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Twist

The Story of the Suit



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The story of the suit

Jade, the talisman fabric

The Jade collection from Dormeuil is a unique marriage of fine fibre and gemstone, combined to create a cloth that is the essence of luxury.

The fabric is made from Merino fibre grown to bespoke specifications in the fertile Awatere Valley of New Zealand's South Island. From the southern hemisphere the fibre travels to England and into the hands of skilled textile professionals with years of experience in spinning, weaving and finishing premium cloth.

The result of the extraordinary marriage between an incredibly fine yarn and a gemstone that has been revered for 7,000 years, this 240g Super 160's 100% Merino

fabric has an excellent soft drape. Jade echoes the beauty of the New Zealand landscape in shades of grey, brown, navy, beige and black, with flashes of pink and light blue. The collection has the variety to meet differing tastes, ranging from plains, semi-plains and classic stripes to windowpanes and Prince of Wales checks.

The royal connection does not stop there. HRH The Prince of Wales, patron of the Campaign for Wool, has proudly worn Dormeuil's Jade.

Starting in this issue and carrying through to November, the 'Story of the Suit' article series will trace the life of Prince Charles' suit from raw fibre to



finished garment, detailing all the crucial production stages in between. This is a story of provenance and the craft required to produce luxury garments manufactured by professionals with a passion for the best textiles.



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The genuine article

Nestled in the stunning New Zealand landscape, Haldon Range prides itself on producing the finest Merino fibres worldwide, grown to the most rigorous specifications. Station owner Dick Bell can guarantee the traceability of the fibre right down to the animal itself, a skill prized by fabric manufacturer Dormeuil. **Charlotte Rogers** reports.

Located in Marlborough's Awatere Valley on New Zealand's South Island, Haldon Range is responsible for producing some of the world's finest wool fibre. Grown to exacting standards, the fibre is the product of careful genetic testing needed to rear animals that meet the specific requirements of the client.

This work is carried out by station owner Dick Bell and his team, whose premium superfine Merino is the basis of beautiful fabric worldwide. Haldon Range is the exclusive grower supplying Dormeuil's Jade cloth.

The special quality of the fibre is rooted in the location where the sheep are raised. Awatere has a unique climate ranging from hot, dry summers to cold, clear winters. The valley of the Haldon Range estate is covered with naturally fertile pastures, ascending to tussock covered 2,000 metre hills. It is this temperate climate that allows the fibre to develop consistently.

Bell explains: "Although it can be quite dry at times it is never the extreme cold experienced in other parts of New Zealand, hence exceptionally good for

consistent wool growth which in turn is a base requirement for quality cloth. The consistency of wool fibre is paramount in processing top quality cloth.

'It is far better than producing a fibre that is just another commodity fibre for a commodity cloth'

"If you have a climate that goes from one extreme to another while the wool fibre is growing then the final outcome is a cloth that does not have the handle or finish that we obtain here at Haldon Range," he adds.

Dick Bell's woolgrowing heritage dates back to the 1800s when his family settled in the Otago region, becoming the first sheep herders in the district. Hundreds of years

later Bell has built up a stock of over 5,000 head, consisting of 2,500 ewes and 2,500 hoggets. Virtually all the adult sheep are turned over every two to three years for genetic gain. Typically, most farmers only replace the flock every five years.

"The ability to move fast is a great attribute to replenish the whole flock and work in advance to deliver cloth," says Bell. "The ram determines the handle and lustre. Good handle of the wool means good handle of the cloth and every year we are seeking to create a better handle."

Haldon Range has a controlled genetic breeding programme. The stock is the progeny of over 500,000 screened genetics from Australia and New Zealand, tested for length of fibre, micron, lustre and handle. The breeding programme is influenced by ram selection. The in-house culling regime of all females is monitored throughout the year,

Jess Bell, daughter of station owner Dick Bell, and the superfine Merino flock at Haldon Range. Copyright Jess Bell.





enabling Haldon Range to rid itself of stock before the following breeding season.

The constant improvement of the breeding stock is essential to meet the requirements of high quality fabric. “This is paramount to enable us to produce a fibre that is going to perform in cloth. Because of Haldon Range’s close relationship with Dormeuil we know their exact needs for the next two to three years before the animals are born,” Bell explains.

