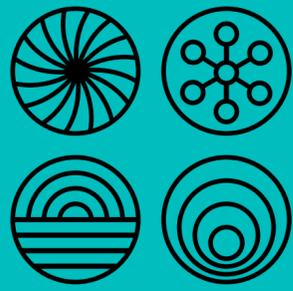


FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

CASE STUDY:
FINISTERRE



Image: Finisterre



CASE STUDY

FINISTERRE

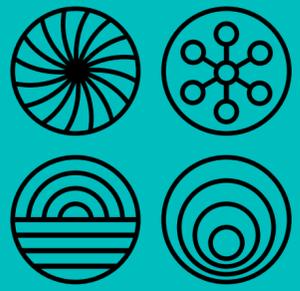
Founder/Owner	Tom Kay
Type	Menswear / Womenswear functional outdoor clothing
Sector	Outdoor wear
Established	2003
Location	St. Agnes, Cornwall
Size	Medium
Website	finisterre.com

"We are a business, we cause damage, and you could argue that the most sustainable thing you could do is not start a business in the first place. But we are trying to be a better business with better products and better supply chain, and transparency. There is an honesty factor there which I think people are drawn to."

"If we're developing product to work outdoors, we're doing it through a daily experience of being outdoors. We're not about high performance, we're about longevity, it's just got to work in the outdoors on that daily dog walk. It's real life as opposed to a lab test version of it. Even for colour palette, we're influenced by what's happening outside in our natural environment."

FINISTERRE





CASE STUDY: FINISTERRE

KEY TAKEAWAYS

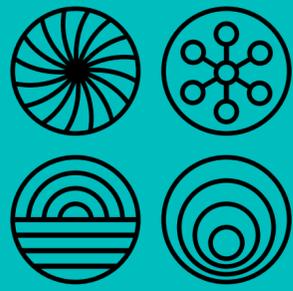
Good design at Finisterre is functional design, fit for purpose, aiming to create long-lasting products.

Product development and innovation happens in partnership with suppliers (e.g. Econyl), customers and community groups (e.g. through local wetsuit testing).

Business processes are based on a deeply ingrained shared vision across the team and a culture of humility and compassion to ensure employee well-being.

The right investors who share their vision are key for Finisterre's goal of growth for impact.





OVERVIEW



Finisterre was founded with the ambition to design and develop hardy British surf wear in the best and most sustainable way for those that share their passion for the sea. Founded by Tom Kay with a small group of friends, Finisterre managed continuous growth over the years, extending their existing retail business model to offering repair services to extend product life.

Customers are seen as the biggest advocates of the brand and the company organises a range of customer engagement activities. These include a wetsuit tester programme, online engagement through workshops and yoga classes, and repair workshops and interaction with customers who bring their products for repair. In order to facilitate continuous improvement, Finisterre also has a strong internal feedback culture enabling constant feedback loops.

Funding from private equity investors and through crowd-funding initiatives enabled Finisterre to significantly scale up over the years. However, it was important for the company to find the right investors to ensure that they grew in a way that was compatible with their values and the company vision. While Finisterre now operates in a more structured way than during the early days (which was enabled by external funding), investors fully understand Finisterre's vision and share their purpose-driven ambitions.

Thanks to more funding and a growing customer base in the UK and abroad, Finisterre now operate nine stores across the UK. This allowed them to engage with more people, extend their product range, and develop new collaborations. Examples include sustainable outdoor shoes with Vans, turning ocean plastic into swimwear solutions with Econyl, and developing new products to raise awareness of the urgent need to protect the environment with the Natural History Museum. Despite their growth, Finisterre has maintained previously existing, strong local partnerships with key stakeholders such as Tellenby, an Australian Merino wool producer in Exmoor.

However, with size come also new challenges. Right now, Finisterre is a fascinating example that it is possible to increase one's positive impact through growth while ensuring that the underlying purpose and vision are visible in everything they do.

"Yes, we are competing with others, but I would say we carry a story, we carry a purpose and we're not greenwashing. It's real and we live the way we say we live."

FINISTERRE

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Design by: Studio LP

The Fostering Sustainable Practices project investigates creative practices in design-led fashion micro and small enterprises (MSEs) as an evidence base for change towards a more sustainable fashion industry. Project findings are underpinned by two-and-a half years of work with more than forty fashion MSEs, who demonstrate sustainable prosperity in and through Fashion.

This collaborative research is led by Centre for Sustainable Fashion, a University of the Arts London research centre, based at London College of Fashion. Project partners are based at London College of Fashion, The Open University and Middlesex University's Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research (CEEDR; a partner in Surrey University's Centre for Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity).

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