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The journey that began in 1991 has grown stronger with every passing fashion season. Their eclectic creations using the ikat and jamdani weaves, both in silk and in cotton, stand out every year. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London displayed Abraham & Thakore's work as part of an exhibit on contemporary Indian design.

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Making inroads into the traditional mindset of old craftspeople has been a delicate and laborious process. But today, owing to their efforts, Abraham & Thakore have some of India's best weavers working with them. "They understand the enormous possibilities of natural fabrics," says Devid, who, along with Rakesh, shares a deep-rooted bond with the weavers. "We have not sacrificed quality for design. The beautiful aspect is that the weavers experiment with their old structure using our innovative designs." One of their cotton ikat shirts has woven polka designs. Another piece, a silk ikat sari—in finely blended yellow, black and white, brings fashion and modernity to the table. There's also the translucent white jamdani stole, with its paisley border.

Handlooms can get very mundane, Rakesh admits. But this is where design can tweak. "When we sit down to discuss a particular collection, we start from the bottom. That we work with traditional handloom is evident, but also work on how we can execute the designs differently. We chart out the different possibilities with the weavers, never compromising on the traditional procedure." The weavers have already worked with the designers' ever-evolving design principles. They have combined new structures, design elements, yardages, blends, textures and warp and weft combinations. In short, they have agreed to experiment. "At the end of the day, they are happy to discover the enormous potential of handlooms and natural textiles."

There is a certain beauty and richness to natural fabrics that no power loom product can attain. Each piece is the product of several artisans. As Rakesh says, "What you call the flaws of weaving add to its beauty. With every wash it attains a new dimension, a fresh sheen. Any fan of natural fabrics will know the delicate touch of an ikat or a jamdani creation. It's elegant, rich and magical."

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