“It’s a bit of a moving target but it’s far better than producing a fibre that is just another commodity fibre for a commodity cloth. We are in the luxury fibre market and we can’t sit still. We must produce what the market wants and keep moving,” he adds.

‘Because of Haldon Range’s close relationship with Dormeuil we know their exact needs for the next two to three years before the animals are born’

To ensure the quality of the fibre is beyond question objective testing is undertaken, particularly on extrafine fibre below 16 microns. All the sheep are micron tested as one year olds and again every year before shearing. Once the test results are returned the animals are put into micron ranges.

The tested fibre correlates with the number on the sheep tag and is colour coded according to its micron range. For instance, 11-11.5 micron sheep are marked blue to create one mob. Animals in the 15.2-15.8 micron range may be coloured red and so on. This means that Bell knows exactly which micron wool is in each mob before shearing begins. The Haldon Range motto is old fashion stockmanship combined with modern technology, balancing all criteria from stock and fibre selection to the processing of the fibre.

“The parameters for each specific micron range have very narrow margins of micron variations and that is the trick to a luxury cloth,” Bell states. “Because our packages of wool are relatively small compared to commodity wool there is very little room for error. Whereas with larger volumes

blemishes within the wool can be hidden, we cannot get away with that and nor do we want to. We have to be right on the button.”

Haldon Range wool is processed into tops by a company in Japan or Italy. Dick is on hand to ensure any subtle differences are adhered to at the processing stage in order to magnify the characteristics of the wool. These specific characteristics are understood by the spinners, weavers and finishers.

“We are all craftsman in our own right who jointly have passion, vision and the technology to produce a unique cloth from a unique fibre. If at any stage of growing and processing one of us takes our eye off the ball then it would just be any old fibre or cloth,” says Bell.


“We don’t allow that to happen as it is the subtle differences in processing Haldon Range fibre that give this cloth the edge it deserves. This fibre has been grown to detailed specifications and has to be treated as such.”

Traceability from fibre to fashion is the cornerstone of the Haldon Range philosophy, guaranteeing customers the genuine article. Bell argues that the industry must go further to protect consumers and punish those who claim traceability they cannot prove.

“Traceability is very important and from my last count there are only a handful of growers worldwide who have guaranteed traceability, although there are many in the industry who claim they have,” he states.

Throughout his longstanding relationship with Dormeuil Dick Bell has invited cloth designers and marketing people, as well as company president Dominic Dormeuil himself, to visit the farm in Marlborough. Just as it is crucial for Haldon Range to appreciate the cloth manufacturer’s art, the fabric side needs to understand how the fibre influences handle and feel.

Haldon Range began collaborating with Dormeuil on the Jade fabric four years ago following a meeting between Dick Bell and a jade sculptor. The combination of jade and Haldon Range wool adds texture and handle to the fabric.

It is a source of pride that HRH The Prince of Wales, patron of the Campaign for Wool, has worn the Dormeuil Jade cloth. Bell is pleased to see the Campaign gain momentum worldwide through the work of Prince Charles, helping the industry gain credibility. “It is a privilege to have a royal so passionate about wool and the sustainability of the fibre.” 

Haldon Range has built up a flock of over 5,000 head. Copyright Jess Bell.



All sheep are micron tested as one year olds and every year before shearing. Copyright Jess Bell.



Haldon Range prides itself on producing a premium quality Merino fibre. Copyright Jess Bell.



Quality investment

Superior fibre needs to be treated with care and respect by skilled and trusted professionals. This is the reason why Dormeuil works with Huddersfield-based Spectrum Yarns to spin the premium yarn for its Jade collection. **Charlotte Rogers** finds out more.

Established in 1980, Spectrum Yarns is a go to source of high quality yarn for customers worldwide. A proud British manufacturer, this family run business is steeped in the history of its Huddersfield location, at the heart of the UK textile industry: "Textile manufacturers in Huddersfield create the best fabrics in the world by taking care of the product all the way through the supply chain," says Paul Holt, sales executive at Spectrum Yarns.

'Ten hues can typically go into a single shade, with complexity building layer on layer'

The Spectrum Yarns portfolio encompasses four different businesses from fine worsted spinning and coarse spinning to hand knitting yarns and a line of knitted garments. The company's fine worsted yarns are sought after by Dormeuil for its Jade fabric.

