

# ITALIAN FABRICS

GERT MOTMANS, DESIGNER OF THE SCAPA ORIGINALS COLLECTION, TRAVELLED TO COMO TO FIND OUT HOW THE EXCLUSIVE FABRICS FOR HIS NEXT COLLECTION ARE MADE.

The table is scattered with simple geometric prints on pure chiffon and beautiful floral patterns on shiny velvet and shimmering silk. Fashion designer Gert Motmans lets his fingers glide over the stacks of fabric, giving them an appreciative nod. He's happy with what he sees. These are the fabrics he has selected for his 2017 Autumn/Winter collection. Even though it will be a year before the new collection hits the shelves, he is already putting the finishing touch on his designs. Despite his full schedule, he took the time to visit this factory in Italy.



## YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL

G. Binda Company has produced high-end textiles for the fashion industry since 1945. The third generation of the Binda family creates exclusive and contemporary fabrics for the world's most prestigious fashion houses and clothing brands. They specialize in printed fabrics made using traditional methods, with a passion for quality. Years of experience and attention to detail are what Gert Motmans believes make these fabrics so unique. 'As a designer, it's extremely valuable yet highly unusual to work with people who produce fabrics and materials with such craftsmanship,' explains Gert.

## CLOSE COLLABORATION AND STRONG CONNECTION

The relationship between Scapa and Binda extends beyond that of client and supplier; theirs is a close collaboration that goes back more than two decades. Each season, Binda creates exclusive fabrics based on Scapa's unique wishes, which are then translated into a series of elegant garments with Scapa's signature style. 'Scapa is one of our most valued clients,' says Michele Binda, whose grandfather started the company. Michele and his brother Giovanni are responsible for all overseas aspects of the business. 'Scapa has been given priority in each of our departments, from proposal to finished product, thanks to our strong connection.'

## THE DESIGN PHASE

The collaboration process starts with Binda's design team. 'We're inspired by our archives, by that season's trend forecasts, and by things we believe will appeal to consumers and the market,' explains Michele. Binda's comprehensive fabric archive dates back to the 1950s, which is what makes the company so unique in the fabric industry. 'We either create the designs in-house or we outsource the task to external parties,' says Michele. 'Most of our fabrics are printed by hand, which is something that sets us apart within today's market and in our relationship with Scapa. Like us, they want a traditional approach.' From the start of the design process, Binda creates specific fabrics that anticipate what Scapa's fashion designers are looking for that season. Michele then presents Gert and the rest of the Scapa team with the initial designs.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

After choosing the fabrics for the 2017 Autumn/Winter collection, Michele takes Gert on a tour of the Binda factory. This is the first time Gert has been given a behind-the-scenes look at the production process. Before he even enters the factory, he is in awe of the thousands of huge metal frames, neatly stacked in double rows outside the building. Most of Binda's fabrics are printed using the traditional screen printing method. This means each fabric and each colour requires its own screen print. The more complex patterns could require up to ten different colours, with each colour being printed separately.

## THE TRADITIONAL SCREEN PRINTING METHOD

In the factory, Michele shows Gert how the screen printing method works. Several skilled craftsmen carefully place a large metal frame on top of a long swatch of fabric rolled out on the table. When the frame is lifted again, you see colours added to the open areas of the screen. Each screen print must be done with extreme precision. Even when the process is fully automated, experts are needed to monitor the machines and check the results. There's no room for error, especially when it comes to complex paisley prints or Persian motifs. Binda is one of the few companies that still produce paisley prints, given how time-consuming and labour-intensive the process is.

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*"Binda strives for beauty, not cheapness"*

## NOTHING IS LEFT TO CHANCE

There is activity in every corner of the factory. Fabrics are being printed, washed, and finished. There's a palpable sense of industriousness here and the sound is deafening. Two men roll a recently printed piece of silk fabric destined for scarves on a long coil along with a sheet of tissue paper to prevent the wet ink from staining. Elsewhere in the factory, a fabric with a geometric print is shoved into a giant machine to steam the fabric and fix the ink. In the farthest corner of the factory, ink is mixed by hand on an old-fashioned scale. As soon as the right colour has been achieved, the formula is saved on the computer. Each colour bath is also checked manually.

