

Giorgio Armani



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The second most powerful selling designer in the fashion world today, behind front runner Ralph Lauren, is fashion icon dominator Giorgio Armani. Giorgio Armani's products are sold in over one hundred countries, and bring in approximately more than two billion dollars per year in sales. Giorgio Armani has reached this dominating position in the fashion world because, consumers who wear his merchandise say that they feel so chic, so confident, so fabulous.

Giorgio Armani was born in 1934 in Piacanza, Italy in an industrial town about twenty miles south of Milan, which was bombed repeatedly during World War II. Giorgio Armani was the son of Marie and Ugo Armani; his father was a transport manager for a shipping company, whereas his mother made all of the family clothes. He began his studies as a doctor of medicine at the University of Bologna from 1952 until 1953, where he soon came to find that medicine was not the right road for him, so he joined the military from 1953 until 1954 to do his obligated service for his country.

Giorgio Armani's first job came as a window dresser in 1957 for one of Italy's leading department stores', La Rinascente, a job he held for about seven years. Armani left La Rinascente in 1964 and joined Nino Cerruti, where he worked as a designer and was responsible for designing the label "Hitman" for Cerruti's menswear company. Armani established himself as a freelance designer in 1970 and started a company with his friend Sergio Galeotti. For five years they freelanced and designed clothes for various manufactures. He made women's clothes for Tendresse, mannish coats for Gibo, and also made two menswear collections for Manual Ungaro, from whom he learned his good cutting techniques from.

In 1974 Giorgio Armani held his first show in his name where his menswear collection of informal fashion blazers were presented. In 1975 Giorgio Armani launched his own fashion label with ready to wear women's wear and Armani junior, his children's line. In 1979 he started his "Mani" collection for less expensive wear for woman, and "Le Collezione", his menswear collection for men. During the same year Armani designed clothes for actor Richard Gere, where Gere starred in the movie "American Gigolo" in which Armani's designs were implemented into. Giorgio Armani would be counted as one of the top leading fashion houses' by the end of the decade. Armani's friend and enthusiastic partner Sergio Galeotti died from AIDS in 1985, leaving Armani his fifty percent interest in the firm, as well as to take total control of both the design and business aspects of his fashion empire.

Armani owned the era of the 1980's, where by this time his collection was branched out over several lines. The decade known for it's designer jeans, Armani launched Emporio Armani in 1981 which was a designer jean line, which was a lower price version of the flagship line. Giorgio Armani was one of the first designers to exploit the marketing power of media stars by continuing to design for his string of relationships with Hollywood motion pictures blockbusters such as, "Batman", "Pulp Fiction", and the "Untouchables". Armani was also responsible for the pastel wardrobe of the stars of "Miami Vice", the hit TV series of the 1980's. Armani also designed and produced wardrobes for several musicians during their musical tours, such as Paul Simon, Billy Joel, David Bowie, and Eric Clapton. In April 5th, 1982 Giorgio Armani made the cover of Time Magazine. He was the first Italian designer to be so honored and in 1983 he received the CFDA International Award.

The course of the 1980's proved that Armani was the new name in fashion, and he immediately set to out to expand his Emporio Armani line from just jeans. In 1981 he started his Armani Express restaurant chain, in 1982 he started his new fragrance line, and in 1987 he started an eyewear line. Armani was on a fashion takeover, and in 1989 refused a buyout from Gucci and LVMH. The start of 1990's proved that Armani was not just another designer, the company carried no debt, and at the end of 1990 Armani's total retail sales, including licensed products were an impressive \$1.6 billion. The first Armani Exchange store was opened in 1991 in New York City's Soho district. The store offered affordable jeans and shirts which were much less pricier than Armani's high end dress wear. Bloomingdale's, Neiman Marcus, as well as Saks Fifth Avenue, opened another 2 dozen or so, sections within their stores in 1992.

In 1997 Armani's fashion rival Gianni Versace was murdered in Miami, and the Police cancelled a fashion show in Paris in 1998 citing security concerns for the designer. To some, this showed as the proof of the rivalry between the French and Italian fashion industries. The company continued to roll out new lines, starting their accessory division in 1999, as well as entering E-Commerce the same year with armaniexchange.com. On his 25th anniversary in the year 2000, the billionaire designer honored himself by opening a three level, \$73 million dollar mega store in Milan.

Armani uses the elements of masculine tailoring to make feminine garments and understands how to make a suit sexy. He makes jackets without stiff linings, and opens up the armhole. He uses slinky dress fabrics to make jackets, so lacking in starch that they could hardly hold a crease. Once a woman tries on and wears an Armani jacket, they are hooked for life. Armani's concepts are somewhat exceptional addictive

magic and he is the magician leaving his consumers wanting more and more.

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