

di Alessandro Dall'Onda

Wearing a better future

Quality, passion and innovation are the three pillars on which the strategy of the historic textile group Albini Group, today in the hands of the fifth generation of the homonymous family from Bergamo, where the group is based. And after the successes of its internationalization, now among the projects of the Group there is even a special Silicon Valley of textiles.

This is a family with a suitcase in the hand. Albini Group from Albino, a small town in the Bergamo area, is a family which has always been ready to go far away in the world hunting for the best raw materials, sometimes available in very limited quantities. Starting with Stefano Albini, the President of the company, who admits having learned everything (or almost) by his brother Silvio, who unfortunately died a couple of years ago. When he remembers him, still today, the tone of his voice seems to get lower, as a sign of respect: “Silvio was an enlightened, visionary and far-sighted entrepreneur, always willing to visit the world in search of new ideas”, says Stefano, confirming the entrepreneurial DNA of his family.

It is a long history that of Albini Group, which starts in 1876, precisely in Albino, to conquer then the world of high-quality fabrics, being always able to please demanding customers such as the English royal family, large industrialists, actors, and other people of great taste. The whole family is committed to the company, so his brother Andrea works next to the President Stefano, and his cousin Fabio, too, and the results were not long in coming. Today turnover stably exceeds the 140 million per year.



Stefano Albini is the President of Albini Group, the first textile producer in Europe, with over 20 thousand variants of fabrics per year available in 80 countries all around the world.

Albini excellent tradition comes from far. Most of the credit Stefano acknowledges' goes to his brother Silvio who led the company from 1984 to 2017, pushing its development beyond the Italian borders and, together with friends like Zegna and Loro Piana, contributing to make known all over the world the strength and the excellence of the Italian textiles.

"The idea of positioning itself at high level, so that in all these years we have chosen to produce only fine fabrics in the name of innovation and quality," says Stefano. Thus, the company's international relations made it possible to know the needs of not only Italian customers, also thanks to collaborations with luxury brands like Dior and Hermes. "From the point of view of the design;" Stefano continues, "the credit goes to my cousin Fabio. Every six months we propose to the market a different collection which is the result of our creativity, tailored to the needs of our partners. Today the consumer doesn't just want a nice one I draw but he wants to feel part of the network of values that form a company." Values such as a sustainable production approach, for over ten years, made possible by the use of traceable materials, organic and recycled, transparent and certified information and strict control of the supply chain.

But let's take a step back and go back to 1992, a significant year for the international turn of the Group with the acquisition of three historic English brands: Thomas Mason, David & John Anderson and Ashton Shirtings, together with a historical archive of over 700 volumes representing the history of European shirtmaking. "Again, it was an intuition by Silvio, in those years often traveling to England, to define these deals," explains Stefano, who about the precious archive, containing motifs and drawings also dating back to 1860, he admits that, even today, that container of memories remains a great source of inspiration for the Albini stylists and for the creatives of the fashion brands. Leap temporal, 2000s: the Albiate 1830 brand, ex Caprotti family, joins the group, a new logistics centre in Bergamo is created, the Mediterranean Textile and the Delta Dyeing, both in Egypt, start, and in 2012 the first Albini collection dedicated to the female universe is done. And then, in 2019, there is the innovation of Albini Next at Kilometro Rosso, a think tank that was born with the aim of overcoming barriers and to trace new frontiers, starting from the field of textile, under the banner of industrial and academic partnerships such as those with the Bicocca University and the Politecnico di Milano.



"This was my idea," the President explains with satisfaction. "I really like innovation in any field, not just textiles; there are therefore different realities with which we are working for recycling and natural colouring, but also with companies of software for the digital part and with Sistema Moda Italy for a project linked to the world of start-ups. Our aim? Identify the issues that will change the textile industry of natural fibers in the coming years. If until the last century ours dresses were made only with cotton, linen, hemp, wool and silk, today there are new textile fibers such as Lyocell and

those natural and sustainable deriving from fruit. With this project we want to identify the fabrics of the future and the new production processes”. With the idea of a new Silicon Valley of textiles.

Meanwhile, the difficult months triggered by the pandemic highlighted the need to implement processes of profound transformation at the international level in the textile supply chain, as well as in all other sectors. Lockdowns in different countries have accelerated the consolidation of online commerce and new consumption habits, leading to the need for a transformation of organizational models and a rethinking of go-to-market paths terms of tools and timing. In this sense, the Albini Group continued a precise roadmap, already embarked on in 2010, with the launch of the first e-commerce on which 90% of the Bespoke line's business now passes, then reinforced with the creation of the app Fabric Butler and with an increasingly digital-oriented approach fuelled by strategic partnerships such as the one with Oracle for the creation of a new integrated platform B2B.

At a time of global action in the fight against Coronavirus, in addition, the company presented the first Viroformula fabrics with HeiQ Viroblock technology, a cutting-edge performance that prevent fabrics to become a host surface for the spread of harmful and contributing viruses and bacteria, therefore to reduce the risk and speed of contamination and transmission. “We have been fast, and we had a winning intuition. What we have developed on fabrics is a technology that has been shown to provide active protection from viruses and bacteria”, explains Stefano Albini. “How? By exploiting the liposomes, which destroy viruses in a few seconds, depleting the viral membrane in its content of cholesterol.”

Today, with an offer that includes over 20 thousand fabric variants a year for 80 countries around the world, Albini is the first producer in Europe for shirts, led by the fifth generation of the family. For this reason, when Stefano Albini is asked to identify three numbers that for him have marked the history of his company, in addition to 1984 (date of the beginning of the leading by his brother Silvio) and to 2018, the year in which he takes over the direction, also indicates the sixth, as a wish that the new generation, the sixth in fact, can ensure a solid growth prospect in the next 50 years.