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Made in USA

American Eyewear Companies Spread Their Roots and Grow



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GWENDOLYN PLUMMER / SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR

NEW YORK—What it means to be American-made can be different for everyone. In July of 2021, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) introduced a new rule that both clarified and narrowed what it means to be a product “Made in the USA.” Under this new rule, the FTC prohibits companies from labeling their products as “Made in the USA” unless “virtually all” <https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/blog/2022/04/ftc-charges-battery-maker-first-case-under-made-usa-labeling-rule>

pieces or ingredients are made and sourced in the U.S. In addition, the final assembly or processing and “substantial transformation” of the item must occur within the U.S. as well.

The rule is strict, and it can be tough to reach every single requirement—in the eyewear industry, for example, many American-made frames are constructed and designed here in the U.S. using globally

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L’Amy America Debuts Home Grown Seven.Five

It was 2021 when L’Amy America signed an exclusive manufacturing agreement with Wayne, New Jersey-based Scene Eyewear. This year, that agreement came to fruition with the announcement of Seven.Five (75), L’Amy America’s American-made eyewear collection.

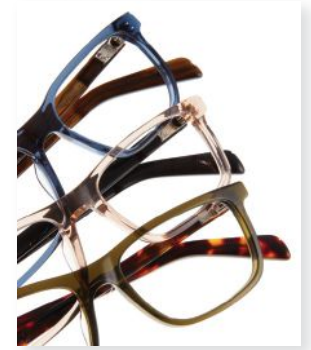
Designed at L’Amy’s headquarters in Connecticut and manufactured of global components in New Jersey, L’Amy America’s brand new Seven.Five collection is a luxury, handcrafted American collection. The initial collection, which officially launches at Vision Expo West this month, is made up of 12 models in four colors each. Sales from the collection support the Two Blind Brothers’ charitable initiative, too.

The collection’s name is a nod to American history, L’Amy’s director of lifestyle brands Connie Reiss explained: “The brand name 75 symbolizes the beginning—the start—the impetus of a movement. In 1775 the first, and perhaps most pivotal battle of the Revolutionary War was fought. The year 1775 marked the beginning of America’s quest for freedom.

“In a similar spirit, 75 is our start. We are among the first of a small handful of eyewear pioneers to invest in the American eyewear manufacturing movement. 75 not only symbolizes the beginning, but more importantly signifies the early days of the American eyewear revolution.”

L’Amy America is a large, global company, with international brands and partners—but the team sees the importance of homegrown production, too. Reiss told *VM*, “While we are a global company with manufacturing partners all around the world, we do believe in the importance of supplier diversification and that American manufacturing should play a bigger role than it currently does in the global eyewear supply chain.

“Ultimately, we are a consumer solutions provid-



L’Amy America is launching Seven.Five, its American-made collection designed in Connecticut and produced in New Jersey.

“Superior quality, handmade acetates, comfort-sculpted temple design, gorgeously distinctive colorations, and subtle patriotic detail make for a memorable collection.”

- Daniel Shack, VP of business and product development, L’Amy America

er and we create eyewear products and segments that fill consumer needs. The consumer demand for USA crafted products continues to increase. By addressing this consumer need, it becomes yet another key solution-segment for us that sets us apart from the competition.”

L’Amy America CEO and president Stephen Rapoport agreed. “At L’Amy America we are proud of our international heritage, but we are an American company. For decades we have been a global supplier with manufacturing facilities in various countries. Today, more than ever, we believe in the importance of supplier diversification but we believe America should play a more significant role in the manufacturing process.”

Combining global know-how and American handcraft, the 75 collection will be a staple for L’Amy America going forward—a collection that will allow the company to show off its personality and vision. “We combine skill and artistry resulting in a collection in which you can literally feel the craftsmanship—the luxury—and more than anything else, feel the commitment and pride that goes into the careful creation of each and every frame,” explained VP of business and product development Daniel Shack.