Spectrum's work begins with the receipt of the processed fibre from Haldon Range in New Zealand, which has been grown exclusively for the Jade collection. The wool is always dyed in fibre form, being the gentlest method for producing yarns intended for high quality cloth. Spectrum Yarns commissions dyers in Bradford to dye the fibre to bespoke specifications.

The shade is checked by a skilled colour matcher who ensures all requirements are met. Colours are blended to achieve the right shade based on the mixing card. Ten hues typically go into a single shade, with complexity building layer on layer. It is imperative that the colour is level, especially



as the company is renowned for the rich tone of its yarns.

Working to a base recipe, the matcher assesses the stocks and works out which shades are needed and in what weights. At this point Spectrum Yarns can alter

the blend to achieve the correct colour, a highly skilled job which requires a great degree of experience.

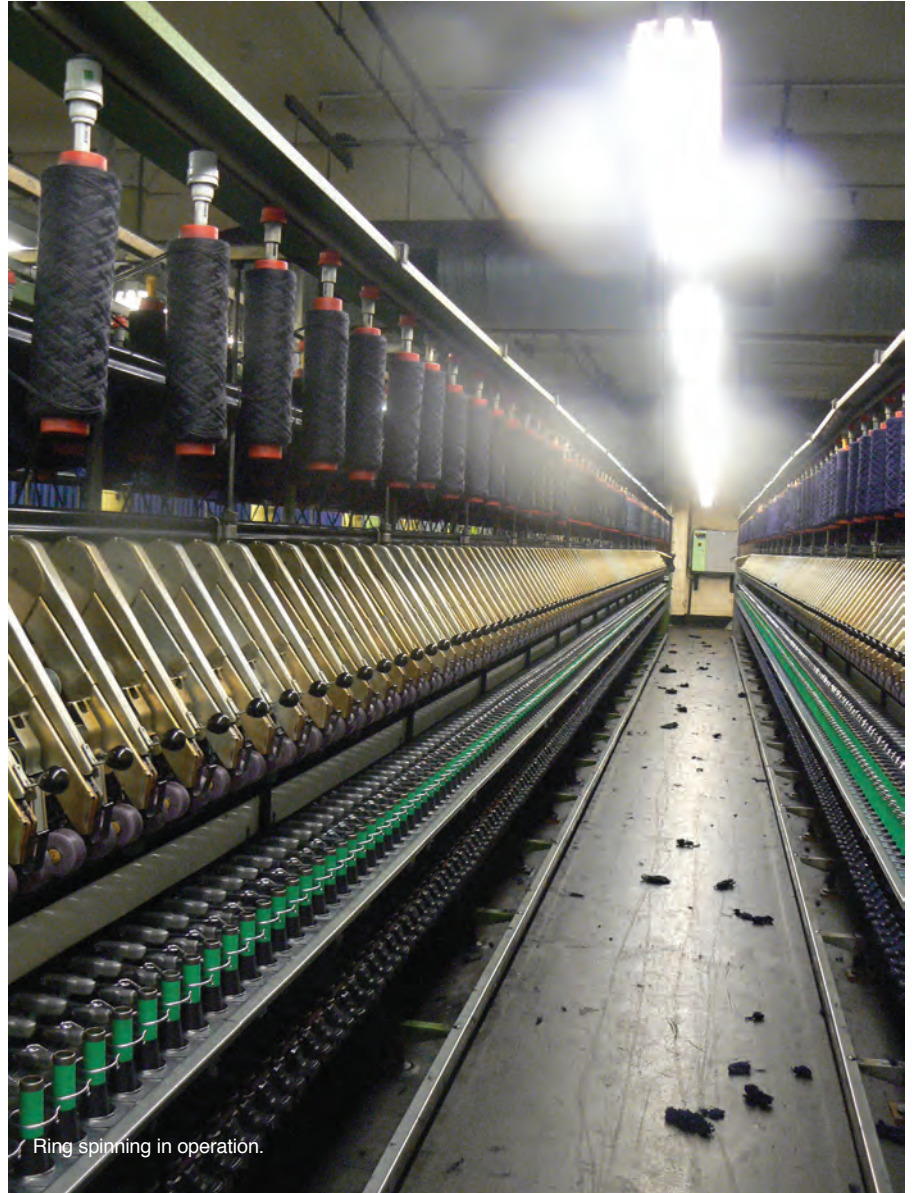
"We need to think about the way colours are built up. Even in a navy solid there are elements of grey and black," Holt



Twisting in operation.

explains. “Package dyeing cannot recreate this expertise which is held in high regard. It is crucial to ensure we get the colour right before the yarn reaches the customer. Professionalism and quality are at the core of our company philosophy.”

