



MADE IN JAPAN

JAPANESE TEXTILES: LEADING THE WORLD WITH PEERLESS EXCELLENCE

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WHEN you think about Japanese textiles drawing attention overseas, people often envision traditional woven cloths used in kimono and other articles. However, Japan is also attracting attention for cutting-edge textiles that use the latest technologies. Why do buyers overseas choose Japanese textiles? Franco Ferraro, the designer behind the eponymous Italian brand Franco Ferraro, describes why he picks Japanese textiles for his pieces.

Ferraro first took an interest in Japanese textiles when he saw them displayed at Milano Unica, one of the world's largest textile expositions held in Milan. An annual attendee at the event, he met Jiro Matsuyama, the CEO of Daiichi Orimono's European office, and learned about Japan's excellence in contemporary textiles.

"I was seeking extremely high-density synthetic fabrics for my mens collection, and came across Japan's first-in-class textiles in this category," Ferraro recalls. "The fine caliber and technical features of the textiles Daiichi Orimono offered, such as DNA Light, which passed



Italy's Franco Ferraro is a huge fan of Japanese textiles



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- 1 Clothing made from Japanese textiles at Italian brand Franco Ferraro
- 2 Ferraro says Japan's synthetic fabrics are now as soft and pliable as natural ones
- 3 A jacket made using synthetic fabric: fashionable and high tech

IDFL's (International Down and Feather Testing Laboratory) textile testing and 'MAURI,' a polyester fabric with a cotton-like texture, far surpassed the others at the show. For my ladies wear collection, I found 'CORDIS' and 'DICROS' to be particularly innovative because they have both high density and great fluidity—both of which are essential qualities to ladies wear fabrics. These and other offerings amazed me.”

For the last eighteen years, Italian fabrics were used for Ferraro's collection, distributed through Itokin, his Japanese partner in thirty-two boutiques around Japan. Now, for the first time, Ferraro decided to use the Japanese fabrics made by Daiichi for the next season.

Ferraro says that synthetics are generally stiffer than natural materials, and it was a challenge to find materials soft and fluid enough to use for clothing, so he had basically given up. When he discovered Daiichi's textiles, his worries were over. He adds, “It is undeniable that nobody produces items in the high-density polyamide and polyester fabrics used for garments that will be quilted with goose down that are as technically superb and safe as Daiichi Orimono's.”

According to Ferraro, even though Japanese companies have just shown seemingly perfect textiles

at these expos, every year they come back with products that are even more sophisticated. This is why the world's fashion industry looks to Japanese textiles and sings their praises.

Ferraro also has great admiration not just for Japanese synthetics' front-running position and quality, but also for the trustworthiness of the Japanese companies and the individuals working there. “The extremely correct and efficient business practices and reliable punctuality in deliveries set the Japanese standard to one that cannot be reached even by European textile companies,” he notes. “This reliability plays a fundamental role in my preference for choosing to source my raw materials here rather than anywhere else.”

In days gone by, Europeans used to look at the label “Made in Japan” as signifying poor imitations of original products. However, Ferraro says that throughout Europe this bias has vanished. “Today, ‘Made in Japan’ signifies a level of quality still unattainable in Europe. Not just in the world of textiles but also in all creative fields, people consider Japanese products to be highly innovative and cutting-edge. I think Japan should hold the greatest confidence in its products and proactively promote them to the world.” 