

TOM FORD
PLASTIC INNOVATION PRIZE
POWERED BY LONELY WHALE

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 11 p.m. PST ON MARCH 9, 2023

TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize Winners Revealed at Green Carpet Fashion Awards

Prize was awarded to three Winners of global competition sourcing and scaling biologically based and degradable alternatives to traditional thin-film plastic made from fossil fuels

March 9, 2023 (LOS ANGELES, CA) - Winners of the [TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize](#), the global competition powered by nonprofit [Lonely Whale](#) to source and scale marine-safe and biologically degradable alternatives to traditional thin-film plastic made from fossil fuels, were announced today at the [Green Carpet Fashion Awards](#) (GCFA) by Prize founder, Tom Ford, during his acceptance speech for The GCFA Visionary Honor. The \$1.2 million Prize Purse is a combination cash prize and direct investment presented by Title Sponsors [TOM FORD BEAUTY](#) and [The Estée Lauder Companies](#), and [Trousdale Ventures](#), the exclusive venture capital partner of the Prize. The Prize Purse aims to support Winners to scale their solutions to replace traditional thin-film plastics, which make up [46% of all plastic waste](#) leaking into the ocean each year.

“I started this Prize three years ago with a harrowing fear that the world our children would inherit would no longer be a livable one,” said Ford. “I wanted to be a part of the solution, not be an arbiter of the problem. If we did nothing about the waste and pollution flooding our oceans the disruption to our planet would be irreconcilable.

“Watching the brilliant minds within this competition has given me extraordinary hope in making the impossible possible. Our three winners have created truly viable alternatives – alternatives that when scaled across markets and industries will drastically change the course of the health of our planet.

“Today, as we announce the winners of the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize, I am honored, hopeful and thankful. Honored to have such great minds and partners join me to pioneer change. Hopeful for a better tomorrow, and thankful for all that has already been achieved.”

The GCFA Visionary Award was presented by award-winning actor and Prize Judge Trudie Styler in honor of Mr. Ford’s leadership of launching the Prize with Lonely Whale to help reduce the estimated [180 billion traditional thin-film plastic polybags](#) used annually by the fashion industry alone. Mr. Ford’s speech inspired the audience’s luminary leaders in fashion and business to take action and celebrate the solutions. The GCFA was co-chaired by actors Cate Blanchett, Viola Davis, Simu Liu, Simone Ashley, [American fashion designer and filmmaker Tom Ford](#), and model Quannah Chasinghorse in a celebration of collective transformation and commitment to sustainability and moving the fashion industry forward.

“It was an honor to highlight the alternative materials created by the Prize winners to reduce the environmental impact of traditional thin-film plastic at the Green Carpet Fashion Awards,” said Livia Firth, activist, producer and founder and Creative Director of Eco-Age and the Green Carpet Fashion Awards. “It has been inspiring to work with Mr. Ford, Lonely Whale and my fellow judges to identify a solution for traditional thin-film plastic that has the potential for wide-scale adoption. I look forward to seeing the fashion industry rise up to this challenge and embrace these biologically based and degradable alternative materials.”

The Winners are:

- [Sway](#), an American company offering seaweed-based, home-compostable replacements for regenerative thin-film plastic packaging at scale;
- [Zerocircle](#), an India-based company making wildlife and ocean-safe packaging materials from locally cultivated seaweed that will dissolve harmlessly in the ocean after use;
- [Notpla](#), a London-based start-up inspired by the way nature encapsulates liquids, on a mission to make plastic waste disappear by pioneering natural-membrane packaging that uses seaweed as an alternative to single-use plastic.

“The Winners of the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize continue to inspire me with their commitment to innovate in order to scale marine-safe alternatives, helping to mitigate the 11 million metric tons of new plastic made from fossil fuels that enters the ocean each year,” said Lucy Sumner, Co-founder of Lonely Whale. “The investment and ongoing partnership from TOM FORD BEAUTY, The Estée Lauder Companies, and Trousdale Ventures underscores the vital need for collaboration to achieve systems change.”

