



A material for keeping

Entrepreneur Arturas Kanapkis discovered that stylish bags made from Tuscan vegetable-tanned leather chimed perfectly with his love and respect for ageless elegance, allowing him to build up his own leathergoods brand.



LONG-LASTING



REPAIRABLE



SUSTAINABLE



SMEs



GREEN JOBS

Just as time, care, love and the judicious choice of materials sets slow food apart from fast food, there are slow fashion products that mark a more peaceful and natural rhythm than the drum-machine beat and bang of fast fashion. Serial entrepreneur, Arturas Kanapkis, has an appreciation of this that belies his years.

He is the founder of Lithuanian leathergoods brand Time Resistance, creating it, not by accident, but initially as part of an ambitious numbers game. He knew he wanted to go into business but he wasn't sure exactly what sort of business he wanted to set up. While still a student, he began to launch a series of start-ups, often two or three at a time, looking closely to see which ideas appeared to have legs and which did not. His early ideas included an online fragrance business, one for setting people up to grow their own garlic, a series of vegetable stalls in local markets, and one to source old brick for new building projects. Others that have still not progressed beyond his Excel spreadsheets include fresh juice bars and purchasing and selling used cardboard boxes. In 2010, he began to work on a business idea to import bags. Not just any bags though, but bags that Mr Kanapkis describes as beautiful, classically designed in veg-tan leather from Italy.

Undying elegance

"That was the one that flew," he explains. "That's the one that became Time Resistance. I wanted to see which would grow the fastest and which would fall short of working as well as I had hoped. I also wanted to see which I liked, which was closest to my values, which would allow me to stamp my personality on it most easily." The natural desire for fast growth aside, he took his time over this, importing his first collections of bags from Italy in 2010, while still an undergraduate, and selling them to boutiques in Lithuania and to customers online. In 2012, he opened his own online store between completing his bachelor degree studies and embarking on a Master's course. In 2013 and 2014, he even opened two bricks-and-mortar stores in his home country to grow the bags business. The timelessness of leather, the way its beauty increases with age, the ancient traditions and techniques involved in producing it still appealed to him greatly, an appeal that only increased when he spent time during these years living and studying in Italy, in Padua, as



Not just for men. Time Resistance has products for women, too, such as this Clarissa bag.

ALL CREDITS: TIME RESISTANCE



Skills, craftsmanship and careful choice of materials give the bags a 'slow fashion' appeal.

part of his post-graduate study.

He talks admiringly of the architecture and the atmosphere of his favourite cities, the energy and the vibrancy of the people in these stylish towns. But he says he also admires the older people, especially the older gentlemen, you often see in these places, people who take the same care as they always did to shine their shoes and look their best, even if it is only to spend a few hours in a café playing chess with a friend. "Back in the day, possessions were meant to last and these lovely old men seem to still be wearing and using items they bought 50 years ago," Mr Kanapkis says, "And they look magnificent." It is this undying elegance that he seeks to emulate in the briefcases, document holders, Gladstone bags, backpacks and other products that make up his product range now.

Rebranding

It was 2015 before he rebranded the business as Time Resistance and decided to concentrate fully on e-commerce, with a new, dedicated online store for the new brand, plus a presence on specialist handcrafted and vintage site Etsy, followed a year later by the brand's first sales on Amazon. By 2018, Time Resistance's annual turnover was in excess of \$1 million per year and the company began to show its wares



Lithuanian brand Time Resistance specialises in classically designed briefcases and bags made from Italian veg-tanned leather.

at industry events such as Mipel in Milan and ILM in Offenbach. By 2020, customers in 70 countries around the world were using a total of around 30,000 Time Resistance bags and the company had been nominated as one of Lithuania's fastest growing businesses for three years running.

He says that, given he embarked on his business career while completing his studies, he is glad he started in his native Lithuania. It was relatively cheap to make mistakes there, he says, plus he was able to learn a great deal from those mistakes and put what he had learned into new business ideas. "To make those mistakes and to learn those lessons in the US, for example, would have been much more costly," he explains. And yet, now around 90% of Time Resistance's sales come from the US.

Still leather's time

He has also taken time to learn about leather through working with his suppliers in Italy. As a string of videos on YouTube show, he has even learned to cut and sew pieces and to make some of the products himself. He likes using leather to make things such as document folders that can double as MacBook sleeves, combining the ancient and the modern, showing that this is still leather's time.

While working with and relying on a carefully selected group of Italian suppliers, tanners that are members of Tuscany's Genuine Italian Vegetable Tanned Leather Consortium (Il Consorzio Vera Pelle Italiana Conciata al Vegetale), he also set up his own production unit in Lithuania three years ago, with a view to developing new design ideas and creating prototypes there. The company has an ambition to increase production at this site, while still maintaining a close working relationship with its partners in Italy.

Hard work and keenness to learn have allowed Arturas Kanapkis to fulfil his wish to build a business that reflects the values that matter to him. He has suffered a set-back because of the Covid-19 pandemic, as most businesses have, but says that, if the crisis subsides in a few months, Time Resistance will be able to return to normal, step by step. He believes his bags will withstand this interruption. He says: "These are slow fashion products, products that were in fashion 20 years ago, are in fashion now and will be in fashion 20 years from now." 



Founder, Arturas Kanapkis, is a serial entrepreneur who, at last, found a business idea he could build in keeping with his values in Time Resistance.