Once the colour has been approved the dye lots are put into work to prepare the packing cases to spin. It can take up to ten weeks from the time the order is placed by Dormeuil to the completion of the yarn due to the many value added processes involved. Holt, however, believes that whilst an investment in time, the end product is well worth the wait.



Ring spinning in operation.

‘Textile manufacturers in Huddersfield create the best fabrics in the world by taking care of the product all the way through the supply chain’

The extrafine fibre required for the Jade cloth needs to be spun at slower speeds. This two-fold yarn is produced by putting two ends together and twisting the yarn to give the weave strength. Quality assurance tests take place throughout the process to ensure that the product is never compromised.

The dyed tops are drawn out, pulling the staple fibres in straight parallel lines to create longer, stronger slivers. The sliver is then drawn out further to become a roving, which is wound off onto a bobbin ready to

spin to the specific fabric weight required by Dormeuil.

The thickness of the roving dictates the thickness of the yarn. In the case of Jade, the yarn needs to be fine. Once spun to the correct thickness the yarn is wound off the spinning tube and run through an electronic clearer to check for any faults. The assembly winder puts the two ends together to prepare the yarn for twisting.

The last process, twist insertion helps the yarn strength for weaving. In the case of the Jade collection, this is a fine yarn with a high twist. The twisting machine can take a week to produce a kilo package of fine yarn. Spectrum Yarns has a number of twisting machines for a variety of operations and added flexibility.

Currently the largest sector of the business is the well-established worsted spinning operation and hand knitting yarns

are also making a big contribution. Spectrum is looking to expand its Glenbrae branded range of knitted garments. The knitwear is manufactured at Spectrum’s site in Derbyshire. In total 180 people work across the Spectrum Yarns group.

Holt believes the reason the company has survived so long is its ability to diversify into different business areas, offering a consistently high quality product. “People like UK quality because it stands the test of time. We genuinely believe that there is a good future for manufacturing in the UK, particularly as more people have controlled stocks. This plays into the hands of ‘Made in the UK’ producers who can offer flexibility.”

Spectrum Yarns sees the message hitting home amongst merchants and retailers who are looking for something different and willing to invest in quality, which remains the driving force of UK manufacturing.



Top of their game

In the next instalment in the Story of the Suit series, Twist meets Pennine Weavers to see how the premium Merino yarns spun specifically for Dormeuil's Jade are transformed into luxurious cloth. This level of manufacturing is made possible by a committed workforce, working on the best technology. **Charlotte Rogers** reports.

Regarded as one of the most highly invested weavers in Europe, Pennine Weavers has based its success on a continued commitment to advanced technology, supporting its workforce and preserving the succession of skills.

A commission weaver since the early 1970s, Pennine Weavers' relationship with Dormeuil was forged in the late 1990s and further strengthened following a management buyout of the company ten years ago. This is a partnership which continues to thrive, founded on a common philosophy and system synergies.

Pennine Weavers is a key supplier for Dormeuil's 'Made in England' range, weaving the Jade collection and many of Dormeuil's other prestigious fabrics. "We have got the skills to deal with very fine, delicate yarns," explains Gary Eastwood, managing director at Pennine Weavers.

"We can translate the complex structure of the cloth and respect the quality of such delicate yarns, which have an immense value and need fine handling. We have the utmost confidence in our machinery and our people."

This Keighley-based weaver produces 30,000-35,000 metres of fabric a week, the equivalent of 10,000 suits. The weaving shed boasts 32 Dornier looms, the oldest of which is six years old, the newest addition three years old. Having the technology in place allows Pennine Weavers the flexibility to manufacture short runs from 12m to bulk

orders of 3,000m. Getting the balance of niche, bespoke work to volume right is key to the company's continued success.