A panel of extraordinary [Prize Judges](#), informed by an esteemed group of [Scientific & Technical Advisory Board](#) members, selected Sway, Zerocircle and Notpla out of the eight Finalists under consideration including [Genecis](#), [Kelpi](#), [Lwanda Biotech](#), [Marea](#), [Notpla](#), [Sway](#), [Xampla](#), and [Zerocircle](#). The Judges’ selection was made following a rigorous nine month-long testing phase, sponsored by Nike and aligned with international standards, to ensure their materials are biologically degradable, minimize negative social and environmental impacts, meet industry performance standards, and are also cost-competitive, scalable and market-ready. The testing was led by the [New Materials Institute at the University of Georgia](#) and the [Seattle Aquarium](#).

The Prize Purse, presented by Title Sponsor TOM FORD BEAUTY and The Estée Lauder Companies, totals \$1.2 million and is a combination cash prize, sponsored by the companies, and direct investments in the Prize Winners by [Trousdale Ventures](#), the Prize’s exclusive venture capital partner. Awards were allocated to the Winners as follows: \$600,000 for Sway, \$250,000 for Zerocircle, and \$150,000 for Notpla. A Milestone Award of \$200,000 was paid out equally to all finalists in 2022.

“TOM FORD BEAUTY is thrilled to support this partnership in sustainable plastics innovation. We are honored to continue Mr. Ford’s legacy and further our commitment to investing in innovation that contributes to a more sustainable future,” says Guillaume Jesel, President, Global Brands, TOM FORD BEAUTY and Luxury Business Development. Nancy Mahon, Senior Vice President, Global Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability at The Estée Lauder Companies shared, “Social investment and environmental responsibility are core pillars of The Estée Lauder Companies. The significance of these tenets continues to positively impact the employees and communities we work with and has helped drive our company’s success.”

Following the award of the Prize Purse, Lonely Whale will launch an Innovation Accelerator sponsored by TOM FORD BEAUTY and The Estée Lauder Companies, designed to ensure Prize Winners achieve widespread market adoption of their innovative alternatives to traditional thin-film. Further details will be announced in June 2023.

“As an innovation-focused investment firm in search of companies designing a brighter future, we are thrilled to join Lonely Whale as the Prize’s exclusive venture capital partner to invest in the three Winners of the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize,” said Phillip Sarofim, founder of Trousdale Ventures. “Accelerating access to capital for innovators like Sway, Zerocircle and Notpla is critical to scale marine-safe alternatives to single-use plastics made from fossil fuels. Our investment in the Prize recipients aims to further that cause.”

The testing program included field testing in Caribbean waters and in-lab testing led by the New Materials Institute at the University of Georgia. The Seattle Aquarium led in situ field testing in Pacific Northwest waters and a bespoke, first-of-its-kind laboratory-based test designed to model what would happen in a marine mammal gut if the materials were ingested.

“When it comes to protecting the future of sport and the future of our planet, Nike is about innovating, creating and scaling solutions. By joining the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize as the sponsor of the Finalist material testing and part of the Early Adopter Coalition, we committed to accelerating the creation and adoption of material solutions that solve the issue of traditional thin-film plastic waste,” said Liz Rodgers, VP of Sustainable Product for Nike. “We are proud to celebrate the announcement of the three Winners who underwent the vigorous material testing track led by Lonely Whale’s research partners at the New Materials Institute and Seattle Aquarium and look forward to continued collaboration with this group of incredible innovators, brands and advocates that share in our ambition to raise the bar for sustainability.”

Finalists’ materials were also tested by major brands within their packaging solutions and supply chains to ensure viability as a replacement to existing non-recyclable thin-film polybags made from fossil fuels. The [Early Adopter Coalition](#) includes [Burton](#), [Dell Technologies](#), [Florence Marine X](#), [GoSili](#), [HP Inc.](#), [Imperial Dade](#), [J. Crew](#), [Le Club](#), [MillerKnoll](#), [Nike](#), [Noah](#), [Rachel Comey](#), [ROQ.US](#), [Stella McCartney](#), [TOM FORD Beauty](#), [TOM FORD International](#), [Veronica Beard](#), [Version Tomorrow](#), and [Vuori](#).

