



Stencil is once again leading the Australian corporate wear market with the development of highly practical – and classically stylish – fabrics and clothes.

Article by Matthew Smith

Since 2002, Stencil has been working hard to bring new technologies and material advances to the Australian corporate wear market. Producing high-tech, hard wearing shirts and outer garments, Stencil has built a reputation for quality and innovation.

For the last three years, there has been one innovation which has proven itself particularly useful, flexible and well-suited to corporate wear – the use of nano-treatments on fibre. Developed in conjunction with business partners and marketed under the Nano-Gear label, Stencil currently produces two styles of business shirts - the Nano Shirt and the Le Mans Shirt – as well as a Nano Cotton Polo, utilizing these new and increasingly popular nano-treatments.

What sets Nano-Gear apart from Cool Dry® or any other high-tech, high-performance treatments is as simple as it is practical: an uncommonly high degree of stain resistance and resistance to wear while retaining a fabric's desirable natural qualities. While other high-performance fabrics will wick moisture away from the wearer, Nano Gear® actively repels moisture from its surface - even traditionally disastrous substances like red wine and soy sauce simply roll off the surface, rather than being absorbed. This same quality helps protect the fabrics from a multitude of other stains, as they fail to find a foothold in the surface of the fabric.

This incredibly effective stain resistance is achieved using a nanoscale coating of specially developed polymer to alter the surface qualities of each individual strand of fibre. By altering these surface qualities, Stencil is able to alter the fundamental ways in which the finished fabric interacts with other substances it comes into contact with. While there are a great many exciting possibilities still waiting to be explored in the deployment of this technology, it's the most immediately practical of



Opposite: The Nano Cotton Polo
 Left: The Nano Shirt
 Above: Le Mans Shirt

them - stain resistance and other comfort-related qualities - that have been developed to a commercially viable level.

Of course, stain resistance isn't much use if no-one wants to wear the fabric in question - but the Nano Gear® fabrics are made from a range of high-grade one hundred percent breathable cottons as well as poly-cotton blends, making them even more comfortable to wear than other high-performance fabrics, and better looking, too. And because being stain-free doesn't count for much if you look crumpled and tired, Nano Gear® further proves its versatility and performance value – the nano-treated cotton doesn't behave quite like an ordinary natural fabric, but has a greater resistance to wrinkling and creasing, and is easier to iron than untreated cotton.

There are currently three styles of Nano Gear® fabric being produced by Stencil. The first, a 55% cotton 45% polyester fabric, is used in Stencil's Nano Shirt, which is available in both long- and short-sleeved styles for men, and in a 3/4 sleeve style for women. Ideal for comfortable business wear or uniforms, the shirt is available in a range of blues, white, black and a neutral 'putty' tone. The shirt is comfortable and lightweight - and, like all Nano Gear® products, is incredibly resistant to stains, spills and wrinkling.

The second style of Nano Gear® being produced is featured in the Le Mans shirt. A more traditional 'business' cut, the Le Mans is available in long sleeve for men and 3/4 length sleeves for women. Le Mans utilizes a 100% cotton base, and has all the attractive look, weight and feel of a traditional cotton business shirt, combined with Nano Gear®'s hard-wearing functionality.

The third style of Nano Gear® fabric currently produced is featured in the Nano Cotton Polo. Weighing in at a luxurious 210g, the Nano Cotton Polo sports all the features of a high-class styled polo - herringbone neck tape, a tape stripe on the placket, and a jacquard collar, amongst others - while combining the stain resistance of Nano Gear® with the cool, easy wearing expected of a performance polo.

Stencil is currently working on a number of other applications for Nano Gear®, some of which might even see light in the 2007 range, which is currently being assembled. Amongst these prototypes are a lightweight Nano Gear® business shirt, to join the other lightweight shirts currently offered by Stencil, and similar high-tech fleece-weight fabrics for use in pullovers and other winter-weight clothing. With many possibilities for the adoption of Nano Gear® technology across the Stencil range, you can be sure to see an increasing number of hard-wearing, hard to stain designs over the next few years.

Of course, Stencil still produces other high-tech fabrics, and the classic fabrics too – Poly/Cotton blends, 100% combed cottons, drills, cotton piques, micro fleeces and any number of blends designed for optimum comfort and wear. However, it is Stencil's relentless pursuit of new fabric technologies, and a refusal to compromise on their standards of quality, comfort and wear, that make Stencil's garments the success story they are. While there's no telling what Stencil will be making five years from now, there's one thing you can be sure of – they'll be working hard to stay a step ahead of the market.

If you are interested in seeing Stencil's range of Cool Dry® garments, please visit www.stencil.net.au or contact your local Stencil distributor.