“Superior quality, handmade acetates, comfort-sculpted temple design, gorgeously distinctive colorations, and subtle patriotic detail make for a memorable collection.” ■

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Thema Offers Italian-Born, American-Made Eyewear

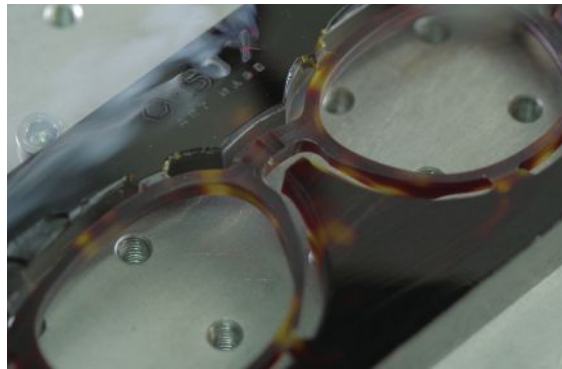
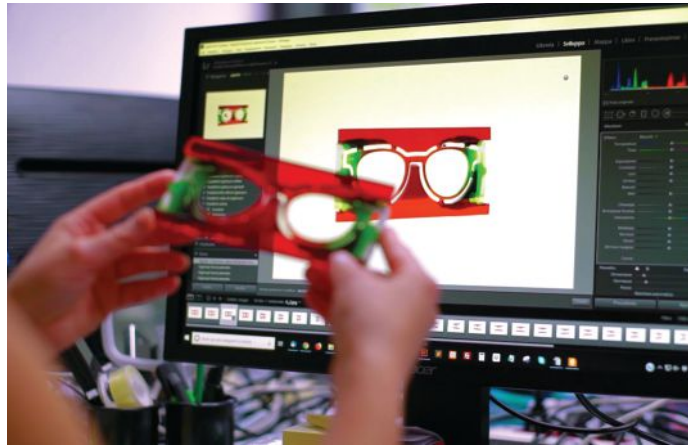
Italian-born and American-made, Thema Eyewear opened its Miami, Florida factory in 2017 to “bring the quality and tradition of Italian eyewear to the United States,” Giulia Valmassoi, CEO North America, Thema, told VM. The company’s three most popular brands are iGreen Hi-Tech, which focuses on biobased acetate frames, O-Six Eyewear and Giorgio Valmassoi 1971, its classic and contemporary collection that uses luxury materials.

Overall, Thema focuses on creating eyewear that is both eco-friendly, made to order and entirely customizable—all achieved in its Miami factory.

Valmassoi explained, “The importance of having our collection Made in USA was inspired by the opportunities we were fortunate [in] having when coming to the States. Having our factory in the U.S. has provided our workers, who have migrated from countries all [around] the world, an opportunity to use their skills and techniques in eyewear manufacturing and in turn creating a stronger community and economy.

Since most of our designs are made-to-order, our goal was to utilize the same manufacturing techniques used in Italy to make customizable frames for our U.S. customers within three to five business days from the order. Producing our frames in the U.S. doesn’t just add the value of American made eyewear, but also gives us the ability to maintain the high quality of our products.”

While the increasing prices of raw materials and wages have caused Thema to raise some prices themselves, Valmassoi has found that customers are happy to pay in a little more for Thema, especially considering the direct relationship between the Thema factory and the ECP. Thema welcomes customers for factory tours regularly whenever it is safe to do so, and Valmassoi said a majority of Thema’s customers are small businesses who “have shifted their optical store inventory selection



All of Thema Eyewear’s frames are fully customizable and made in Miami, Florida.

“What we have seen lately in sales trends and customer demands, is an interest in eco friendly product offerings, interactive digital services, made-to-order designs, and Made in USA products.”

- Giulia Valmassoi, CEO North America, Thema

to only purchase Made in USA products and support independent brands.”

The relationship between factory and ECP is more important than ever—and Thema understands how to bridge that gap in a uniquely impressive way. Getting a custom-made pair of frames into the customer’s hands within a week is no small feat, but Thema does exactly that every single day. “Customers are excited when they hear only three to five business days for a custom frame to be produced and their patients receive the frame within seven days of placing their order,” said Valmassoi. “With our frames being produced in small batches, we can uphold a higher quality of standard for all our

products and guarantee 100 percent customer satisfaction.”

Thema always aims to be at the forefront of eyewear innovation, especially when it comes to the areas of sustainability and customization. Eyewear that is made in the U.S. fits into these areas perfectly, said Valmassoi. “What we have seen lately in sales trends and customer demands, is an interest in eco friendly product offerings, interactive digital services, made-to-order designs, and Made in USA products.”

As Thema continues to reach for what’s next, being American-made remains at the heart of its growth. ■

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