In the case of Jade, the yarns arrive at the 95,000sq ft manufacturing site direct from Spectrum Yarns of Huddersfield. In the warehouse a detailed system of labelling and barcodes mean each yarn is completely traceable, essential to operations as Pennine Weavers stores up to 120 tonnes of yarns or 32,000 separate items at any one time.

Next the measured length winding strips down the yarn from large to smaller cones, according to the warp length required. The yarn is wound off the cone to the tension plate. The tension is minimised for the fine yarns required for Jade.

'Investment is a statement of intent to our employees and customers. It shows our total confidence in manufacturing'

Pennine Weavers has three Benninger automatic warping machines. The warping process involves a high degree of accuracy and understanding of cloth. The creel is wound onto the machine and separated



Gary Eastwood, managing director at Pennine Weavers.

according to the warp requirement. When finished the warp is automatically transferred from the swift to the weaver's beam. There can be up to 10,000 threads in the warp, which could take up to two and a half hours to complete on the sectional warping machine.

In line with its commitment to investment, Pennine Weavers recently purchased a GOM single end warping machine from Karl Mayer, to be delivered at the end of this year. The machine was chosen to meet the increasing demand for shorter warps from its customers such as Dormeuil.

Jade is woven to a warp of between 35m and 75m. Whilst extra care and attention is required for this fabric, the machines

MADE IN ENGLAND



are always calibrated to the same high standard to offer consistent quality. A Swiss technician even travels over twice a year to check the calibration.

Eastwood notes the invaluable partnership between Pennine Weavers and machinery manufacturers such as Dornier and Stäubli. The weaver collaborated with Swiss textile machinery specialist Stäubli on specifications for its Safir drawing in machine, which prepares the warp for the loom.

Since its installation two years old, the Safir has increased productivity by 9%. With an integrated camera and spectrophotometer, the Stäubli machine eliminates human error by accurately confirming the colours are correct. The operator programmes the pattern using the touch screen system. Steven Revitt, who has worked for the company for close to 30 years, expressed his delight with the accuracy of the new technology.

Eastwood agrees with the value of technological updates: “Investment is a statement of intent to our employees and customers. It shows our total confidence in manufacturing in the UK. We are here to stay and so is quality worsted manufacturing. Investment supports this message. There is strength in ‘Made in the UK’ plc and British manufacturing is all it’s cracked up to be.”

Once the drawing in process is complete the warp is ready for the loom. Jade is woven at slower speeds of 350 picks a minute, whilst the average speed is closer to 450. Pennine Weavers adapts the technology to fit the production process, getting more out of the length to minimise yarn wastage.

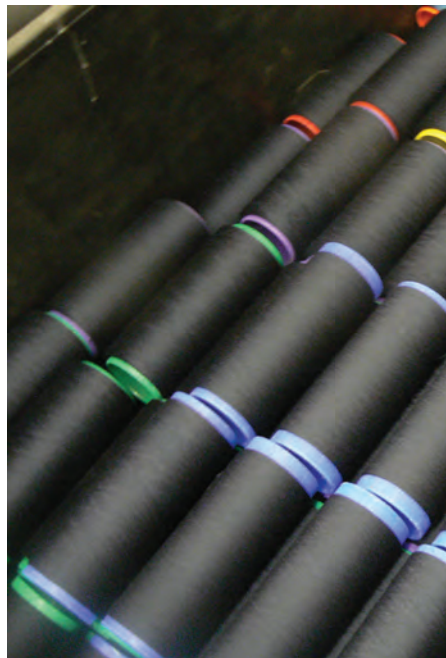
“Our employees want the challenge of the Dormeuil product and Dormeuil trusts us with their fine cloth. We are making something that no one else in the world can, which is a source of immense pride. We have a lot of pride in manufacturing something in the UK,” says Eastwood.

Every roll of fabric is quality checked throughout the process to ensure consistency. There are four full time in-house menders, whilst Pennine Weavers also engages the services of menders in Bradford and Huddersfield.

In-house training is key to the company’s investment in skills, especially amongst the younger generation. In 2003 the average age of Pennine Weavers’ workforce was 54, now it is down to 45. The company has high expectations of its staff, which is matched by extremely low labour turnover and absenteeism. There are 77 employees, working in three shifts,



Measured length winding strips down the yarn from large to small cones according to the warp required.



The smaller cones produced after the measured length winding has taken place.



The Jade selvedge woven at Pennine Weavers.

