

'Double-knits' dent foundations

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Fall lines will contain more styles, they say, but still not enough to be a major factor at retail.

However, most manufacturers in all price ranges see potential in Simplex fabrics, and one fabric house — a prime producer of double-needle foundations fabrics — is currently at work on expanding its technology.

According to Irving Starkman, head of intimate apparel fabrics for Blue Ridge-Winkler division of Lehigh Valley Industries, double-needle knits "will become a basic technology that the foundations market will be using. The word 'double-knit' has become magic.

"It's made to achieve the look of bonding — one fabric that has all the properties of two fabrics bonded together."

Blue Ridge-Winkler is currently producing Simplex treatments in a variety of foundations fabrics including nylon tricot, polyester, Qiana and Antron III.

"We have sold about one-quarter million yards to foundations people for their fall lines. Our best seller in foundations is straight nylon which is down at the price level where most manufacturers can use it. Coming up strongly is anti-stat Antron III."

Prices for Simplex treatments have gone up slightly — about 5 per cent in the last year — according to Starkman, and such fabrics are

'Double-knits' make a mark in foundations

By BECKI LEVINE

NEW YORK — Simplex fabric or double-needle, warp-knit treatments are making a dent in the foundations market, but makers warn, the treatment is showing more potential for the future than immediate retail action.

For most, double-needle fabrics are still only a minor percentage of total brassiere production and account for even less in girdles, where currently they are only being used as panels rather than entire items.

about twice the price as for regular treatments. However, he pointed out, most foundations manufacturers were using two layers of fabric and bonding them. Thus, the actual cost increase is about 25 per cent, rather than 50 per cent.

Currently Blue Ridge-Winkler's price range for Simplex treatments is from \$1.45 per linear yard of nylon to \$4 per linear yard of Qiana.

The firm "is working on new equipment that can be added to existing machinery to achieve new looks with

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Industries, New York, has been named exclusive sales agent in this country for **Vanity Brassiere Co.** of Montreal, Canada. The Vanity line includes bras in the \$6 to \$10 retail range, garter belts at \$3 to \$4 and bikini panties from \$4 to \$6.

Salem Industries operates the three-unit Salem Hosiery chain.

Vanity Fair Mills, Inc., has set a major expansion program in Monroeville and Jackson, Ala. The program includes expansion of existing facilities at both locations and erection of new plants in the immediate area, involving an outlay of approximately \$30 million for five years. The plan includes a central cutting facility for all VF apparel plants in the area and a new sewing plant in Jackson. Facilities at Monroeville and Jackson will be expanded to produce fabrics for H.D. Lee and Kay Windsor, both subsidiaries of VF Corp.

Simplex such as jacquards and nubby textures."

Alvin Goldstein, executive vice-president of Bi-Flex International, noted double-needle knits are "not that important to the budget consumer yet, but I think they will become more important. Eventually these things filter down to a range suitable for budget manufacturers."

Carnival currently has about four styles done in Simplex, with one of them a "best seller." The company began using the treatment only after the last market week.

Olga has the treatment "on the drawing board for introduction" sometime in the future, although no date is set as yet. According to Whitney Draydon, vice-president of sales, the firm delayed plans on these because of its success with lace and tricot.

Lilyette recently introduced a bandeau in double-needle but a spokesman noted it is early to gauge retail reaction. "We think it has certain good qualities and has a chance of surviving.

"The fabric went over very big with other manufacturers,

and the reaction of the consumer was good. The initial reaction to our new bra will show how strongly we will promote it, but we will certainly go out and push it," to some extent.

According to Marian Sherwood, advertising and promotion director of Van Raalte, "There will be more promoting of them; they have a handle. We're always looking for news — news that relates to people's life style."

Ms. Sherwood feels strongly that double-needle knits do just that. "The rib top is the uniform today and women need a smooth look underneath it. Double-needle knits give a smooth seam, have a nice, clingy, close to the body feel."

Van Raalte currently has Simplex treatments in fashion colors, as well as white, and even promotes the treatment in its catalog. The firm plans to add more to its line and may eventually get into Antron III in its next group.

According to a spokesman for Warner's, which introduced the first Simplex foundations about a year ago, the treatments have been doing "very well at retail. It was a major thing for us and had a significant impact from the sales point of view and from that of consumer benefits." In October, the firm introduced a double-needle knit girdle, which is being delivered now.