

ANDREW COOPER & ALEX SCHULZE

These South Florida surfers have a mission to wipe out ocean plastics.

WHEN ANDREW COOPER and Alex Schulze went surfing in Bali, they didn't expect to catch more than perfect waves. But they found themselves paddling in a sea of trash. "People imagine Bali as a dream vacation destination," says Schulze. "That trip was an eye opener for Andrew and me." Though reality was disheartening, conversations with local fisherman—whose nets regularly contained more plastic than fish—inspired the duo to combine their love of the ocean with their business degrees. In 2017, they launched 4ocean, aiming to rid the ocean of trash in part by selling bracelets made from postconsumer recycled plastics and glass. "The bracelet represents a movement," says Cooper. "It's a pledge to reduce single-use plastic consumption." In addition to removing 7 million pounds of trash to date, 4ocean is researching sustainable, single-use plastic alternatives while gathering trash from rivers to keep it from flowing into the ocean. "The thing we're trying to drive home is that consumers have the opportunity to refuse single-use plastic," says Schulze. Cooper concurs: "The solution is not to clean up the mess; the solution is to not have the mess in the first place."

— GINA DECAPRIO VERCESI



▶ **In 2018**, Collins dictionary named *single-use* its word of the year. The term describes items whose unchecked proliferation is damaging the environment.

▶ **According to** the Ocean Conservancy, 8 million metric tons of plastic enter the ocean every year, impacting nearly 700 different marine species.

▶ **Though synthetic plastics**, like Bakelite, appeared in the early 20th century, large-scale, non-military plastic production didn't begin until after World War II.

SEA CHANGE

Single-use plastics get a second chance in pretty packaging, fancy flats and sustainable vinyl.



1 **Captain Blankenship**, known for its ocean-inspired body products, uses 100 percent recycled plastic and paperboard containers.



2 Footwear pioneer **Rothy's** creates stylish shoes from post-consumer PET plastic via a waste-reducing, 3D knitting process.



3 British singer-songwriter **Nick Mulvey** just released his ecominded single "In the Anthropocene" on vinyl made from ocean plastics.