myself and our product development team have been and continue to be busy at work.

