

INDEX FOR FASHION DESIGNERS

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LAURA ASHLEY

Retaining the simplicity of her native Wales, Laura Ashley considered herself to be a most unlikely person to become famous in the fashion world. Her designs are noted for their floral, frilly, lace covered appearances that suggest the traditional English country manners and customs. Laura's designs eventually extended to dresses, scarves, curtains, decorative accessories, wallpaper, and tiles.

She was born in the town of Merthyr-Tydfil, Wales. She served in the British Royal Naval services in World War II, and married Bernard Ashley in 1949.

After the Ashleys married, Laura started to make small household linens, cotton table mats, napkins, and tea towels. Together they founded their company in 1953 in Pimlico, an area of London, England. Their first location was their kitchen. They baked the dyes in their oven. Laura recalled that it was used more for making dyes than for cooking. They worked out of their home for about three years, silk screening Laura's original designs, until the neighbors complained about the smells generated by the processes involved!

In 1956, the Ashleys moved to Kent, England, where they converted an old coach house into a factory. While there, the river burst its banks and flooded the factory. They struggled through and once again they found themselves submerged with orders for tea towels. They added oven mitts and aprons in matching patterns to the tea towels. During this time, they sold their products in handicraft shops and stores such as Harrods in London and Heal's.

She became even more successful in 1961 when they moved to her native Wales. She camped out with her three children until they found a house. They found an old dance hall in the nearby village of Carno and made it a factory. When they made a striped garden smock, her career launched.

In 1977 they had 400 employees and by 1979 that had grown to 1000. Their exports came to almost \$9,000,000 and their world wide turnover was \$50,000,000. They won the Queen's award for Export Achievement and the Queen received them on the royal yacht, Britannia.

Laura Ashley took the time to visit many of the factories, print works, and shops. Expansion numbered more than 220 world wide, by the time of her death.

Their operation was a very close family business. Three of their four children work in the company. Jane, 26, takes the publicity photographs; David, 25, runs the marketing operation; the youngest, Emma, 14, is allowed to design the brightly colored dungarees that were the "eye-popping" finale in the Ashley's New York fashion show during the late '80s.

Laura Ashley found it very interesting that two sophisticated centers, New York and Vienna, are the most conservative. They want the turn-of-the-century things like the pinafores, long dresses, frilly blouses, and night dresses. Clothes like this were the basis of her original success and show off, to the best advantage, the unaffected charm of the milkmaid prints. The freshness is a conscious reaction against the big city slickness and crime.

When Laura Ashley began designing, women of the '50s were ready for a change in fashion from the Art Deco looks of the '30s and the tailored, masculine styles of the '40s. They were ready for the clean country look of a more innocent past.

GEOFFERY BEENE

Geoffery Beene was born on August 30, 1927 in Haynesville, Louisiana. His father, Albert Beene, was an automobile salesman and his mother, Lorene (Waller) Beene, wanted him to become a doctor. He felt the first two years of school were not too bad; but, in the third year his studies got into dissections and cadavers which was more than he could stand! He decided to quit college and went to California to study.

In the mid-forties, he moved to New York City and studied at the Traphagen School of Fashion. Shortly after, he moved on to Paris for training in sketching, designing, and sewing. He was also trained by the retired Molyneux, a famous French designer of the previous decade. In 1949 Geoffery moved back to New York and worked for a short time with Samuel Winston.

In June 1963 Geoffery Beene set up his own business. His clothes were loose fitting, ease-waisted, and bloused tops. They were sold anywhere from \$90 to \$375. He sold around \$500,000 worth. Within two years, that jumped to \$4,000,000.

In one 12 month period, Beene earned the Coty American Fashion Critics Award, the Nieman-Marcus Award, and the first of two awards from the National Cotton Council of America for his use of native American fiber.

In 1966 Geoffery Beene was chosen to represent the United States at the First International Fashion Week in Mexico. Some people say that his best collection was shown in 1967. It was then that he showed his "Little Girl" dresses, his "Rice Patty" pants, and his new conservative jumpsuits.

