

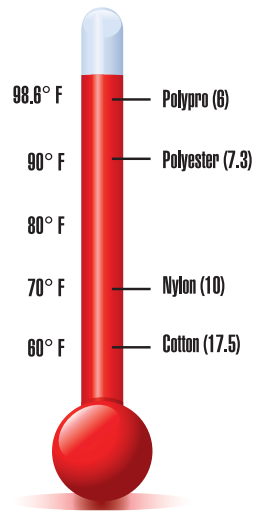
VapourFlex Enters Market with Polypro Laminate

Two textile categories making noise with originality these days are waterproof/breathables and polypropylene and now along comes a newcomer that combines the two. Called VapourFlex, this waterproof/breathable, elastic polypro laminate fabrics looks to appeal to the active outdoor market as warmer, drier and lighter alternative to what is currently available.

Stretch is a key factor in the product along with the high functionality of polypropylene. In addition, style comes into play with a polyester polypro VapourFlex version. In this combination, print sublimation is possible.

Developed by a group of diehard windsurfers and kiteboarders several years ago, VapourFlex will launch officially at Outdoor Retailer this January. The original group set out to create a less bulky, more comfortable high-performance material for extreme water sports. In this quest Aquatic Designs was born and the team realized a polypropylene laminate was the answer. The VapourFlex product was patented but only more recently has the project picked up steam.

Charles Nemphos has taken the reins over the past three years working on growth strategies for VapourFlex LLC. With financing from a group of investors and sourcing in place, the goal is to license the technology and patent to a brand in the outdoor activewear marketplace. "Ideally we'd



like a partner to take this to the next level," says Nemphos, who also serves as president of Yale Sportswear, an athletic-wear maker.

Nemphos feels the time is right for VapourFlex, with a market favoring not only today's softer, odorless polypro, but also improved lamination technologies that provide great four-way stretch and performance.

"We know how to source, we know how to design and cut and sew," says Nemphos, who has been at the helm of Yale Sportswear for over 25 years. Currently fabric laminating is done in China with the help of Global Sourcing, and garments made in the Yale Sportswear facility based in Federalsburg, MD.

VapourFlex can be used in multiple layers with different materials and is not confined to a specific laminate type. Nor is the product confined to specific fabric type; VapourFlex can be a knit or a woven or microfiber fabric. Rob Brendel is chief of operations and overseas technical development.

The polypro/polypro VapourFlex product targets the extreme user with high marks for functionality. However, Nemphos believes the polyester/polypro adaption will have broad appeal. "We can sublimate the poly and laminate it so the face has color and print," says Nemphos, who mentions for instance doing camo print. "Trying to bring a new technology to market is a long, arduous process," he adds. "Achieving consistency of product takes considerable time and effort." ●

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Celliant is active in the technical bedding textile market, having placed its technology domestically in Serta, Ironman (The T3 Recovery Bed) and Fabrictech (recently named the Official Mattress and Pillow Protector for the National Sleep Foundation) and has additional launches in Australia, Switzerland and Turkey currently underway. Global partners include Superba in Switzerland, Yatas in Turkey, Slumbertech in Australia and the IronMan brand is now with Novo in Canada for pillows and other bedding products.

“For us, bedding is a critical market,” says Seth Casden, Celliant president. “We’ve been involved in the market for some time and have had a good five year relationship with Serta. It is prestigious name, a high-end product, and a good fit for us.”

What kicked things off for Celliant was the IronMan Recovery Bed from T3 in Australia. The product received excellent coverage in Australia and now is enjoying expanded global distribution. However, Casden states, “you don’t have to be an elite athlete to want this technology.” He cites a study that shows products with Celliant increase sleep efficiency about 12 minutes a day, which adds up over the course of a year.

“The topic of sleep and recovery is right in our wheelhouse,” says Casden, who mentions being in talks currently with Tempur-Pedic. “Even if you are not an athlete, you sleep. Every single person sleeps to recover. You need to recharge. Why not sleep the most efficiently and effectively.”

Similarly, the Cupron product isn’t athlete-specific, but like the other

“The current buzz about performance sleep will create awareness.”

