

May the rain be with you... Interview with Aurelien Rinaldi, Co-Founder of Beau Nuage

Rain is a fact of life in the U.K. One that is synonymous with Britain and everything British. But what if we didn't have to be one of those brits with eternally wet bags from umbrellas? What if the annoyance of rain could be a thing of the past?

Beau Nuage or 'beautiful cloud' as the translation goes is a very simple yet effective startup; focusing on revolutionising umbrellas. The U.K. is known for its wet weather and one of the most annoying things for an individual is carrying a wet umbrella, not wanting to put it in your bag, or leaving it behind in a restaurant or pub.

So when two french gentlemen (Aurelien and Antoine) were studying in London, having left the sunny south of France, they decided to solve this problem by creating a patent for an umbrella sleeve that dries and absorbs the water from the used umbrella and stops your bag getting wet.

Did we mention their company has a big focus on sustainability, provides water to places globally that need it and employs staff with disabilities in its French base? Who thought Umbrella's could make such an impact! Maddyness spoke to co-founder Aurelien to find out about his journey so far.

[Maddyness] Tell us a little bit about how and why you started Beau Nuage?

[Aurelien] Our cloudy adventure begins in the pouring rain of London. For two young people like us who were more accustomed to the sun in the South of France, rain quickly became a fundamental problem of everyday life. The idea of reinventing the concept of the umbrella then flooded our minds!

Our innovation was simple but revolutionary: an umbrella of optimal quality accompanied by an absorbent cover to keep it always dry, thanks to an absorption technology for which we have obtained a patent. The Beau Nuage concept was born! Very quickly, tens of thousands of Beau Nuage were sold and distributed in more than a hundred stores in France and Europe! Our Beau Nuage have continued to make more and more people love the rain and they are receiving showers of compliments since the launch!

You and Antoine sound like you are great friends, what makes you great business partners?

First of all we trust each other, which is very important when setting and running a company with a business partner. We are also complementary, in the sense that Antoine has a good artistic touch and therefore he is in charge of our marketing on a daily basis, whereas I am more sales oriented and therefore I take care of the distribution.

For me one of the best parts of Beau Nuage is your social impact work. Can you tell me all the ways you give back to the communities in both France and globally?

We really wanted to bring a more eco-friendly approach to our brand and products. What makes Beau Nuage eco-friendly? All of our canopies are now made from recycled plastic bottles, we work with a charity building wells in dry areas of the world, and we recycle and donate umbrellas when we can't sell

them. We also work with a charity based in France who help find employment for adults with disabilities. The umbrella industry has been one of the most polluting industries for decades, and it is now time to make a change!

You have a patent for your material, how has this changed the umbrella game?

Yes, Beau Nuage has invented a solution to make your life easier when the rain falls! We have developed and patented the world's first absorbent cover. Thanks to its three-layer technology, our cover consumes raindrops and keeps your umbrella permanently dry with its microfibre inner layer. It is made of extremely fine fibres and its special density allows it to absorb up to 200 times its own weight in water. A simple innovation but extremely useful!

All you have to do is store your umbrella in its cover and then in your bag to remove the fear of soaking your belongings. Once at home, you simply need to flip the cover inside out and let both the cover and umbrella dry.

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Which moment was a pivot for you as a business and why?

The pivot happened in 2017 when our products started appearing on TV in France and on the Financial Times in the UK. From one day to the other, sales on our e-commerce website increased drastically, which gave us the visibility we needed at the beginning of the project.

Finally what are your hopes for Beau Nuage in the future?

Our real goal throughout this adventure is intangible: it is to make you real rain lovers! To that end, we will wish you the rain as much as it takes and hope that our Beau Nuage will make it your best friend. So... may the rain be with you!

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