He is known for keeping his shows interesting. Once he showed a coat made entirely out of wooden buttons, a short dress cut like a tutu with a sequined bodice, and a feathered skirt accompanied by a pink lamé coat with an eight foot boa made out of ostrich feathers and aluminum foil.

In 1960 Beene started designing men's wear. His line included: wool blazers, jersey slacks, aviator jackets, and straight, full cuffed slacks.

In 1975 his spring and summer collection won him added respect. Also in 1975 he went to Milan, Italy to try to go international. He succeeded and then decided to distribute his clothes on the European continent.

In recent years he has made agreements under which he designs jewelry for Bergere Originals, shoes and handbags for Andrew Geller, scarves for Jewel Case, elegant frames for Victoria Optical, pantyhose for Bonnie Doone, and more.

GEORGE B. BRUMMEL

George B. Brummel was born in London, England, in 1778. He would be known later on in his life as the English dandy, "Beau" Brummel.

Before the 1800's, European society had a strict social class system. Some countries had laws that regulated the clothing fashions of people in certain classes. There were many so-called "sumptuary" laws that were designed to preserve this system. An example would be concerning the use of colors. Only royalty could wear purple. Any other person caught with purple clothing would be punished by death. Peasants were allowed only natural colors such as tan, brown, etc.

George Brummel began designing clothes shortly after this time and was appalled at these laws. He tried to break away from this tradition.

His designs set styles for men's clothing and manners for over 20 years. Brummel studied at Eton College. It was here that he attracted the attention of the Prince of Wales, and later King George IV. The Prince later made him an officer in his own regiment, the Tenth Hussars.

After spending a few months at Oxford University, Brummel was left moderately wealthy from an inheritance after the death of his father. He then set up an elegant fashion shop for men in London and won the love and admiration of the entire fashionable world.

Brummel had severe gambling problems. These problems, combined with his extravagant lifestyle, soon plunged him deep into debt. He then fled to France to escape his hounding creditors in the year 1816. In 1835 he was put in jail for a debt. Brummel died in France while spending time in a mental institution. He was 62 years old at the time of his death.

COCO CHANEL

Gabrielle Chanel was born in 1883 near Issorie in the province of Auvergne, France. She was delivered in a convent hospital where a nun gave her the middle name of Bonheur. She would rise above her humble beginnings, and become one of the most famous and influential fashion designers of the 20th century.

Chanel was orphaned at an early age. One story of her early life is that, as a small girl, she cut up the curtains to make clothes for her dolls. She loved riding horses, and often rode early when the cocks were crowing. She was nicknamed "Miss Cocorico", later shortened to "Coco". Another story to explain her unusual nickname is traced to her career as a "cocotte", a very original and amusing companion for men.

At 17, Coco and her sister went to work in a hat shop. In 1914 they arrived in Paris where Coco opened a tiny millinery shop of her own and where she refashioned store-bought hats. By 1905 her straw "boaters" and tight fitting cloches had become very popular. Women were tired of wearing the feathery hats with big bows that had been stylish at the turn of the century.

Chanel was described by Vogue as a "revolutionist, a non conformist, and a long time rebel who let women out of the prison of tight corsets." In 1910 she opened her own shop on Cambon Street in Paris. She catered to the needs of women and was interested in the elegance of a simple line, a good cut, and detail instead of flashy, very elaborate and expensive clothes. She felt women wanted sporty, practical clothes and outfits made of silk or wool. Her first break from traditional dress was a jersey dress, belted at the waist, which most fashion designers of the time didn't even consider to be a dress.

The 1920's was a time of change and Chanel changed fashion. She created sweaters trimmed with white collars, knitted suits, and the "little black dress". In her opinion, women should never overdress during the day. One of Chanel's greatest rivals, Paul Poiret, rebelled against her styles by making his more velvety, silkier, and ruffly than ever. He failed. Chanel had managed to change all of France with her new styles. Famous fashion houses who did not change, like Poiret himself, were forced to go out of business.

In 1922 Chanel fashioned the drop-waist dress. In 1923 she was credited with giving the sun tanned complexion a credible place in fashionable society. Other new fashion ideas of the time accredited to her are: the twin sweater set, crocheted lace, the leather belt, sailor's pants, the short evening dress, the small hat, the casual jacket with large pockets, and the introduction of costume jewelry. Knee length, single strands of pearls were one of her hallmarks.

