

Unique Jade-Wool Cloth Combines Kiwi Ingenuity, European Expertise

The idea of blending wool and jade into a unique cloth for upmarket menswear began in New Zealand two years ago and has been realised by European cloth maker Dormeuil. *(Image of cloth is shown below)*

Marlborough wool grower Richard Bell, whose Haldon Range superfine wool is already a top international seller, worked with Dormeuil to investigate what would happen if New Zealand jade or pounamu was combined with his wool at the cloth making stage.

Trials showed that jade particles washed into the woven fibres created a finished cloth smoother and softer than any fine wool material made before.

Its remarkable tactile qualities encouraged Dormeuil to manufacturer a new line of jade-wool cloth and make it available to leading tailors around the world.

One of these was RJB Design of Auckland who made the first suit using the cloth in New Zealand for the Prime Minister, John Key, to wear to the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton.

Richard Bell said the wool supplied by Haldon Range is specifically grown to Dormeuil specifications on his Marlborough high country station and is the result of 20 years of genetic selection for superfine product quality.

He says the finished cloth is an example of Kiwi ingenuity and European expertise combining to manufacture a unique and valuable product with worldwide sales potential.

The jade used for blending with the wool is supplied by Ian Boustridge of Greymouth, one of New Zealand's most noted and experienced workers with pounamu in all its forms.

He said that when finely reduced, the fibrous nature of the stone enables it to lock into wool fibres and create a highly distinctive feel to the end product.

This marriage between the traditional softness of wool and brilliance of jade is an appropriate metaphor for the Royal Wedding.

It will be the first occasion when a suit of the new material is worn on the world stage, appropriately by New Zealand's foremost representative.

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