

Cross-generational and across gender the way forward for Furla

By **Claire Malcolm** on November, 14 2017 | Fashion, Bags & Accessories



Alberto Camerlengo, CEO, Furla

Channel growth of 47% in the first six months of 2017 has put Furla front and center in travel retail and company CEO, Alberto Camerlengo, credits its current commercial success with a healthy approach to global growth.

“In 2011, when we entered travel retail, we had zero travel retail presence and now we are registering exponential growth every six months. We are opening more and more doors but it has to be a ‘like for like’ scenario, with travel retail expansion mirroring domestic opportunity,” he says.

The high visibility that travel retail affords a brand like Furla is invaluable according to Camerlengo and key to that is consistency in terms of presentation, whether it’s downtown Ho Chi Minh or Hamburg airport.

“We look for partners that have the same values, who understand the brand and who can support it. We provide training and merchandising expertise. It’s a two-way relationship in every location,” he notes.

The big picture for travel retail has Asia leading the way, and it’s a region where Furla is actively investing. Elsewhere, the Americas is a land of opportunity and a major focus for 2018 while business in the Middle East continues to be guided by strong sales at Dubai International Airport.

Says Camerlengo: “We are working with our partners to have more space so we can properly showcase our brand portfolio. If you add men’s, sunglasses and watches to our usual women’s bags then an average of 20 square meters simply isn’t enough.

“We try to get around this by being innovative with merchandising so, for example, we have the MyPlayFurla collection with its interchangeable flaps on show, so the customer with enough downtime can play with different options. This has proven to be very successful for us in the last 18 months and adds an element of fun and personalization to the experience.”

With designs ranging from the classic and elegant to the contemporary and avant-garde, the decision to venture into male territory was a natural evolution as Camerlengo explains: “We have a great supply chain in place, fantastic quality products and so it was time to address a male audience, plus it’s a growing market.

“Domestically, we started with men’s bags in Japan a couple of years ago, and business is growing very fast, and so we decided to add the men’s collection to travel retail. It’s currently available in five locations and this will grow to 12 by spring/summer 2018.”

Its latest male range sees new Arazzo, Ippocampo and Grifone prints added to the best-selling Atlante line and new styles and sizes extending the Marte business collection with cross-body zip tops, small messengers and all-new collapsible handled briefcase.



Furla has added a number of new prints to its best-selling Atlante line



Furla's men's collection is currently available in five locations, which will grow to 12 by spring/summer 2018

In the leisure category, new solid color and animated animal print designs underpin the Ulisse line of nylon bags and the Icaro collection welcomes a super practical four-way bag.

"What's interesting is that we also see women buying men's products, with items like the tote and some of our backpacks bought by female travelers," remarks Camerlengo.

In the last 12 months, Furla has also turned its marketing strategy on its head with the decision to lead with social media. Says Camerlengo: "All the rules have changed. It's about influencers, not only celebrities; content, not only beautiful images.

"We now start all our campaigns with digital activity and we see the power of social media in terms of how it is driving sales - it is more powerful than any other communication channel."



In the leisure category, new solid color and animated animal print designs underpin the Ulisse line of nylon bags