

FRETTE

Gently does it

Founded in 1860, the Italian company Frette is the leader in luxury linen for hotels and the home. Its history of supplying linen to royalty and nobility continues today, combined with a reputation for quality and flawless service. Today, the respected company is ready to extend its presence and notoriety worldwide.



It all began with a memorable order, one day in 1880: the young Italian fine linen company, Frette, is commissioned by the ministry of foreign affairs of the Kingdom of Italy to supply linen to its ambassadors all over the world. It loyally continues to fulfil this service today. The following year, it becomes official supplier to the Italian royal family. Since then, over 500 noble European families have had their linen especially woven in Italy. "Since the 19th century, the Frette name has been synonymous with excellent quality", stresses Giuseppe Sordi, logistics and IT director.

Luxury requirements

Still today, the company seeks the noblest raw materials in the world, such as El Amria cotton from Egypt, with its long fibres that enable the weaving of incredibly fine Jacquard. The threads are tinted before weaving, which makes it possible to use different strands of colour to create contrasts as subtle as a painting: another distinctive Frette feature. After weaving, an exclusive finishing process is carried out by highly qualified staff and faultless machines, giving the products a unique look and feel.

“Frette bed linen is known for its durability, stresses Giuseppe Sordi. Along with the exceptional aura of our brand, it’s a major selling point in the hotel industry.” The argument has convinced some of the best hotels in the world: the Savoy in London, the Ritz in Paris, Raffles in Singapore, and recently, Ritz-Carlton hotels in the United States. *“For our customers, we manage a complete project, from design through to production. Our long experience is another of Frette’s strengths”, stresses Giuseppe Sordi.*

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A different approach

Frette’s technical skills go hand-in-hand with a talent for innovative sales methods. In 1886, the company launched the first sales catalogue in Italy. Three years later, sensing a new trend for comfort, relaxation and intimacy in the home, it began to produce a full collection of household linen. New innovations came to light two years ago, with the first limited editions such as the *Sophia* bed throw in linen and Jacquard silk, in homage to Queen Sophia of Bourbon: 200 numbered copies, sold with a booklet telling their story. *“It’s a product that conveys our image, explains Giuseppe Sordi. It will boost sales for all our collections.”* In 2006, Frette embarked on the e-commerce trend, with its first online boutique in the United States. The results are *“exceptional”*.

Frette wants to become a luxury brand for household linen. *“We don’t want to be in competition with other household linen manufacturers, states Giuseppe Sordi. “Our customers also shop in luxury ready-to-wear boutiques, they buy according to their heart.”* The household linen brand will also include clothes: Frette wants to invest in the pyjama/bath robe universe, its traditional area, and outdoor clothes: *“It’s unexplored ground, which may hide real potential.”*

In 2006, Frette announced *“highly satisfying”* profits, up 16% on the previous year. This year’s growth should be about the same, and seven new boutiques are going to open all over the world. Clearly, Frette is aiming high. And it recently asked Norbert Dentressangle to look into the development of new warehouses, in Europe and elsewhere, to accompany its growth.



Frette and Norbert Dentressangle

In June 2006, after organising its logistic operations alone for a long time, Frette signed a six-year contract with the Norbert Dentressangle Group. On its Grezzago site, 20 km from Frette’s head office in Concorezzo near Milan, the Group:

- receives and checks threads and other raw materials before sending them to Frette’s subcontractor weavers and manufacturers;
- receives, checks and stores end products before sending them via express transport services to customers (hotels and household linen shops) all over the world.

The warehouse manages 800,000 metres of ennobled fabrics and two million end products each year.

“We chose Norbert Dentressangle for its experience in the luxury sector and its ability to manage the logistics of raw materials and end products, explains Giuseppe Sordi. Today, we are also impressed with its flexibility.”

