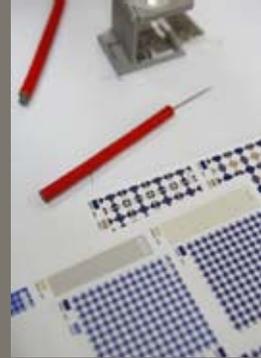


# MATERIAL MATTERS

Soktas aims to be the world's best-known fabric brand. Some 30,000 metres of finished fabric are dispatched every day from its yellow mill on Turkey's Aegean coast, which is famous for the lustre and softness of its natural cotton. A true family operation, Soktas has emerged as a leader in innovation for the textile industry – whether that's bringing the entire process of cotton manufacturing in-house or pursuing creative collaborations with fellow artisans who can reveal new depths to its fabric.



*At Soktas fabrics are designed and made under one roof*



## SOCIAL FABRIC

"There is virtue in vertical integration," says Muharrem Kayhan, who heads up Soktas with his brother Hilmi; both have inherited a long farming tradition in Soke, Turkey. Though Soktas began as a row of cotton-spinning machines in 1971, today every aspect of manufacturing takes place under one roof and the company even grows its own cotton bud: Meander 71, Turkey's first long-staple cotton, in fields nearby. "It's going back to the old days when the family were farmers and there's a real pleasure in that," says Muharrem. "Growing our own cotton also makes it exclusive to us."

Research and development is central to the brand and the fabric design department in Soke remains at the core of the company's growth. Soktas is also the first and only firm growing and producing from naturally coloured cotton on an industrial scale, using a seed from Peru. The result is a light camel-coloured fabric that deepens in the wash, dye-free.

Soktas has honed in on its made-to-measure presence internationally; an additional warehouse facility in Biella, Italy, makes for easy access to the European market. Three sample warping machines in Soke allow the team to create small runs of material quickly, perfect for meeting the needs of fashion design-

ers. "We want to make sure that pre-production is easy," says Muharrem. "We also like to bring [clients] here or take our archives to them. We want them to know they have a partner who will be with them throughout the season."

Meanwhile, in September Soktas revealed its creative collaboration with one of Naples' most illustrious tailors, Salvatore Piccolo. The capsule fabric collection for 2016 reflects the warm Mediterranean character that is shared between the two brands, with a further two collections to come this year. Says Muharrem: "The synergy of our heritage and our hard work creates the unbroken chain of fibre to fabric with care and inspiration."