

Stella McCartney Turns Champagne Waste Into Luxury Grape Leather

From SpeciesUnite.com

December 2023

The designer and sustainability campaigner has partnered with champagne brand Veuve Clicquot to use grape waste from its vineyards to create a grape-based alternative to leather.



Credit: Stella McCartney / Veuve Clicquot

Fashion designer and sustainability champion Stella McCartney has revealed a new luxury collection made with “grape leather”.

The grape-based alternative to leather is made of grape waste taken from the vineyards of champagne brand Veuve Clicquot, with whom McCartney has partnered with for the collection.

The collaboration highlights an innovative and sustainable alternative to traditional animal-based leather, with the production process taking by-products of Veuve Clicquot’s harvest and then combining them with plant oils and natural fibers to create a fabric McCartney calls VEGEA.

Like many of McCartney’s efforts, sustainability credentials are key. The new grape-based VEGEA helps to create leather without the need for animal-based leather, which is a product of

the climate-intensive animal agriculture industry. Animal agriculture contributes an estimated 11-17 percent of the world's GHG emissions, with 65 percent of that being from cattle.



One of three variations of the “grape leather” Frayme bag. Credit: Stella McCartney / Veuve Clicquot

With VEGEA made up from 80 percent natural, renewable, and recycled elements, the fabric carries a fraction of the environmental footprint of animal leather, and is said to have a 40 percent lower impact on global warming and a 50 percent reduction in water usage compared to fossil fuel-based alternatives to leather.

In an [interview](#), McCartney said that the finished product made from grape looks, feels, and lasts the same as real leather.

“You truly cannot tell the difference”, the designer explained. “It also has the ability to be available at scale, which is something that excites me because I get to create and design great fashion while at the same time I am pushing boundaries. I get to challenge an industry that is really old fashioned and still works with the same five to 10 materials that it’s worked with for the last hundred years.”

The fact that the grape material has the ability to be made at scale will likely excite those in the sustainable fashion industry, where problems around scalability have hindered some other alternative-leather projects in the past.



The Frayme bag made from “grape leather”. Credit: Stella McCartney / Veuve Clicquot

Included in the new “grape leather” capsule collection are three Frayme bags, as well as a bottle holder accessory that can store a champagne bottle. There’s also two variations of McCartney’s signature Elyse sandals, with the platform wedge made from recycled cork collected from Veuve Clicquot’s cellars in Reims. The range is set to be available to pre-order 11th Dec via Stella McCartney’s website.

Two Decades of Innovating Animal-Free Fashion

McCartney launched her luxury lifestyle brand in her name in 2001, after four years as creative director of Chloé. The designer is a passionate animal advocate, inspired by her late mother, Linda McCartney, and has never used any animal-derived fur, leather, or skins in her collections, instead championing sustainable, innovative materials.

While McCartney was once seen as an outlier in the fashion industry, her influence can now be seen across many leading brands, including a more general industry-wide shift towards developing more sustainable and animal-friendly fabrics and materials.



The quirky bottle holder accessory made with grape leather. Credit: Stella McCartney / Veuve Clicquot

Innovative animal-free alternatives to fur, leather, and other animal skins are increasingly part of the mainstream, amid heightened consumer awareness surrounding the climate crises and animal exploitation. Recent examples include [Nike's collaboration](#) with musician Billie Eilish to create vegan leather sneakers, to [ZARA launching a collection](#) of fashion accessories made from pineapple leather.

McCartney herself has continued to innovate. In 2021, the designer launched the world's first-ever garments made from vegan, lab-grown Mylo mushroom leather, as part of a groundbreaking consortium between Mylo, Stella McCartney, Adidas, Lululemon, and Kerin.

And earlier this year, McCartney [revealed her first item](#) made with a new, natural fabric that's created entirely from banana plants.