‘Our employees want the challenge of the Dormeuil product. Our workers have a pride in what they are doing’

five days and seven nights a week.

“We have an extremely hard working and loyal workforce. We operate a profit share scheme so the workforce is incentivised. They can see the benefits so they are financially confident and can go forward and plan their lives,” says Eastwood.

Mill visits are crucial to the transparency of the Pennine Weavers operation, confirming for visitors the ‘Made in England’ authenticity of the cloth. It is about education, showing

international partners that luxury cloth like Jade is being woven in the UK. “We want to get our message out to the shop floor at the retailer,” Eastwood explains. “They have seen my employees weaving, the skill required and the enormous amount of care and attention involved.

“The constant challenge is to remain at the top of our game. We cannot take our eye off the ball. If you have the best people, machinery and systems, then you have a chance.”



Bring out the beauty

The next stage in our route to the suit is the application of the jade. This is achieved through an exclusive method devised by Huddersfield-based finisher WT Johnson, controlling all the processes to help this beautiful cloth reach its full potential. **Charlotte Rogers** reports.

In Chinese culture jade is considered an imperial gem, an ornamental stone prized as much for its cultural meaning as for its beauty. Jade has roots in the art of the Chinese empire, with a special significance comparable to gold and diamonds in the West.

Philosopher Confucius noted the 11 virtues of jade ranging from its purity to its physical strength, which represents intelligence. The unique green shade denotes loyalty, the gem's transparency is a show of sincerity and its brightness represents heaven.

Jade is also of significance to the Maori culture of New Zealand. Known as pounamu or greenstone, jade is considered a treasure used for the construction of tools, weapons, ornaments and jewellery. New Zealand's South Island is the source of the

stone destined for Dormeuil's Jade collection.

The demand for Jade was driven by a real desire from the market to create something new. Jade has an aesthetic value for the wearer. Whilst the addition of the gemstone is not outwardly obvious, it creates a cloth of understated luxury designed to make the wearer feel special.

Dormeuil approached Huddersfield-based textile finisher WT Johnson with the concept and after two years of development an exclusive method was created for the application of the gemstone to the fabric.

In order to execute the complex finishing process to best effect it is essential that the technical team are involved from the beginning, argues managing director Paul Johnson: "We need to be part of the creative

process from the start to use our expertise in the most appropriate manner. Understanding the product and its intended customer makes it easier for us to do our job."

The solution devised by WT Johnson for the application of jade begins with the hard green gemstone being ground down to powder form and made into a suspension through the addition of water. The suspension is then sprayed onto the cloth woven by Pennine Weavers, one of 20 stages of finishing that bring the Jade fabric to life.

The suspension penetrates the weave and yarn, the very fine particles completely coating the fabric. Micro-analysis under an electron microscope proves that jade is present and remains during processing. The same consistent results are achieved time after time.

Along with the application of the jade the fabric undergoes a number of processes to achieve its characteristic smooth drape. "Fabric with jade is not enough. To ensure its natural beauty we need to set the fabric, press it and create the soft drape. We also have to ensure that the addition of the jade does not affect the fabric handle," Johnson explains.

"We strive to bring out the inherent beauty of the fabric. We have a responsibility to the craftsmanship of Dick Bell, Spectrum Yarns and Pennine Weavers, whose skills created the fabric, to ensure that the cloth reaches its full potential," Johnson adds.

The treatment of Dormeuil's Jade takes two weeks from the time the fabric is delivered by Pennine Weavers until the day it leaves WT Johnson. The surface is cleaned to remove any fibres and stabilised with steam, which modifies the linkages of the wool with the moisture. The fabric is carefully dried and pressed, amongst a number



The jade is ground down into a powder and made into a suspension through the addition of water. The suspension is then sprayed onto the cloth, coating the surface.



of other processes essential for success. A gentle scour of the fabric in the soft Pennine waters can take up to three hours alone. This processing is natural but achieves a permanent effect.

The fabric is tracked through the mill and recorded during every stage. WT Johnson worked with Minova on improving the online tracking system, allowing all parties involved to have access to the process information.

A trusted relationship with its customers is the foundation for WT Johnson's business. The finisher's collaboration with Dormeuil dates back over 40 years. Jade is a replenished bunch, which WT Johnson works on every two to three months. Whenever a new bunch is launched, the Huddersfield finisher is involved.

