

U.S. NEWS

Home Grown

From textiles and clothing to guitars and cookware, brands are embracing their American roots

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CERTAIN COMPANIES

HAVE made it their mandate that no matter the cost or difficulty, keeping production on U.S. soil is a core value and part of their operating

ethic. Quality control can be more easily managed at a brand's facility close to home, consumer desires can be implemented faster, and in shipping, the carbon footprint of each brand is drastically reduced.

Brands such as Airstream and Gibson are known to last a lifetime and can often be passed down for generations. The consumer can look to these brands for dependability, and the calibre of products keeps them coming back for decades. Today, amid fluctuating tariffs and the widespread desire to ramp up American manufacturing, will other brands follow suit? It is doubtful that the country will return to the manufacturing hub it was in the mid 20th century, but perhaps in the coming years there might be a return to increased U.S. production.

The early 20th century birthed American innovations like the Ford assembly line, and for most of the century the country enjoyed a thriving manufacturing industry, providing work in factories that fabricated metals, textiles and electrical products. At its peak, industry employed 22 percent of the nonfarm workforce, until a long decline began in the 1980s. As of 2023, only 8.3 percent are employed in manufacturing. Several factors are responsible for this decline: the rise of consumer spending favoring services over goods; automation of the assembly line; and, of course, the lower cost of manufacturing in places such as China.

Material World

"Yes, there are challenges in domestic production, like a higher cost of labor, but we see the benefits outweighing this," says Caitlin Taylor, a representative for Pendleton, a heritage textile company. The company was founded in 1863 by Thomas Kay, an Englishman who immigrated to the U.S. He later went to Oregon, where the climate was more suited to raising sheep and producing wool, and established his first mill in 1893. Now all Pendleton blankets are still made at two mills—one in its namesake Pendleton, Oregon, established in 1909, and the other in Washougal, Washington, opened in 1912. The brand's items are sold at more than 50

stores in the U.S. and also available in Europe, Japan, Canada and Australia. "Our customers have always valued the craftsmanship and heritage of our products," says Taylor.

Home Cooking

Known for its frying pans, enamelware and Dutch ovens that are made to last a lifetime, Lodge Cast Iron—founded in South Pittsburg, Tennessee, in 1896 by Joseph Lodge—focuses on manufacturing a quality product while boosting the local economy. The company has long been an early adopter in automation, both to reduce its environmental impact and innovate its product. And in contrast to the shrinking American manufacturing industry, Lodge has ramped up its production facilities, opening a second foundry in Tennessee to increase its output by 75 percent.

Music City

Founder Orville Gibson, a craftsman with a passion for musical instruments, filed his first patent in 1896 for the mandolin, which influenced the acoustic guitar design known today. Demand for his instruments grew, and he secured funding to officially start the company in 1902. To this day, all Gibson guitars are manufactured at

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT
Gibson guitar;
Lodge Cast
Iron cookware;
Pendleton
shirt and
blanket