“Partnering with Lonely Whale to conduct rigorous lab and field testing for the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize was an important opportunity to showcase and advance the material testing standards necessary to ensure alternatives to traditional plastics are not just marketing wins, but are truly marine-safe and biologically degradable,” said Jason Locklin, Ph.D. and Director, New Materials Institute at the University of Georgia. “The New Materials Institute was proud to play a role in blindly assessing each of the Finalists’ alternative materials and I am excited to follow the winning teams’ success.”

Brands interested in joining the Early Adopter Coalition can reach out to INFO@PLASTICPRIZE.ORG for more information. Learn more about the Prize at www.plasticprize.org or follow @TOMFORD, @LonelyWhale and #UnwrapTheFuture on Instagram.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES:

WINNERS

JULIA MARSH, CO-FOUNDER & CEO, SWAY – FIRST PLACE

"We're honored to receive first place recognition from the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize Judges as innovators providing a viable alternative to traditional thin-film plastic. At Sway, we're working to replenish the planet from sea to soil, and, thanks to the support of the Prize, we're better positioned than ever to scale our solution for fossil fuel-based plastics to meet industry need."

NEHA JAIN, FOUNDER & CEO, ZEROCIRCLE – SECOND PLACE

"This is a special hour for us where our team's work has been recognised globally among diverse panelists. This, however, is just the beginning and we are excited for what the future holds for us. This recognition is also a reminder of the urgent need to prioritize sustainability and environmental stewardship in all aspects of our lives."

PIERRE PASLIER, CO-FOUNDER & CO-CEO, NOTPLA – THIRD PLACE

"It is an honour to be recognised as a TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize winner amongst this international group of entrepreneurs developing solutions to traditional thin-film plastic. We look forward to the forthcoming innovation accelerator and expanding our impact across the market."

LONELY WHALE

WES SECHREST, CEO OF RE:WILD, LONELY WHALE'S FISCAL SPONSOR

"The world must move away from fossil-fuel based plastics to protect and rewild the ocean and other ecosystems," said Wes Sechrest, CEO of Re:wild, Lonely Whale's fiscal sponsor. "Innovative alternatives to single-use thin film plastic, like those developed by the winners of the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize, are powerful tools in helping to address the triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and human wellbeing."

JUDGES

JOHN JOHN FLORENCE, TWO-TIME WORLD CHAMPION SURFER, OLYMPIAN, AND FOUNDER OF FLORENCE MARINE X

"Growing up in Hawaii, the ocean has always been home and something I do not take for granted. I want to do what I can to ensure that future generations have the same opportunity I do to enjoy the ocean, which is why I decided to collaborate with Lonely Whale. The innovations from the winners of the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize are a testament that we can transform the way we think about plastic that ends up in the water and the impact it has on our planet."

SASKIA VAN GENDT, HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY, ROTHY'S

"With the growing awareness of fashion's environmental impact, it's important for executives to know the science behind their business practices. The winners of the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize are poised to help minimize the industry's footprint by offering biologically degradable, marine-safe alternatives to thin-film plastic polybags made from fossil fuels."

SUSAN ROCKEFELLER, AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER, ARTIST, CONSERVATIONIST, FOUNDER OF MUSINGS

"Lonely Whale's call to action through the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize is a brilliant way to inspire innovators, engineers, and business leaders to lean in and commit to solutions that help create a future with clean seas. I am thrilled to celebrate the Prize Winners and eager to see the fashion industry step up and adopt their solutions at scale."

TRUDIE STYLER, ACTRESS, FILM PRODUCER, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST, ENVIRONMENTALIST, UNICEF AMBASSADOR, ORGANIC FARMER AND WINEMAKER

“We need to build—and quickly—the foundation for a new mode of environmentalism. Working with Lonely Whale as a Judge of the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize has been an inspiring opportunity to help bring this new vision of action to life alongside a diverse community of like-minded advocates each committed to realizing a future with clean seas.”