Technical manager Alan Dolley agrees the relationship with Minova and Dormeuil is key to the success of this project. "We work with Dormeuil to help them compete globally, making a unique product with a special selling point. From Dick Bell to Spectrum Yarns to Pennine Weavers, our route to the suit is as good as you can get in the world – the top echelon in the execution of a superior fabric."

WT Johnson is in the unique position of looking both up the supply chain to the fibre in order to understand how to treat the fabric, and downstream to meet the requirements of the tailor. The finisher appreciates the demanding specifications of Savile Row for cloth stability, dimension and drape. WT Johnson also always has in mind the needs of the suit wearer for permanent finishing that maintains its luxurious handle and silky feel for years to come.

A strong supporter of the 'Made in the UK' supply chain, WT Johnson sees the Jade fabric as an example of excellence that characterises Britain's worldwide reputation for technical expertise. The transparency of the UK supply chain is another major attraction.

The Huddersfield finisher treats 2,000 pieces a week, with each machine being carefully calibrated for precision. Paul Johnson argues that experience is crucial to consistent finishing. With a natural product, this experience plays an even greater part. The workforce is challenged daily to make decisions about the treatment of cloth and WT Johnson trusts in their ability.

The company philosophy is to reinvest profits back into the business to support the succession of skills, as well as improving




Batch Decatising. Additional finish is applied using this batch system. The levels of press are increased by this process and again made permanent by the high setting temperature.



Following the application of the jade in powdered form, the cloth undergoes a number of special processes to create the soft, smooth drape of a luxury fabric.

technology. "We always take a long term view and success is in knowing where succession planning should be and investing in skills. The skills our employees have developed are second to none" states Paul Johnson.

"We share a vision of UK manufacturing developed through innovation. Those that think UK manufacturing is dead should think again because we are alive and kicking.

"Day in and day out we add value to the highest quality cloth. The success story of Jade is replicated daily with other UK manufacturers as a result of strong business relationships. These customers sell their products around the globe. We consistently create advantages for our customers as a key part of the process in creating luxury textiles." 



Coming full circle

The Story of the Suit has come full circle. Starting in the Awatere Valley of New Zealand, travelling to West Yorkshire's manufacturing hub and on to Savile Row, the Jade fabric returned to its origins when it was worn by HRH Prince Charles on tour in New Zealand.

Charlotte Rogers catches up on the progress of the suit.

The route to the suit has seen Dormeuil's Jade transformed from premium New Zealand Merino fibre to delicately spun yarn to intricate woven fabric enhanced with a bespoke finish that bonds gemstone to wool.

In 2009 Jade was just a concept, only made a reality after two years of research and development. For luxury cloth manufacturer Dormeuil the process of creating a new cloth is the pursuit of excellence, involving experimentation to achieve the perfect handle, appearance and performance.

Drawing on its longstanding relationship with Haldon Range of New Zealand, Dormeuil wanted to integrate Dick Bell's work with genetics into the product development programme. The story of incorporating an imperial gemstone into Merino cloth struck a cord with Bryan Dolley of Dormeuil, who was inspired by a meeting with Bell to see how this unique product could work.

For Dominic Dormeuil, company president, consistent product development is the only way to create a true luxury product. "We always try to innovate and create new cloths which we hope will be a bestseller, but of course we cannot know what the reception will be until they are in the market.

"The reaction to Jade was beyond our expectations. Everything was different about it from the concept of including the jade gemstone to the design and marketing of the unique story. Jade is the whole package. It is a fantastic product based on the different characteristics of the fabric from the soft, fine wool (grown specifically for the purpose) to the beautiful design, the spinning, weaving and specialised finishing."

For Dormeuil, Jade is different to the

other collections. The addition of the gemstone gives the cloth an extra dimension, combined with soft finishing for a luxurious, smooth drape. Described as one of Dormeuil's 'Ultimate Luxury' cloths, Jade is a 240g, Super 160's fabric available in plains, semi-plains, classic stripes, windowpane and Prince of Wales check. Favouring rich, deep shades of black, dark navy, brown and grey, the collection also features lighter elements of beige and true blue.

