

Craftsmanship and Made in Italy in the Fashion Market*

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Abstract

Fratelli Rossetti is synonymous with style, both in Italy and abroad: an enduring milestone of timeless craftsmanship. Over the years, the firm has grown but has always preserved its flare for craftsmanship. Each shoe embodies a meticulous production process, entirely executed in the workshops in Parabiago by the Company Master Craftsmen. Tradition and quality have always gone hand-in-hand with insatiable curiosity and a commitment to innovation and have led Fratelli Rossetti to be competitive in the Italian and global market through a network of boutiques spread all over the world and located in the best spots.

Keywords: Fashion Brand; Made in Italy; Shoe Manufacturing; Craftsmanship

1. Dedication, Devotion and Passion for Shoemaking

Fratelli Rossetti was founded in 1953 by the visionary genius Renzo Rossetti in Parabiago, in the outskirts of Milan. At that time, Italy was moving its first steps into a real fashion system.

Today the company is run by the second generation of the family - Diego, Luca and Dario, the Rossetti brothers. Through dedication, devotion and passion for shoemaking, they have taken the company to its 60th anniversary and beyond. Today, the brand is synonymous with style, both in Italy and abroad: an enduring milestone of timeless craftsmanship.

Throughout the years Fratelli Rossetti has grown but has always preserved its flare for craftsmanship. Each Fratelli Rossetti shoe embodies a meticulous production process, entirely executed in the workshops in Parabiago by the Company Master Craftsmen. The making of a piece counts more than a hundred steps, from the leather selection to the stitching of the sole indeed.

As many other Italian firms with an established and well-known trademark, and a rich artisan know-how, Fratelli Rossetti has looked attractive to many groups in past few years. Despite the several tempting offers, the Rossetti brothers understood that the familiar heritage represented the best lever in order to be competitive in the Italian and global market and decided to keep on being independent.

* Invited Article

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2. Great Little Innovations at Fratelli Rossetti

Loyal to tradition but embracing new, inevitable change, Fratelli Rossetti has always been an innovative company, one not afraid to make changes to its way of making shoes. As a matter of fact, Fratelli Rossetti has a long story of “great little innovations”: within the company, tradition and quality have always gone hand-in-hand with insatiable curiosity and a commitment to innovation. From the introduction of tassels and the invention of shoes designed to be worn without socks, to stylistic innovations and the launch of the “mannish” style, through the application of colour in unrepeatable chromatic hues. It was Renzo Rossetti himself who stressed the importance of embracing new materials, styles and shapes. Today the company continues its research and development activities thanks to the know-how of its Master Artisans and the creative flair of the style department.

Fratelli Rossetti’s true icon is the Brera loafer with tassels, introduced for the very first time by Renzo Rossetti back in the Sixties. Such an original decorative element represented a veritable revolution for Italian fashion.

Drawing inspiration by Milan’s artist neighbourhood, named Brera indeed, the loafer embodies its liberal and unprejudiced atmosphere. As an artistic composition, Brera combines different materials, colours and forms marking one of the most successful chapters in the Fratelli Rossetti story. Today, the tassels are the distinguishing feature that identifies the Brera loafer, an iconic Fratelli Rossetti model which is reinvented each year with new colours and leathers, both for men and women.

Fratelli Rossetti has always fostered the image of an androgynous, sophisticated and anti-conformist woman wearing designs, such as the Brera moccasin, that combines masculine and feminine codes. In line with this philosophy, in 2014 Fratelli Rossetti started promoting the #sexyinflats concept: heels are not essential to feel sexy, women look and feel feminine and charming in flat shoes as well.

Dandy Glitter, Hobo Sparkling, Dandy Mirror, Candies, Tattoo and Brera Stardust: a wide collection of #sexyinflats and feminine designs launched by Fratelli Rossetti in the last few years. The #sexyinflats concept is today embodied by the brand-new Brera Stardust: a shiny and glittering party shoe, like Cinderella’s one.

3. The Worldwide Network of Boutiques

Fratelli Rossetti counts 330 employees worldwide with Fratelli Rossetti boutiques spread all over the world and located in the best spots: Via Montenapoleone in Milan, Madison Avenue in New York, Rue Saint Honoré in Paris, Via del Babuino in Rome, etc.

Italy counts 16 flagship boutiques: Bologna, Brescia, Cagliari, Capri, Genova, Milano, Napoli, Palermo, Porto Cervo, Roma, Torino, Venezia, Verona.

As for the international market, Fratelli Rossetti boutiques are located in Europe – Paris, Moscow, Bruxelles, Antwerp – in the United States – New York – in Middle East – Beirut, Dubai, Kuwait City – and Asia – Seoul, Daegu, Harbin.

4. Craftsmanship and ‘Made to Measure Service’

After six decades from its birth, the company has never stopped believing in Italian excellence, for this reason Fratelli Rossetti shoes are still entirely ‘Made in Parabiago’, a few kilometres away from Milan.

Every shoe and every step of the manufacturing process are still made in-house: an added value for the company that clients all over the world are able to perceive.

A very unique technique is Toledo, a special hand-made method to apply colour directly on the upper mounted on a last. The colour is hand dabbed onto the untreated leather, that is to say white natural calfskin. Such a technique allows artisans to reproduce a wide range of colour palette reflecting all possible shades, even customized ones. By means of a special buffing treatment, master craftsmen use dyeing techniques to highlight the natural characteristic of texture and shadows. The final look is glossy and refined: with a special antique and delicate patina every shoe is a unique piece of craftsmanship reflecting the masters’ timeless knowledge and Fratelli Rossetti’s legacy into quality shoe-making.

Fratelli Rossetti offers its male clients a ‘Made to Measure’ service, that is to say a chance to own unique shoes, handcrafted by a single Master Artisan who deals directly with the client throughout the entire production process, from the initial appointment to the delivery of the article. The result is a product of superb craftsmanship, customised with the client’s name. The choice of leathers ranges from fine calfskin to iguana and crocodile and the leathers are hand-painted in the colour chosen by the client.

Aiming to promote craftsmanship, Fratelli Rossetti gave birth to the #NewArtisan project and becomes a sort of patron of up-and-coming talents and their enterprises, entirely based on craftsmanship and producing hand-made goods. The New Artisan initiative gives new talents the chance to showcase their skills and tell their unique story in Fratelli Rossetti’s boutique, on Via Montenapoleone, in Milan.

In a series of monthly events, the scheme will tell the stories of creative figures who are building careers on their artistic capabilities by handcrafting items that are usually industrially produced, such as skateboards, lampshades, mobile phone covers, guitars, sartorial headwear.

New Artisan is a project for professional creative talents who have rediscovered the value of handmade products and given a contemporary twist to them. Through these emerging players, we want to promote our long-established values of craftsmanship, research and Italian-based production.

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