

# Timeless FASHION

Style, quality, simplicity, and sustainability are the core values paramount to Swedish clothing brand Filippa K.

Images courtesy of Filippa K

**F**ilippa K brings sophistication and minimalism to contemporary fashion with its classic and eminent designs. The label has built a successful business based on a model that includes strong principles and making sure the product is always at the forefront of its operations. Filippa K offers a style rather than a trend, creating timeless pieces and wardrobe favourites that can be enjoyed for more than one season.

Filippa K was founded in 1993 by Filippa Knutsson who had designed a small line of tight stretch jeans and distributed them throughout selected retailers in Sweden. As popularity grew, basic styles of knits and jerseys were added to the collection and by 1997 the first two Filippa K stores

were opened in Stockholm, Sweden, and Oslo, Norway. One year later, a men's collection was launched and then a third store was opened in Copenhagen, Denmark. In the early 2000s, Filippa K expanded into European markets and then later into Canada and the United States.

Amelie Söderberg took on the role of CEO in November 2013. She studied economics at university and started her career as a buying assistant and sales representative associate for the underwear brand Twilfit. From there she went to NK Cosmetics in 1995 and held the position of product manager for five years. In 2000, she joined RNB Retail and Brands.

"I stayed there for 12 years. I was the buying assistant and I went on to being a buyer and

then one of the buying directors. I ended up as the CEO. So my background is within retail and wholesale. I was working with many brands and had the possibility of operating within fashion, beauty, and jewellery.

"Today, the RNB stores operate with four to seven departments within them so I had the opportunity of working with a lot of suppliers—they have approximately 300. So I was working with a lot of different brands, where Filippa K was one."

Amelie says she is having a great experience working for Filippa K. "It's been a really good year. I have come into a company where there are so many good things about it and so many opportunities for the future. So this position is fantastic, and of course it has been >



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# Reistex

is a Portuguese textile company specialising in the production of knitted garments for women and men

Founded in 1984, Reistex is a vertically integrated company internally holding all production steps, from pattern making, cutting, tailoring and finishing to packaging.

The product quality, responsiveness, flexibility, and advanced technology contribute to the affirmation of Reistex as a reference in the textile industry in Europe.

With over 70 employees, divided by various sectors of the company, Reistex has a young and dynamic team combined with an experience of more than 25 years in the textile sector. Our staff is highly qualified to provide the best quality and accurate solutions to meet our customers' needs, taking into account the new trends.

Reistex and Filippa K have a long history of cooperation, and with more than 15 years of working together, we consider them one of our key customers.

It is with a great pleasure that we have, over the years, built a relationship of trust actively participating in all Filippa K projects sharing the strategic line of business to take our social, environmental, and ethical responsibility.



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a journey, being a new person in this position in a company that has such a strong brand.

Filippa K's clothing, shoes, and handbags are available for both men and women in a total of 55 Filippa K stores and more than 700 premium retailers. The company is based in Stockholm, Sweden, and Filippa K products are sold in brand stores as well as other international retailers in 20 different markets around the world. Plans are underway to become stronger in those established markets. German expansion will take place in the near future and Amelie says the UK and Japan are currently being evaluated.

"I would say for me it's about making the brand global and secure. Because of the possibilities of the brand, it really has a reason to be in other markets as well. The style and the product we represent has such huge potential in all markets. We just want to grow organically and at the pace we have the capability to do.

"But we really want to move this forward and think globally. When you look at brands today, you work as if they are global. You work with a global position and perspective because with social media and the like it becomes so global directly, at a very early stage."

Filippa K ensures style, quality, and simplicity are at the heart of the brand. Sustainability is another key focus, which is becoming increasingly more important as consumer awareness builds. The business has been taking a leap forward in recent years with interesting projects, initiatives and cross-functional collaborations centred on sustainability.

"The vision for us is very much to work within sustainability and take a stand there," Amelie says. "I think

*"Working with Filippa K is a pleasure and a constant process of learning as they always work at the vanguard of new trends. It is also a commitment with Filippa K's values, which we share and implement in the daily operations of our company." - Francelina and Maria, Owners, Reistex*

"We don't see the challenges we have within sustainability work as a limitation. We see it as a possibility."

- Amelie Söderberg



this is the future where we see the ecosystem as our inspiration. We don't see the challenges we have within sustainability work as a limitation. We see it as a possibility. And we are talking a lot about the sustainability as the gateway to growth."

