

## *BeeWise: restoring value to the memory of savoir- faire*



FASHION, TAILORING, TEXTILE

### Contacts

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We learned about this new initiative, which was recently born from the passion of four friends, aiming at enhancing the talent of the best knitting grandmas of Milan.

### Tell us your story. How did BeeWise start?

BeeWise started in the summer of 2013 up in the mountains, from an idea sparked by four friends, seated around a table to speak of those values and know-how we are in danger of losing, due to our frenzied scrapping of things. One of us pointed out, for example, the classical woollen jumper knitted by our grandmas and this triggered it all.

Being completely alien to the world of clothing and knitting, it took us two years to study the techniques and the market, and develop a targeted idea, identifying the right yarn supplier among the best Italian producers and creating the team of grandmas that would do all BeeWise garments strictly by hand, using knitting needles or crochet hooks.



La nostra mission è restituire valore alla memoria del saper fare, tornando a mettere al centro l'attenzione e la cura per i dettagli.



Nasciamo come piattaforma di e-commerce, e sin dall'inizio uno dei nostri obiettivi è stato quello di portare il nostro particolare concetto di artigianato Made in Italy in giro per l'Europa

### What's your philosophy?

Our mission is to restore value to the memory of savoir-faire, refocusing our attention and care for details. Also, we like the idea of building a bridge between two very distant generations. On one side are the grannies with their art, and on the other the babes who are about to be born, or recently born - the end users of our products.

The essence of the BeeWise line is to combine the know-how of our knitting grandmas with the use of prized yarns, not only cashmere and organic cotton, but also mink, to bring out a series of garments with a timeless style able to resist the trends of the moment.

### How important is the artisanal factor?

BeeWise wouldn't exist without it. We are perfectly aware that, in merely business terms, to give in on this point would mean greater productions and less costs, but this would completely distort the inspiring vision behind our project. Every BeeWise item is handmade from start to finish, without the help of any machine, but only with knitting needles or crochet hooks.

### How did you find the grandmas to engage?

Unfortunately, and it was a surprise for us, in Milan there are no groups of ladies who meet to knit together as a pastime, and to share advice and suggestions. So the search was harder than what we had imagined. The recruitment process we carried on in specialised wool shops was fundamental, because we were able to

gather the names of ladies who were willing to take on assignments. From then on, especially by word of mouth, we managed to create a small team that now counts around a dozen grannies, in the sense of over-fifty-year-old ladies.

The selection came about through the study of the items they made and letting them work on target samples of our collection. It was one of the most exciting experiences of our adventure: seeing the passion our grannies put into BeeWise, their wish to challenge themselves, and in some cases also the possibility to fulfil a dream put aside for years, since there were children to raise and salaries to bring home. It was - and still is - a crescendo of emotions.

The extraordinary thing is the sense of community our grannies immediately established with one another. The name BeeWise precisely arises from the concept of a beehive where all work together in harmony and hand down an ancient know-how, in our case. We like to consider our grannies as active bees, and that's why we chose the bee as our symbol, sewn on under the form of a precious button on all our outfits, with the exception of those for babes.

### What are the products you make?

We make knitted or crocheted items for children from 0 to 3 years, from small accessories like caps, scarves and shoes, to more important items like cradles or bed blankets in pure cashmere, without forgetting the traditional "granny's cardigans". The line, which includes furnishing items and is continually



developing, will soon be enriched with new products for the coming summer season.

**How do you promote this initiative, and with what results?**

We have just started, but the results are excellent. For the moment, we are campaigning by word of mouth, by attending selected events, and through social networks like Instagram and Facebook. Given the work methods, the particular type of artisanal grandmas and the quality of the final product, we cannot address mass markets also because the delivery times are different, of course. Each garment is made to order, at times tailored according to the specific customer's requests, and this is why a month may pass for the delivery of the more elaborate items. Furthermore, it is fundamental for us to create a direct contact with our customers, so as to be able to recount the basic idea of BeeWise. Those who choose BeeWise garments choose a well-defined philosophy. All our items are at the moment available only online on our site, but in the near future we would like to offer our products in some selected shops that will be able to enhance and promote the values we are trying to convey with our project.

**Do you think that in future this project may also break the confines of Milan?**

We started out as an e-commerce platform, and right from the start one of our objectives was to bring our specific concept of artisanal "Made in Italy" products around Europe. Sad to say, for both different economic conditions and cultural reasons, a reality like ours seems to be better understood and appreciated abroad.

All the production instead will remain strictly bound to Milan, to allow us to closely follow all its aspects, in order to guarantee utmost quality.