Ralph Lauren unveils innovative RLX Clarus Polo Shirt for 2022 Australian Open

By Benjamin Fitzgerald - 14 January 2022

Ralph Lauren is delving deeper into material innovation, announcing on Thursday the launch of a sustainable performance polo shirt, set to make its debut at the 2022 Australian Open in Melbourne next week.

Dubbed the ‘RLX Clarus Polo Shirt’, the high-performance cotton polo is made from a first-to-market patented platform to transform virgin and recycled cotton. Retaining the comfort and breathability of luxury cotton, the shirt’s fibres are enhanced with moisture-wicking and quick-drying capabilities, resulting in a material that performs much like plastic-based synthetic fabrics, polyester and nylon, but without the use of petroleum-based fossil fuels, said the U.S. luxury brand in a press release.

“Ralph Lauren is known for timelessness – and for more than 50 years being timeless has meant both leaning into our heritage and fostering pioneering innovation," said David Lauren, chief branding and innovation officer.

"With the introduction of the RLX Clarus Polo Shirt, we are using our most iconic product as a canvas to launch an industry-changing and scalable textile technology – a high-performance apparel product that is created with natural fibers for the first time. We’re proud to build on the brand’s legacy of signature and authentic style, reinvented for the future," Lauren added.

To bring the RLX Clarus Polo to life, Ralph Lauren tapped the textile innovation expertise of Natural Fiber Welding (NFW), a sustainable material science startup that the New York brand invested in, last August.

"Through this collaboration, we are paving the way for complete circularity with resulting materials that perform similarly to plastic-based synthetic fabrics," said Luke Haverhals, CEO at NFW.

“We are pioneering an entirely new system that simultaneously enables all-natural performance fabrics while reducing waste and eliminating the need for synthetic plastics.”

During the 2022 Australian Open, Ralph Lauren will host an exhibition tennis clinic with tennis legend, Sam Groth,
and Josh Cavallo, a professional Australian football player. Groth and Cavallo will wear the new RLX Clarus Polo Shirt during the clinic, before the shirt becomes available globally for purchase.

The polo shirt release is part of Ralph Lauren's wider commitment to investing in the infrastructure and technologies, like NFW, to develop and scale a circular apparel economy.

Looking ahead, Ralph Lauren said it hopes to expand its use of recycled cotton, helping to advance the company’s progress toward sustainably sourcing 100 percent of its key materials, including cotton, by 2025 and integrating zero-waste principles across its business.

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