As the Jade collection lasts for two years a new bunch was launched in January this year. The designers responsible for the collection are headed up by Aline Galimberti who collaborates with the team in Yorkshire to put the blanket into production.

In the two years since its official launch, Jade has been a global success, sparking demand from luxury customers in Europe, Japan, China, Italy and the Middle East. Dominic Dormeuil recognises the strength of Jade is in the provenance story, starting with securing the best raw materials from New Zealand.

This cloth is also a tangible, commercial example of the strength inherent in the UK supply chain, which is close to Dormeuil's heart. "Our company is a staunch supporter of the British textile industry. It produces the best fabric in the world and we are very proud of the success of Jade," he states.

Dewsbury-based Minova oversees the coordination of the fabric production on the ground. Dormeuil is the majority shareholder in Minova, a textile company



Dominic Dormeuil, president of Dormeuil.

'The reaction to Jade was beyond our expectations'

established by Miyuki Keori of Japan in 1979, which today is a minority shareholder.

Minova's dedicated team of 50 co-ordinates the development, design and manufacture of Dormeuil's 'Made in England' collections, which represent approximately 75% of the product range. The company also receives, inspects and warehouses all



Dormeuil's fabric not made in England and dispatches goods to its customers worldwide from a state-of-the-art fabric cutting and packing facility in Yorkshire.

Dave Smith, Minova managing director, explains how his company is involved in every stage of production. "Minova liaises with Dick Bell and Spectrum Yarns about the timing and quantity of scoured wool. Usually at the same time our design team is working with Paris on the detailed collection to be made. We will instruct Spectrum Yarns on the exact requirements.

"The yarns are then delivered directly to Pennine Weavers. Minova issues them with detailed instructions for the design/shade and quantities for weaving. Minova has full visibility of both yarn stock and weaving progress at Pennine Weavers over an intra-net system. This interconnectivity is crucial to both the absolute level of service and detailed, time-sensitive information that today's luxury clients demand."

Once woven the fabric is burlled and mended at Minova before going to WT Johnson in Huddersfield for finishing. Next the fabric is returned to Minova for final inspection, approval and entry into finished stock.

Quality assurance and technical detail are integral to each aspect of the operation. "We are fortunate to have built over the years a very dedicated team at Minova. To this culture we have blended the utmost attention to aesthetic detail and customer satisfaction that is the hallmark of Dormeuil. It's demanding for the staff but we are all aware that being a manufacturer in the 21st century requires a very sophisticated tool box."

Amongst the advantages of the British supply chain is the ability to communicate clearly on the nuances of production and other aesthetic matters. The advantage of local sourcing is that operations move quickly when the need requires, especially with Minova



Dormeuil's Jade was two years in the research and development.

overseeing on the ground.

"Perhaps most important, however, is that the small team of suppliers we use broadly share our culture of diligence and flexibility," says Smith. "While maintaining the craft mentality there is an openness to new ideas. The industry is much smaller than it was in 1979 and those companies that have continued to prosper realise that if something is easy to do it's much more likely to get sourced in China or Turkey. 'Made in England' has to be something special."

For Smith, Dormeuil cloth sets itself apart thanks to the meticulous choice of raw materials, colours and design. "It's the ingredients you have already discovered. It starts with the breeding and stockmanship of Dick Bell to give us superbly clean and consistent wool of ultrafine micron. Spectrum Yarns and Pennine Weavers' technical expertise and care ensure that this finds its way into a beautifully crafted series of cloths. The pièce de résistance is adding the jade powder at WT Johnson to create something truly unique."

It only seems natural that

Dormeuil wanted to present the Jade collection to his HRH The Prince of Wales. First in line to the British throne, the Prince chose Jade fabric for a bespoke Savile Row suit to be worn on a trip to New Zealand in November 2012 in his role as patron of the Campaign for Wool. In this way the fabric returned full circle to its roots in the Southern Hemisphere, worn by one of the world's greatest supporters of wool.

For Dave Smith of Minova, seeing Prince Charles wear Jade represented the convergence of the 'Made in England' story. "It is a source of real pride and pleasure for all the teams involved in getting from sheep to suit."

Dominic Dormeuil is in total agreement. "For the Prince to wear the Jade fabric is a true seal of approval, especially as he is such a staunch supporter of British manufacturing. Wearing Jade is yet another show of his continued commitment to the global wool industry." 



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