

## Swiss Embroidery Leading the world of fashion

Embroidery has a long tradition in St. Gallen, Switzerland. In the Middle Ages the monastery maintained its own workshops. Around the 18<sup>th</sup> century the art experienced its first boom and export companies employed thousands of women.

The first mechanical embroidery machines were developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and turned St. Gallen into a city of importance throughout the world. This cottage industry provided a large part of the poor country population with an additional income and by 1890 around 20,000 machines were producing embroidery in the region. By 1910 embroidery production was the biggest export industry in Switzerland and around a fifth of the population in Eastern Switzerland earned their living from it.

The First World War hit the industry particularly hard and the embroidery sector experienced its first crisis. Fashion turned away from embroideries and the industry was far too large for worldwide demand. The machines became worthless and were just about left to rot away.

It wasn't until the 1950's that the industry recovered and new high performance machines were introduced. The sector experienced a peak between the 1960's and the 1970's with a steady increase in export value.

Bischoff has been part of the textile centre of St. Gallen since 1927 and is internationally known for exclusive design and sophisticated fashion. Their design directions are based on history, nature and culture and these concepts inspire their designers to create the most exquisite embroideries worldwide. Bischoff supply the haute couture industry around the globe including the exclusive Australian market.