**GUY ECKERT,
OUTLAST TECHNOLOGIES.**

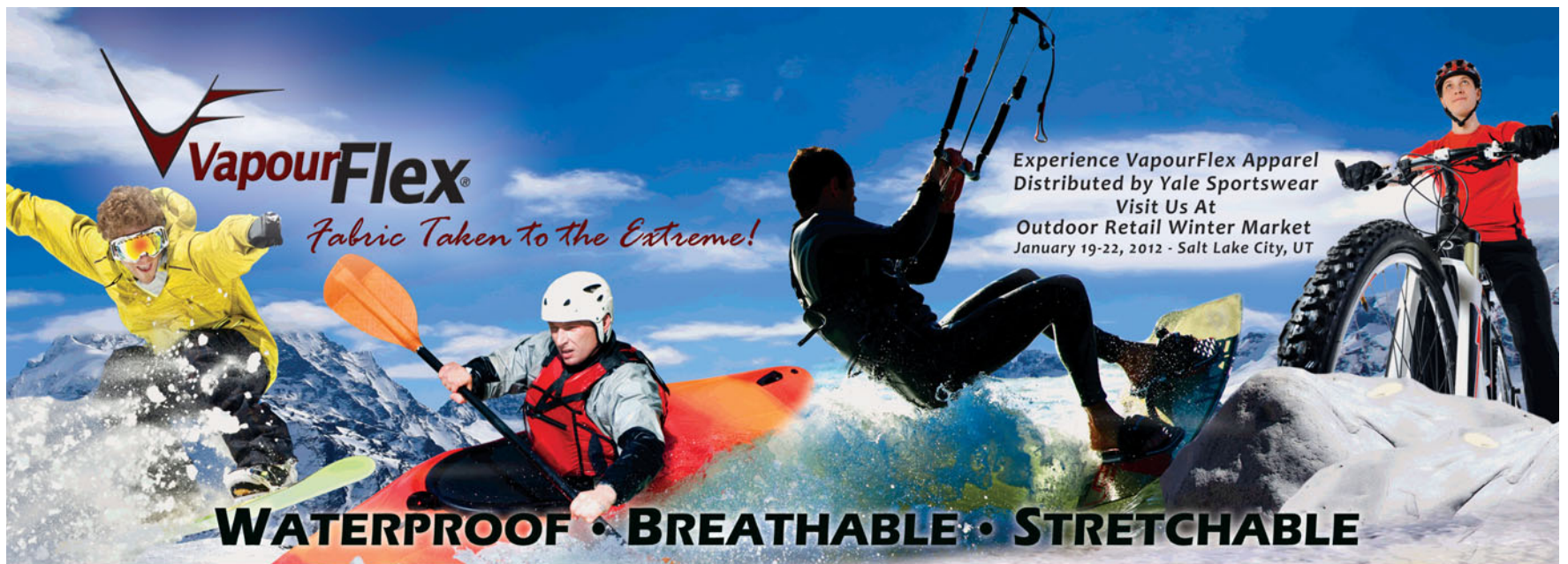
applications. Neary looks to drive the Cupron technology into the textile arena. “The technology brings with it a lot of benefits,” says Neary. “Antimicrobial, anti-stain, anti-odor.” On deck is the military market for bedding applications and the performance sock arena.

Neary says that the company can make a Treated Article claim, as well as a Public Health Claim because Cupron helps in the reduction of the propagation of dust mites, and a Cosmetic Claim as it reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles and is now working on a fourth claim — the Medical claim.

“Cupron continues to spend money and R&D to develop medical claim as it relates to copper ion technology to reduce athlete’s foot and even to rejuvenate human tissue which would advance wound healing properties,” says Neary. Just knowing that might help one sleep better at night. ●

performance materials used in bedding, offers additional benefits during sleep. For example it reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. Currently there are Cupron branded products in pillowcases, sleep gloves and an eye mask.

Cupron, which is a copper ion technology, has traditionally been a medically-based business, but has found success is consumer hardgoods and softgood



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