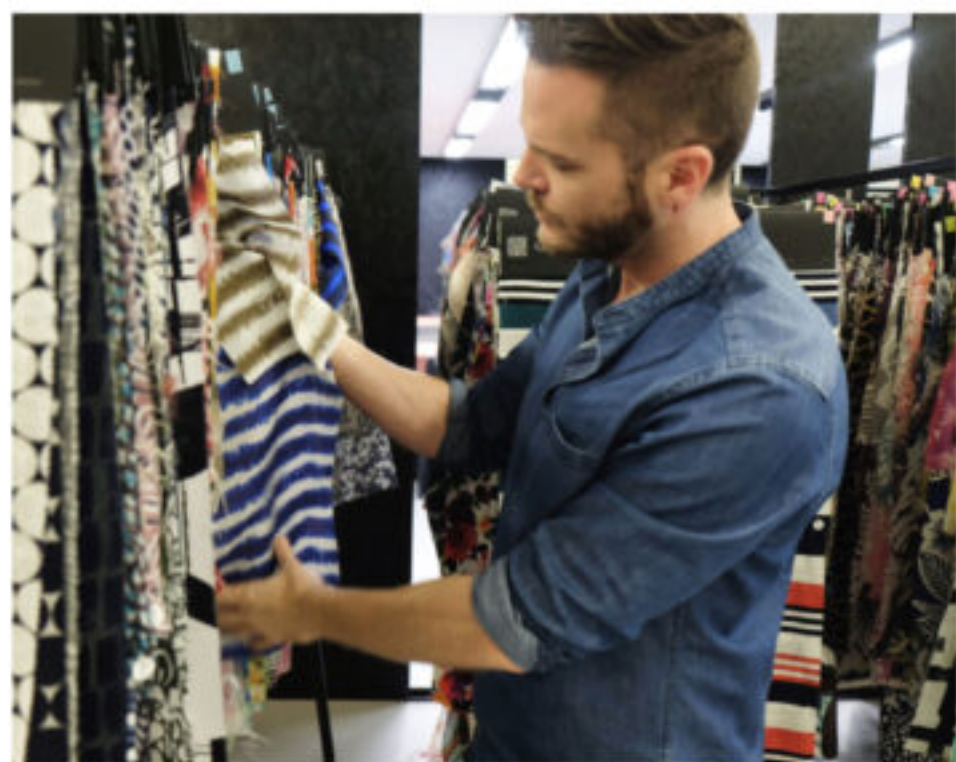
Binda is one of the few companies that still uses the corrosion or corrosione method to print fabrics. This is an extremely difficult process because the real colour is only revealed after the fabric has been screen printed and steamed. Michele shows Gert a piece of cotton in a striking navy blue with an intricate paisley pattern, made with corrosion ink. There's no other way to achieve such a rich result.

## FASTER AND CHEAPER

In a separate part of the factory, machines rest on what look like enormous inkjet printers, all the while pumping out fabrics printed with digital designs. It's no wonder digital design is so popular these days. These machines are smaller than screen printing devices, require virtually no human intervention, and can print thousands of colours simultaneously. They're not only faster, they're cheaper too. Michele explains that most textile factories these days produce 70% of their fabrics using digital machines and only 30% using the screen printing technique. Binda does the exact opposite, opting for 70% screen printing and 30% digital. The digital printers are only used for specific designs, such as those with a watercolour effect, which screen printing can't simulate. 'If screen printing is an option, we always choose it,' says Michele proudly. 'In my opinion, nothing can compare to the quality of screen printing.'

## PASSION AND QUALITY

Michele is disappointed at the standards pursued by others in the textile industry. 'Everyone wants cheap products, cheap fabrics, cheap quality... and it shows,' he says. 'We see this with some brands as well. They want everything as cheap as they can get it. But at a certain point we have to say, "sorry, you can't have a Ferrari for the price of a Fiat," he says with a laugh. 'We are committed to the job. We are passionate about our fabrics, our development process, and everything we do. Especially working for clients like Scapa. That's why we do it,' says Michele. Binda strives to create something beautiful, not something cheap. And that makes all the difference these days. Gert agrees. 'We have a wonderful partnership with Binda. It's more than just going somewhere and buying products. It's about the passion that both partners have for the collection. And I believe this passion is reflected in the end results.'



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