

January 17, 2019



# Southwest Aircraft Seat Leather Takes On New Life In Episode Of 'Project Runway All Stars' Season 7 On Lifetime

## Airline shares repurposing story in "unconventional" way

DALLAS, Jan. 17, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) is adding "travel haute couture" to a list of repurposed items made from recycled aircraft seat leather, underscoring a commitment to its [Repurpose with Purpose](#) initiative. Southwest has partnered with *Project Runway All Stars*, which challenged Season 7 contestants to create fashion items from recycled onboard and travel items, ultimately inspiring a line of leather goods to be sold by non-profit partner, Rethreaded.

For the fan-favorite Unconventional Materials episode, which aired last night, Southwest® provided items commonly used in air travel, including coffee cups, peanut packets, seat belts, and aircraft seat leather. These items were specifically chosen to showcase how everyday items can be creatively repurposed into something new. The *Project Runway All Stars* designers were tasked with creating a look for modern day air travel from provided materials, and crafting a leather accessory out of the upcycled Southwest aircraft seat covers, in less than 24 hours. Southwest congratulates challenge winner, Irina Shabayeva, as judges selected her design using airplane coffee cups and an aircraft seat leather clutch as their favorite. As the winning designer, Irina served as a design collaborator to Rethreaded, a women's empowerment organization and Repurpose with Purpose partner that provides assistance to survivors of human trafficking. Employees of [Rethreaded](#) took inspiration from Irina's accessory, plus other designers' creations, to produce a line of accessories for sale to support the nonprofit organization and its future beneficiaries.

"The unconventional materials episode of Project Runway and Project Runway All Stars is always my favorite, and it's wonderful to see Southwest taking a creative approach to sharing their upcycling efforts," says Irina Shabayeva, Project Runway All Stars Season 7 contestant and episode winner. "After winning the challenge, I had a chance to visit Rethreaded in Jacksonville and was so impressed by their dedication and the work they're doing for the survivors in their community. It was amazing to see how my design is being used for healing."

"At Southwest, we have long been dedicated to global citizenship and Repurpose with Purpose allows us lead in that effort while continuously minimizing our environmental footprint and maximizing our social impact," said [Linda Rutherford](#), Southwest Airlines Senior Vice President and Chief Communications Officer. "We are committed to continuing our upcycling initiative and are thrilled to showcase our creative upcycling efforts through our partnership with Project Runway All Stars and our inclusion in the Unconventional Materials episode."

In addition to serving as a design collaborator to the women of Rethreaded, Shabayeva also received \$5,000 and roundtrip air travel for two on Southwest for her winning design.

Southwest is offering one lucky person and a guest the chance to win roundtrip airfare to any Southwest destination, along with a line of Project Runway All Stars-inspired travel accessories created by Rethreaded. These limited edition accessories are made with upcycled Southwest seat leather and can only be found at [Rethreaded.com](https://Southwest.com/rethreadedsweeps) for a limited time. Visit [Southwest.com/rethreadedsweeps](https://Southwest.com/rethreadedsweeps) to enter and for official rules\*.

Starting today, Customers traveling on Southwest can enjoy the *Project Runway All Stars* TV Series Channel on the Inflight Entertainment Portal via the Southwest mobile app on their personal devices, or a laptop via [Southwestwifi.com](https://Southwestwifi.com). This exclusive channel includes the Unconventional Materials episode from Season 7, as well as behind-the-scenes content, and videos that highlight Southwest's Repurpose with Purpose partners.

Launched in 2013, Repurpose with Purpose is a Southwest initiative that upcycles, downcycles, and recycles discarded material into useful products with the help of partner organizations. The initial phase of Repurpose with Purpose began with the Evolve retrofit program, which replaced Southwest's leather aircraft seat covers at that time. The latest phase of the program launched in 2017 with the goal of repurposing seat covers and other discarded materials like blankets, life jackets, aircraft engines, and billboards. Since 2017, Repurpose with Purpose has repurposed more than one million pounds of discarded material, reducing the amount of waste Southwest sends to landfills, while also generating social and economic opportunities for communities.

**\*NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. A PURCHASE WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING.** Open to legal residents of the 50 United States (excluding Alaska) and D.C. age 19 or older. Void where prohibited. Sweepstakes ends 3/31/19. Approximate value of all prizes is \$1,040. For Official Rules, prize descriptions and odds disclosure, visit [Southwest.com/rethreadedsweeps](https://Southwest.com/rethreadedsweeps). By entering, information collected will be used in accordance with Sponsor's Privacy Policy at <https://www.southwest.com/privacy>. Sponsor: Southwest Airlines Co., 2702 Love Field Dr. Dallas, TX 75235. **International air travel does not include taxes and fees of at least \$5.60 per one-way flight**

## **ABOUT RETHREADED**

Rethreaded's mission is to renew hope, reignite dreams and release potential for survivors of human trafficking locally and globally through business. Rethreaded is a mindful gift company that provides long term employment coupled with mental health services to survivors of human trafficking in Jacksonville, FL.

[Rethreaded](https://Rethreaded) provides a second chance at life through employment for survivors of human trafficking in Jacksonville, Florida.

Rethreaded started with a simple idea and a strong passion from its founder, Kristin Keen. She began by forming relationships with women on the street and making prison visits, and realized that the greatest need was for a safe, supportive work environment where the women could earn money while learning a skill and experiencing continued healing through community. Working in partnership with local non-profits, in Jacksonville, Rethreaded hired its first full-time employee in November 2012. Since inception Rethreaded has empowered over 40 women and provided over 60,000 hours of work for survivors of human trafficking.

Rethreaded works to change lives through business and guarantees that every purchase changes lives.

Rethreaded has been a Southwest Airlines Repurpose with Purpose Partner since 2017. Through this collaboration, the women of Rethreaded have become trained artisans and make the jewelry and accessories from upcycled materials donated by the airline. Thousands of pounds of retired leather airline seat covers are being given a second life as beautiful new accessories, while also giving women a second chance at life through employment.

### **ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.**

In its 48th year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 58,000 Employees to a Customer base topping 120 million passengers annually. Southwest became the nation's largest domestic air carrier in 2003 and maintains that ranking based on the U.S. Department of Transportation's most recent reporting of domestic originating passengers boarded. In peak travel seasons, Southwest operates more than 4,000 weekday departures among a network of 99 destinations in the United States and 10 additional countries. Southwest has announced its intention to serve Hawaii, subject to requisite governmental approvals.

Southwest coined [Transfarency](#)<sup>®</sup> to describe its purposed philosophy of treating Customers honestly and fairly, and low fares actually staying low. Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer bags fly free<sup>®</sup> to everyone (first and second checked pieces of luggage, size and weight limits apply, some carriers offer free checked bags on select routes or in qualified circumstances), and there are no change fees, though fare differences might apply.

Book Southwest Airlines' low fares online at [Southwest Airlines](#) or by phone at 800-I-FLY-SWA.

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