ADVISORY BOARD

TOM BEBIEN, RECYCLING MANAGER, PLASTIC ODYSSEY

“Our team at Plastic Odyssey was honored to partner in the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize. We share the same goal: finding and deploying the most innovative, scientific and technical solutions to the plastic pollution crisis. We know first-hand that material solutions like these will make a real difference for our oceans and for coastal communities living on the front lines of plastic pollution. We congratulate the finalists, the grand prize winners and the entire committee for their amazing dedication to this mission.”

OLIVER CAMPBELL, DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & PACKAGING ENGINEERING AT DELL TECHNOLOGIES

“Packaging is often an overlooked area of opportunity for sustainable innovation. The TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize has claimed this open space, designing a new approach to tackling our plastic problem with the support of a diverse array of stakeholders to ensure market adoption. I couldn’t be more excited to celebrate the winners and look forward to continuing Dell’s trials of their materials in the next phase of the program.”

DR. MARCUS ERIKSEN, RESEARCH DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE 5 GYRES INSTITUTE

“When I co-founded The 5 Gyres Institute in 2009, microplastics were not a part of the mainstream dialogue. Today, I am pleased to see the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize, powered by Lonely Whale, bring the rigor and language of science to life in order to vet solutions before they scale. As a member of the Prize Scientific & Technical Advisory Board, ensuring that the alternative materials did not produce any accumulative microparticles was crucial in our review of the winning solutions.”

DR. FABIEN LAURIER, SCIENTIST & TECHNOLOGIST

"Data without design is irrelevant and design without data is greenwashing; TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize adeptly leveraged both design and data to identify scalable and sustainable alternatives to harmful fossil fuel plastics"

J.R. SIEGEL, SENIOR DIRECTOR, PRODUCT INNOVATION, HIGG

“Industry has a critical role to play in realizing a future with clean seas and the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize, powered by Lonely Whale, has set a new standard for radical collaboration — bringing together rigorous environmental reviews, including innovative test methods, business model analysis, and real-world pilot testing with leading brands to source and assess solutions that could scale to meet the size of our plastic problem.”

TESTING PARTNERS

DR. SHAWN LARSON, SENIOR MANAGER OF CONSERVATION RESEARCH, SEATTLE AQUARIUM

“Our Clean Seas research team was thrilled to work with the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize on developing a novel whale gut simulation to test what would happen if the Finalists' alternative materials were consumed by a marine mammal. We look forward to sharing our forthcoming peer reviewed paper that will outline the research conducted in consultation with Lonely Whale to help advance the protocols for testing plastic’s impact on marine life.”

About TOM FORD

Tom Ford was born in Austin, Texas prior to moving to New York City and Paris to study design. In 1990, Ford joined Gucci as the company's chief womenswear designer before becoming Creative Director in 1994, ultimately becoming vice chairman. Under Ford's leadership, Gucci became one of the largest and most profitable luxury brands in the world, with sales increasing from 230 million dollars in 1994 to 3 billion dollars in 2003. Ford resigned from his post in 2004 and announced the creation of TOM FORD in April 2005. Today, the brand offers a complete collection of Menswear, Womenswear, Accessories, Eyewear, Beauty and most recently Underwear and Timepieces. Presently there are over 100 freestanding TOM FORD stores and shop-in-shops in locations around the world. In addition to his achievements within the fashion industry, Ford is also an award-winning screenwriter, producer, and film director. Tom Ford has redefined luxury. He is a visionary and his success has been recognized by a number of international awards, highlighted by winning seven Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) Awards, including their prestigious Geoffrey Beene Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014 and The Menswear Designer of the Year in 2015. In 2019, Mr. Ford took over as Chairman of the CFDA. Ford currently lives in Los Angeles.

About The Estée Lauder Companies Inc.

The Estée Lauder Companies Inc. is one of the world's leading manufacturers, marketers, and sellers of quality skin care, makeup, fragrance, and hair care products. The company's products are sold in approximately 150 countries and territories under brand names including: Estée Lauder, Aramis, Clinique, Lab Series, Origins, M·A·C, La Mer, Bobbi Brown, Aveda, Jo Malone London, Bumble and bumble, Darphin Paris, TOM FORD BEAUTY, Smashbox, AERIN Beauty, Le Labo, Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle, GLAMGLOW, KILIAN PARIS, Too Faced, Dr.Jart+, and the DECIEM family of brands, including The Ordinary and NIOD.

