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The apparel industry, Albini boosts luxury yarns

by Marta Casadei



The Cottonificio Albini was founded in 1876 by Zaffiro Borgomanero at Desenzano sul Serio, in the borough of Albino. Since 1984 is lead by Silvio Albini (pictured second from right), with his brothers Andrea and Stefano (the two on the left) and cousin Fabio

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“2016 was a tough year, particularly for the cotton sector; nonetheless, our turnover has remained stable and we optimistically brought our S/S '18 collections to Milano Unica and Première Vision, recording a 2-3% increase in visitors compared to previous editions.” Silvio Albini, together with Fabio, Andrea and Stefano, represents the fifth generation of entrepreneurs at the helm of the historic Bergamo-based cotton mill, which celebrated its 140th anniversary last year.

The group currently manufactures yarns, fabrics and finished items and closed 2016 with a revenue of 147.6 million euros, in line with 2015 figures (148.5 million). Since 2011, when Albini turnover reached 125 million euros, the company has shown consistent and organic growth, driven by high quality and research as well as the diversification of its range and markets, and ceaseless investments: “Between 2012 and 2015, we injected approximately 30 million into the company, and last year, we invested some 6 million into the rationalization of industrial processes, to improve quality and increase flexibility; all of this, in order to respond to market needs in the best way possible.”

Albini will implement the same strategy in 2017: “The key word this year appears to be uncertainty – Silvio Albini confirms –, and I believe the best response to such an unpredictable scenario is innovation, combined with the right price/quality ratio. This is what customers require.”

The group comprises five brands – Albini 1876, Albiate 1830, Thomas Mason, David&John Anderson and Albini Donna – and its business interests are international: “Foreign markets account for approximately 70% of our consolidated turnover, though many of our Italian customers earn a considerable share of their revenue overseas. In 2016, one of the best performing markets was the US.”

One of many projects in the pipeline is developing a womenswear division: “We're very pleased with how it's turning out: we dedicated a specific stand to the womenswear collection, a veritable compendium of innovations, and got positive feedback.” Another is strengthening I Cotoni di Albini, the firm that – within the group – produces yarns. “On February 22 and 23, we'll be at the Filo trade fair to present our latest novelties relating to yarns; like mixtures of cotton and top-quality natural fibers.” I Cotoni di Albini closed 2016 with a turnover of approximately 20 million euros, 13% more than in 2015: “We have repositioned the brand, boosting growth both in the domestic market and in Switzerland, Austria and Germany, where the knitwear industry is strong, as well as Turkey and Portugal.” Keeping the entire supply chain under control is a way for the Albini Group to ensure its customers get maximum product quality and at the same time, to promote sustainability – a subject the company holds dear: “We have been committed to sustainability for years: using organic cotton is not enough to call yourself sustainable: you need to reduce environmental impact and energy waste in each of the manufacturing stages. That's not all: I believe sustainability is based on safeguarding and respecting the human environment you work in, including your employees and their families.”