reign
MAGAZINE

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FASHION

Making History

Over the past decade, American heritage brands have been having a moment and it doesn't appear to be slowing down any time soon. Once the clothing of sport and function celebrated for durability and utility rather than fashion, the popularity of work wear makers like Red Wing and L.L. Bean has had a revival. With deep roots, integrity and a passion for craftsmanship, these tried and true brands are being lauded by the fashionable set for everything mass-production is not. They've stood the test of time, becoming trendy without even trying. Millenials have taken note, looking for something authentic amidst a throwaway modern age, while hipsters have embraced the long-lasting quality of heritage brands. Though the word "heritage" is on the verge of being overused on anything that has a throwback look as a buzzword to attract younger customers, the consistency of these classics makes a piece relevant some 20 years later. Heritage brands rely on their history to define what makes them special – durable and handmade, they come with a story, carry authenticity and, dare we say, a soul. With quality backed by the people who make them, these pieces are more likely to be passed down than regifted; giving a unique heritage piece is the antithesis of giving a gift card. Many heritage labels have found new life by collaborating with contemporary ready-to-wear brands, bringing them back into the spotlight and renewing interest in their style and history. J. Crew is known for partnering with definitive labels like Barbour and Quoddy, Target has collaborated with British powerhouse Liberty; similarly, Urban Outfitters created a heritage line with Pendleton. Others have found popularity overseas, notably Japan, where the look of the rugged workman is all the rage (and has been for decades). Here, we explore America's classic heritage labels, and reveal how they went from function to fashion. From utility brands to coveted trendy design houses, they've become the epitome of chic. – *Rebecca Treon*

HERE, A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE HERITAGE BRANDS, REVEALED. READ THE ENTIRE MAKING HISTORY FEATURE IN THE FALL 2015 ISSUE OF REIGN MAGAZINE ON COLORADO NEWSSTANDS OR ONLINE BY CLICKING HERE…

L.L. BEAN | EST. 1912

Consider yourself lucky if you own a pair of L.L. Bean's duck boots—the allweather footwear racked up a waitlist of 100,000 last winter. The Freeport, Maine company's headquarters sits just a few miles away from its original operation 103 years ago and today the family-owned outdoor outfitting company has grown to have millions of fans around the globe, employing thousands. Though the leather and rubber boots designed to withstand brutal New England winters have become the garb of Normcore-obsessed urbanites, we've always loved their preppy classics: The Field Coat and the Boat and Tote Bag (monogrammed, of course) are longtime favorites. Locally, look for the L.L. Bean flagship store that opened last fall at Park Meadows.

FARIBAULT WOOLEN COMPANY | EST. 1865

The year was 1865. The Civil War had just ended and then-President Lincoln was tragically assassinated. And near the Cannon River in Minnesota, a legacy was beginning as Faribault set up shop. Founded by German cabinet-maker Carl H. Klemer, what began as a one-man wool carding operation stands today as an iconic maker of fine blankets. Over the next 30 years, with the help of Klemer's three sons, Faribault expanded by leaps and bounds. They supplied 100,000 wool blankets to the soldiers of WWI, and by the 1930s, nearly every department store across the U.S. carried their wares, cementing a reputation as a producer of quality goods. When American troops headed to Europe during WWII, the Faribault factory was flooded with volunteers to help meet blanket production demands for our boys abroad. So beloved and iconic is the company that when a fire demolished the factory in the 1960s, orders poured in to get mill employees back to work. Their summer and winter weight blankets and throws are classics, but Faribault also does natty scarves and wraps—we especially covet their Huntly Wool Throw Cape this fall.

QUODDY | EST. 1909

These Lewiston, Maine moc makers measure their output by the dozen, not thousands, and when they say their items are hand crafted, they mean it. Each custom shoe is literally stitched and cut by hand without using industrial machines. In their workshop, sewers sit at benches with needle, thread, leather, and a few tools, then create a custom moccasin using techniques passed down over centuries from the native Passamaquoddy tribes that once inhabited the area. Crafting a quality, comfortable and durable shoe takes real skill—each sewer expertly knows how to coax the materials they use into beautiful footwear. Quoddy has stuck to their roots, refusing to exchange the work of the human hand for machine efficiency, and it shows. From classic penny loafers, to boat shoes, drivers and ringboot moccasins, each pair carries on a legacy.

PENDLETON | EST. 1889

The early history of Pendleton reads like an adventurer's diary: Englishman Thomas Kay crossed the Atlantic to work in East Coast textile mills, later sailing down the Atlantic seaboard, crossing the Isthmus of Panama by burro, and sailing back up the Pacific seaboard in an epic voyage lasting four months. The end point was Oregon, our nation's newest state, where he eventually opened his own woolen mill in 1889. Kay's eldest daughter Fannie learned from the ground up while managing the mill before marrying C.P. Bishop, a retail merchant. Together they created the foundation of Pendleton that's still going today, producing the iconic Indian blankets with bright and intricate designs that are synonymous with the West. The blankets, with patterns from the Nez Perce, Navajo, Hopi, and Zuni tribes, were used in trade and ceremony, but the timeless designs were soon coveted by everyone. The early 20th century saw the mill expand its line into wool men's shirts, and the women's 49er jacket was a booming success in post-war America. Today, Pendleton has partnered with Urban Outfitters to create a modern line of clothing and home goods. We love the classics – the blankets from their National Park collection embrace the outdoor spirit of the West and have a look that's right at home in Colorado.