About TOM FORD BEAUTY

Founded in 2006, TOM FORD BEAUTY is a covetable collection of fragrances and cosmetics, shaped with Tom Ford's singular vision of modern glamour and crafted with the ultimate in quality and luxury. Sold in more than 115 countries, the brand includes signature fragrances such as Tom Ford Black Orchid and Tom Ford Ombré Leather, as well as the iconic Tom Ford Private Blend Collection. In 2011, Tom Ford Beauty entered the color category with a complete range of cosmetics designed to create, sculpt and enhance an individual's unique facial structure. Today the brand continues to redefine luxury and taste for global beauty.

About Trousdale Ventures

Trousdale Ventures, LLC is a privately held investment firm led by founder and CEO Phillip Sarofim. Its portfolio of groundbreaking companies improves quality of life by fueling advances in agriculture tech, life sciences, space/mobility, and better-for-you consumer products. Trousdale Ventures seeks to overcome barriers in the fields of health, productivity, and sustainability by democratizing wellness and accelerating innovation.

For more on Trousdale Ventures, LLC visit www.trousdalevc.com.

About Lonely Whale

[Lonely Whale](#) is an award-winning non-profit whose mission ensures plastic waste does not find its way into the ocean. Founded in 2015 by Adrian Grenier and Lucy Sumner, Lonely Whale is fiscally sponsored by Re:wild, an organization established by a group of renowned

conservation scientists and Leonardo DiCaprio to protect and restore the wild – the most effective solution to the interconnected climate, biodiversity and human health crises.

Lonely Whale has spearheaded impactful global movements resulting in: the elimination of billions of single-use plastics, including straws and water bottles, in schools, businesses and communities around the world; more than 330 products launched that are made with ocean-bound plastics through the only global network of ocean-bound plastic suppliers; and youth from 90 countries accelerating a dawn of new leadership - youth leadership - on ocean health. Lonely Whale's latest venture is their partnership with TOM FORD International for the launch of the TOM FORD Plastic Innovation Prize, addressing the 180 billion single-use, thin-film polybags used by the fashion industry every year.

Lonely Whale's work has been recognized by Fast Company's World Changing Ideas and Most Innovative Companies, Cannes Lion Awards, The Shorty Awards, The ADDY Awards, The Webby's Anthem Awards, SEAL Awards, the inaugural P4G Circular Economy Award sponsored by the Danish Government, HALO Awards and the prestigious 2021 UN SDG Action Award. In 2021, Lonely Whale joined the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP), the World Economic Forum's platform for advancing progress in the fight against plastic waste and pollution, as well as transitioning governments, businesses and society towards a sustainable, circular economy for plastics. Lonely Whale is a proud supporter of the UN Environment's #CleanSeas campaign.

About The Green Carpet Fashion Awards

The Green Carpet Fashion Awards (GCFA) is a one-of-a-kind event, recognizing ethical efforts in environmental and social sustainability across the global fashion industry. They celebrate progress, visionaries and game changers, and ultimately solutions for a fairer fashion industry.

The GCFA is the only awards to honor both the handprint and footprint of fashion. The handprint refers to the human capital that goes into the making of fashion, and the footprint is fashion's environmental impact. Putting the heartbeat back into the global fashion industry, the GCFA recognizes and celebrates conscious choices in the supply chain, farming practices, workers' rights, and material manufacturers, and elevates essential achievements from designers, models, and industry thought-leaders.

The GCFA is co-chaired by Cate Blanchett, Quannah Chasinghorse, Viola Davis, Tom Ford, Simu Liu, and Simone Ashley.

The GCFA board includes Amber Valletta, Christopher Bevans, Livia Firth, Tonne Goodman, and Bethann Hardison.

To learn more and support, visit www.lonelywhale.org or follow @LonelyWhale. For PR inquiries please contact:

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