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LINEN TRANSCENDS SEASONS AND
MIXES METAPHORS FOR 2003

NEW YORK --- Fashion rules are meant to be broken and linen is taking the lead in shattering them for 2003. Don't expect to see the old stereotyped summer-only linens at Masters of Linen's booth at the Yarn Fair International. New linen yarns begin with the fiber's innate, casually elegant qualities then move forward in many new directions to update apparel knits and wovens and interior textiles.

Transeasonal yarns in anytime, anywhere weights are created through daring new fiber blends and finishes. Unusual contrasts and complements of colors and textures now mix up tradition with year-round comfort, protection and style. Embracing all these new inner and outer workings is a fresh simplicity that brings out linen's naturally creative aesthetic and innovative best.

Two key yarn and fabric trends for 2003, developed exclusively for Masters of Linen by consultant Ornella Bignami of Elementi Moda, experiment with mixes of traditional and contemporary elements, always targeted to function and comfort.

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The first trend, **Knowledge**, employs the natural beauty of linen's irregularities and imperfections, sometimes exaggerating them through construction and blending with other equally tactile yarns. Slubbed, nubbed and chiné yarns convey a message of authenticity without rusticity. Yarns of different counts are worked into a single fabric adding visual and true dimension. Linen's all naturalness is found in raised and pebbly surfaces such as barely-there ripples, seersucker-like variations and gentle pleats in suiting cloths and bouclé knits. Sophistication meets suppleness when elastane stretch is added to minimalist textures to create flexibility, reduce wrinkling and provide the ultimate in wearing comfort for full-bodied linens.

Soft-touch yarns blend linen with cotton, wool or cashmere. The wool and cashmere combinations can be felted, boiled or pressed into delicate, luxurious knits and fabrics. Shiny/matte, iridescent and subtle light-reflecting surfaces are created through blends of linen with polyamide, silk, Tencel® or polyester, that also increase fluidity and drape.

The second trend, **Intelligence**, combines the newest technologies with old-world charm to create yarns and fabrics that appear aged yet modern at the same time. Here, color, fabrics and garment shapes take precedence over weaves and patterns.

Washed and distressed finishes and dusty, shaded prints impart a recycled look, often mimicking denim. Blurred, thrown, flecked and grainy surfaces tend toward eco-consciousness. Casual wools team up with kemped, knotty, tweedy linens that are not shy about the unevenness and irregularity found in naturally dyed, hand-spun yarns or hand-woven fabrics.

Flat or finely ribbed linen/wool and all-linen velvets work equally well in home textiles and high fashion. Knits are chunkier but stay in the range of the fine-to-medium yarn counts that

retain their lightweights and mingle well with other yarns. Invisible but high-performance coatings and treatments are a plus for linen knits, wovens and interior textiles.

The Masters of Linen trademark was created by the Confédération Européene du Lin (European Linen Confederation) to identify and guarantee the quality of products containing yarns and fabrics produced by licensed Western European linen spinners, weavers and knitters.

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