A handmade shirt is a beautiful thing. Referenced by F Scott Fitzgerald in The Great Gatsby and James Salter in Light Years, a handmade shirt is the perfect signal of a man who has a proper grasp of the finer things in life, who might order half a dozen formal shirts and casual chemises in various tones and textures of petrol blue, in bespoke materials that blend fine Egyptian Giza cotton with linen, cashmere and silk, expertly tailored to the body, faithful to the detail, demands and predilections of customer, finished with keen-eyed precision, fine detailing and pearl buttons.

Nothing feels or fits quite like a handmade shirt. Which is why bespoke shirt connoisseurs turn to companies like Söktas, a family-run Turkish textile manufacturer that has become a specialist in superior fabrics stocked by Savile Row and other leading tailors. It’s an impressive operation; production is vertically integrated, from yarn spinning and twisting to dyeing and finishing. Development of original yarns and new blends enables the Söktas team to offer innovations and world firsts in fabrics, such as exceptional cottons made from a hybrid seed that produces a strong, supple, fine wool, silk and linen and a new super-premium cotton yarn, called Meander 71, made from a hybrid seed that produces a strong, fine, silky cotton fibre that rivals most Egyptian Giza varieties. The company’s commitment to research, development, design and archiving means it has over 300,000 fabrics at its fingertips in various collections, including Noblesse and FastForward.

With a new warehouse now established in Biella in Italy, Söktas has chosen to launch Bespoke Selection, a unique collection of exclusive designs in classic colours and textures created for shirtmakers specialising in made-to-measure and bespoke. Only the finest Egyptian Giza and Meander 71 cotton types are selected to be spun into extra-fine yarns. These are the kind of super high-end fabrics that would have had Jay Gatsby himself calling for his tailor.

www.soktas.com.tr

Fabric of Time

Söktas produces the exquisite materials on which empires and walk-in wardrobes are built

PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN SHORT   SET DESIGNER: ANDREW STELLITA   SEAMSTRESS: PHILIPPA HOWDEN

The Söktas Bespoke Selection comes in books, each with a story that tells what the fabric is suitable for. There are six books (Pride, Boardroom, In Season, Opulence, Timeless and Escape). We have chosen seven fabrics, one from each book, plus an extra, to make up our fantasy shirt.

- **PRIDE**
  - Fabric name: Taylor
  - This is the finest selection of fabrics from the extra fine 140/2 collection.
  - Fabric name: Majesty
  - Fabrics in this line are cotton blended with linen and a new Meander 71 cotton types selected to be spun into extra-fine yarns.
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