In 2013, Filippa K pledged to take their sustainability plans to the

next level by starting to develop products that are as sustainable as possible within all aspects, to be front-runners of long-lasting simplicity. It concerns two concepts: circular design and the curated wardrobe. The curated wardrobe is the idea that a perfect wardrobe is simple rather than excessive. Circular design is a concept inspired by ecosystems. >





means to constantly strive to minimise the negative environmental and social impact. Every garment is created to be long-lasting in quality and style. And every product is built to be worn, adjusted, mended, loved, and recycled. The products will be the first real result of circular design and will be released in stores in February 2015. Filippa K wants to have a holistic view of business and to understand how all parts interact with each other to guarantee value chains are sustainable for the long term.

Ways it aims to prolong the lifetime of Filippa K products are to shift production models from linear to circular, have a circular design mindset, eliminate the use of toxic substances and waste, and to use renewable energy in production by increasing its control and transparency within production by reducing its use of energy, chemicals, and water.

The Filippa K Sustainability Report 2013 states: “There are many challenges in being part of the textile industry, an industry with a long and complex supply chain and one that leaves significant environmental and social footprints. We try to reduce our negative impacts through the choice of our materials, our practices in production, and our partners in the value chain. But perhaps most importantly, our aim is to not produce more than needed and to not contribute to over-consumption.

Amelie affirms, “Our focus is to make products that can last for a long time in both quality and style, and to constantly strive to increase the average lifetime of our products. To achieve our goals, we cherish long-term relationships with our partners and have a long-term perspective in all projects and practices that we initiate.

“In our ambition to create long-lasting fashion, we want to

offer all products a second or third life. Also, we want at least 20 per cent of our styles to live for more than one season in our stores. For this reason, we have created a line called ‘Wardrobe Essentials’, with styles that have become wardrobe favourites to many of our customers and therefore are part of our collection for several seasons.”

Filippa K endeavours to slow down the pace of fashion by offering a style, rather than a constant stream of new trends. As the business does not want to contribute to the over-consumption of goods, it is re-thinking the way its products are manufactured and marketed. Accurate purchase precision and lower stock levels play an important role, as does being influenced by the social and environmental impacts of particular materials.

Quality is part of everything Filippa K does—from how its products are designed, manufactured, and sold,

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to how it cares for colleagues, customers and everyone else it interacts with. In 2008, Filippa K collaborated with the second-hand chain Judit in Stockholm to further lengthen the lifetime of its clothes. It is a way Filippa K can take responsibility for the entire life cycle of its products while also providing alternatives to the traditional practice of shopping and disposal.

Furthermore, Filippa K is working with the non-profit organisation Lånegarderoben, which operates as a clothing library. The idea is that consumers can renew their wardrobe temporarily without contributing to increased clothes consumption. Both of these initiatives prove that the clothes really do stand the test of time, in both quality and style.

Filippa K has a team of about 350 staff who are trained and given the opportunity to develop their skills in the area they already work in or in different areas of the business. Amelie says there is talk about

using an internal education program but the current focus is on the concept of ‘train the trainer’.

“We have a leadership development program. We talk a lot about Filippa K culture and invest a lot into the culture in terms of social relations. I would say that is the key today, but we talk a lot about ‘train the trainer’—how we can use the talents we have within the company to educate the new talents coming in.”

Filippa K’s collaborations with key suppliers and retail partners have helped it get to where it is today. “We would say one term that keeps popping up for us in everyday business is ‘long lasting,’” Amelie says. “We are very much talking about long lasting in terms of the products and the responsibilities of that, and also long-lasting relationships and the relations with business partners and suppliers.

“We are very proud of the relations we have and some of them have

been from the beginning. A key for us is to have personal relationships, and to be a partner when we work with our suppliers.”

Amelie has a very positive outlook on the direction Filippa K is heading in the future. She believes there are no limitations with what the brand can achieve. “We have such a strong reason for being the way we are. We are making fashion and we are a fashion company but we make fashion in our way, in our style.

“We are always on trend but it is expressed with the style of Filippa K. We are very secure and confident in that. We want to be that piece of clothing that you wear when you want to be very feminine, very masculine, very elegant, or very trendy. The consumer wants to feel comfortable and stylish, and therefore, with the kind of look that we represent, for both men and women, we really have a reason for being. I am very optimistic about the future.” •



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