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# Bottega Veneta Prioritizes 'Value Over Volume'

CEO Leo Rongone unveiled a new lifetime warranty on certain iconic bags.

By **MILES SOCHA**

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10:06AM

[Bottega Veneta](#)'s handbags are made in days, not hours — and now some are warrantied for a lifetime.

The Italian [luxury](#) brand's chief executive officer Bartolomeo "Leo" Rongone revealed the new service program at WWD's Apparel and Retail CEO Summit, noting that certain of [Bottega Veneta](#)'s iconic bags can be brought in for complimentary refresh and repair, and will be replaced free of charge in some cases.

Called "Certificate of Craft," the program is launching this month. The service also provides for courtesy loaner handbags in cases when repairs are lengthy, he said. According to a release issued after the event, the certificate is offered via a physical card associated with the serial number of the bag in question.

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"We believe that true [luxury](#) is connected to the concept of time," Rongone said during an on-stage conversation with Luisa Zargani's, WWD's Milan bureau chief.

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He asked a colleague in the audience to hoist up the brand's handwoven Kalimero bag, a bucket style that requires some 55 meters of calf leather and which is created without any stitching. Rongone noted that the artisan simply changes the pressure of the weaving process to realize the curved portions.

Bottega Veneta's Kalimero bag on the spring 2023 runway.

Consequently, "there are no two bags identical," and if an artisan falls ill before the bag is completed, Bottega Veneta must wait for him or her to return to work to finish the object, he

noted.

“Use your product for longer; keep it forever,” he urged. “We consistently prioritize value over volume.”

So how will Bottega Veneta, part of publicly traded French luxury group [Kering](#), continue to grow its business while it is urging a more restrained, yet elevated brand of consumption?

Rongone argued that its value proposition is “seducing a larger audience” and that the number of its clients is increasing.

“Definitely one of the most genuine connections with sustainability is to use the product for longer, not replacing it. This level is way more impactful,” he explained. “We all want to be successful in our lives. But do you want to be remembered for being the largest? Or the most impactful?”

The executive credited Bottega Veneta’s new creative director Matthieu Blazy, who was promoted to the top job in November 2021 after the ouster of Daniel Lee, for embracing the brand’s legacy of “extraordinary craftsmanship” and challenging the artisans at its Montebello leather goods atelier to push techniques to new limits.

These include garments that Blazy described as “perverse banality”: blue jeans, T-shirts and flannel shirts realized in leather treated to resemble ones made of knitted or woven fabrics. Wearing some of the leather jeans on stage, Rongone lauded the “constant caress of the nubuck” leather for the wearer to enjoy.

He characterized the brand as non-conformist since, unlike most luxury labels, it has no logo.

What’s more, in 2021, Bottega Veneta raised eyebrows and generated headlines for taking itself off Instagram, which has become the dominant channel for numerous fashion brands.

“We do this to keep creativity at the center. Creativity drives us much more than media” he explained.

In lieu of social media, Bottega Veneta fosters what Rongone called “cultural affinity platforms.” A recent example was the dinner the Italian brand held during New York Fashion Week at famed used book store The Strand, along with a limited-edition leather reworking of its iconic tote bags.

“In a moment of high visibility on digital, we wanted to give importance to the physical, to paper, to a bookshop that probably has more than 100 years of history,” he said.

Despite its abstention from social media, Rongone described a “fantastic” rapport with Gen Z clients.

He described the relationship brands have with customers on Instagram as “one to many....You are talking to someone.”

If this is removed from the equation then people are free to talk about brands. “Gen Z love these conditions. They love talking about us. They share opinions, ideas, and we love to learn,” he enthused.

The executive also insisted that having no logo is a plus in the face of this generation of consumers.

“They want to be themselves. So it may look like strange in reality, but having no logo has been one of the largest, the most important levers of engagement with the youngsters,” he said.

Rongone highlighted several strong historical links between Bottega Veneta and New York City. The wife of one of the founders lived in Manhattan in the late '60s, and was hired by Andy Warhol to answer phones at The Factory “and say, ‘I don’t speak English,’” thereby serving as a “filter” for the sought-after art superstar.

The Italian brand, founded as a collective of artisans in 1966, opened its very first store on New York’s Madison Avenue in 1972, a time when the brand was gaining renown for its distinctive leather weaving and its tag line “When your own initials are enough.”

“They were firmly believing that they were creating a brand that was celebrating the uniqueness, the quality of people,” Rongone said. “The founders had this idea in mind of creating this extraordinary, luxurious brand, and to celebrate individuality, something that we call today diversity.”

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