

BEAU

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Stone Island is based not in Milan, but in the town of Ravarino in Emilia-Romagna, near the city of Modena in Italy. Why this is the case can be traced back to its original designer, Massimo Osti, a man revered in the world of fashion design as the creator of Stone Island, which, as you may know, is distinguished by a removable badge on the sleeve bearing a compass motif.

‘He was a stubborn man,’ says Carlo Rivetti, president of Stone Island, of his late colleague Osti. ‘When we first started working together, he was in Bologna and I tried to persuade him to move to Milan, but he was not interested. Then he had a friend in Ravarino, nearby, so we moved there instead.’ But the location proved to be an advantage, concedes Rivetti now, some four decades after the launch of the label in 1982. ‘It has meant that we are always outside of fashion. Stone Island is not fashion. It is much more about industrial design, engineering and function,’ he explains.

In black jeans and with his vintage, black Stone Island T-shirt displaying the firm’s compass motif – of course – across his chest, Rivetti is a striking figure. He looks much younger than his years, partly on account of his winning grin and twinkling eyes. He is a man who speaks with amusement and passion, and this translates into the clothes, which are consistently interesting on account of the huge amount of research that goes into them.

‘We start from the fabric,’ explains Rivetti. And over the years there have been numerous examples of how this has resulted in memorable pieces. The very first collection, by Osti, and the genesis of the Stone Island project, was of garments made from the military tarpaulin used on trucks. This cloth, christened Tela Stella, set a pattern for material innovation that 40 years later has seen such extraordinary feats as jackets made of bronze and stainless steel and even Kevlar, and the recurring Ice Jacket thermosensitive pieces that change colour with the fluctuation of heat.

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Va va vroom

An Italian-based touring club for classic superbike enthusiasts to take their wheels out on the open road

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Dress for the future

Menswear label Canali is putting a greener focus on how it makes clothes

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Europe’s Hamptons

Discover Comporta’s low-key high style waiting a short flight away

Island mentality

Stone Island has partnered with Frieze London, bringing its sportswear to the attention of the art crowd. But what is it that keeps the Italian label so hip?

WORDS: ERIC WALKER

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SEAS THE DAY

Swedish boatmaker J Craft has been making exceptional day boats, powerful enough to master the high seas, for almost 25 years. *BEAU* visited its base in Gotland to discover more

Johan Hallén, a burly Swede raised on the ancient island of Gotland, is a skilled craftsman, ex-navy captain and sailor who has been building boats since his teens. But his other passion is food. This is evident as he flips through photos of truffles on his iPhone. These coveted “black pearls” hail from Gotland itself, and Hallén regularly couriers them to a client overseas, between exchanging cooking tips and restaurant recommendations over WhatsApp. ‘The relationship with a client starts after they buy the boat,’ he says with a smile.

Hallén has worked at J Craft – a luxurious boat manufacturer also hailing from Sweden’s largest island – since its inception almost a quarter of a century ago. When he’s not in the Gotland-based J Craft factory working on the latest creation, he’s often tasked with sailing the finished product to clients around the world. It’s enough to make you want to quit your desk job immediately and take to the high seas.

J Craft boats are made by hand, meticulously. Each one is bespoke and takes well over a year from start to completion. The 42ft (12.8m) J Craft Torpedo – the signature model, now in its 22nd edition – nods to the retro and unashamedly glamorous aesthetic of the classic wooden runabouts of the ’50s and ’60s, but with unparalleled performance.

It was the beauty of J Craft that first intrigued company owner Radenko Milakovic. With a background in finance and zero experience of boats, his head was nevertheless turned by the sight of a J Craft moored in Monaco in 2007.

‘I was looking down from my balcony and I saw this beautiful wooden (or so I thought) boat in the

harbour,’ he says. ‘I literally ran downstairs and jumped up and down until I got the owner’s attention. He came over and told me about it and it was just one surprise after another.’ These ‘surprises’ included the fact that the boat was not wooden, but fibreglass with a wooden veneer, and that it wasn’t Italian but Swedish-designed and built. After renting a J Craft for the summer, Milakovic was smitten and wanted to buy one for himself, but with certain adjustments.

These changes, by his own admission, were to compensate for his lack of experience as a mariner, coupled with a desire to make the boat ‘user friendly, easy to handle and equally rewarding for every level of expertise’. When he found that going off-menu, so to speak, was not possible, his solution was to buy the company. This was a serendipitous move that changed the course of J Craft.

The company was founded in 1999 by Swedish businessman Björn Janson (hence the “J”), who had a vision to build a new type of boat in Gotland inspired by the vintage romance of wood-crafted vessels. Hallén, now chief technical officer, has been involved from day one, and J Craft was able to hit the ground running with a high-profile debut commission from King Carl XVI Gustaf. A keen sailor, the Swedish monarch purchased the very first original-series J Craft Cabrio Cruiser.

Sadly, Janson had been battling ill health for many years, and by the time Milakovic came on board in 2008, he knew that J Craft needed to be in safe hands to secure its future. When Milakovic stepped in (Janson passed away in 2011), he redeveloped the boat ‘from scratch’.



From top one of J Craft’s beautiful creations, Zens, gets put to the test in Gotland; Johan Hallén (right) checks over plans



The company makes a considerable effort to minimise waste and keep production as local as possible. The joinery is built in-house and the upholstery is made a ‘few hundred yards’ from the warehouse. Milakovic plans to go fully recyclable in the next few years. He has his ear to the ground when it comes to alternative solutions for new propulsion systems, and even synthetic fuels.

J Craft is constantly changing, but at a pace befitting its pedigree: like the graceful swan kicking wildly beneath the surface. The company motto is ‘evolution not revolution’. Still, Milakovic is keen to accelerate that evolution by increasing production, albeit to a maximum of three to four boats per year. This summer, J Craft officially started its activities in the USA, setting up in the Hamptons to showcase the Torpedo to would-be owners across the pond.

‘My mission is to take this very beautiful thing, this handcrafted tradition that’s been honed over so many years on the island, and bring it to the world.’ j-craftboats.com

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