Chanel also had women cutting their hair during the '20s and she was the first to make the skirts shorter. She was a small, black haired person with brilliant eyes and beige colored skin. She personified the Chanel Look. Her usual dress was a loose jersey cardigan jacket worn over a white shirt with the jacket sleeves rolled back to show white cuffs. With it she wore a short pleated skirt and a "mess" of real pearls and fake red and green stones around her neck.

Coco Chanel became the "unchallenged queen of Paris fashion", building her flair for simple elegance into a million dollar business with the headquarters all on 31 Rue Cambon, Paris. When her career was at its height, she was running four businesses at once; haute couture (26 sewing establishments employing some 2400 workers), a textile house, perfume laboratories, and a costume jewelry manufactory.

Chanel No. 5 (her lucky number) is her biggest perfume success. It was introduced in 1922 in the simplest of containers, not like the expensive bottles other perfumes used.

With the onset of World War II, Chanel, along with the other fashion houses in Paris, was forced to close her doors. She would not reopen again until 1954.

An event that happened in 1922 was not as lucky as Chanel No. 5. Chanel was introduced by a friend to Pierre Wertheimer. Pierre courted Gabrielle in the attempt to take over her company, Parfums Chanel. Even though she fought him, 3 years later she became partners with Pierre. He owned 70% of the perfume business. The friend that introduced them owned 20% and Chanel ended up with a meager 10% of her own company. Wertheimer also owned worldwide rights to the Chanel name, as it pertained to perfumes.

Coco Chanel went to court twice but failed to get her perfume industry back. In 1947 Pierre agreed to pay Coco \$400,00 in cash, plus a 2% royalty on all Chanel products. He also gave her the right to make and export perfume under her own name from Switzerland. But Coco never sold an ounce of perfume. Instead, she traded the rights in for a monthly allowance from the Wertheimers, who also paid her rent, taxes, and food bills. On this income and her settlement, Coco was able to keep herself in a style she had become accustomed to. Today Pierre's grandson is in charge of the business. (1988 reference)

In 1954 Coco Chanel returned to Paris to attempt a comeback in couture. Her first collection was presented in February, six months before her 71st birthday. The timeless Chanel Suit was shown, but her designs were not well received by the Paris press. Americans, on the other hand, loved her designs and bought heavily. Chanel died in Paris, France on January 10, 1971, while working on her new collection. The House of Chanel has continued with the Chanel name belonging exclusively to Pierre Wertheimer.

LIZ CLAIBORNE

Elisabeth Claiborne was born in Brussels, Belgium on March 31, 1929 to American parents, Villere and Louise Carol Claiborne, from New Orleans. Her grandfather, William C. C. Claiborne, was governor of Louisiana during the War of 1812. Liz, who spoke French before learning English, spent her childhood in Brussels. When the Nazis invaded Belgium in 1939, she and her family returned to New Orleans.

Liz's father did not think it a good idea for her to acquire a formal education. Consequently, she never graduated from high school. However, she did return later to Europe to study fine arts. Mr. Claiborne often took Liz to museums and cathedrals; he wanted her to become an artist.

At an early age, her mother taught her how to sew and fostered a creative side that blossomed into fashion design. At the age of 20, Liz sketched a design of a woman's coat, entered and won a Harper's Bazaar design contest! She then moved to New York and became a sketcher and model for the Seventh Avenue garment district.

In the next ten years she worked at the Omar Kram's 7th Avenue House, then worked for 2 years at the Junior Rite Co., followed by a job at the Rhea Manufacturing Company of Milwaukee. There she met the design executive Arthur Ortenburg, whom she married on July 5, 1957. She also worked at the New York City firm of Dan Kelter for 5 years.

In 1960-1975, Liz Claiborne worked as the chief designer for Youth Guild, the junior dress division of Jonathan Logan. Her vision of a mix and match coordinated sportswear for the newly emerging women's work force was a different version than that held by Youth Guild. So, in December of 1975, she set out on her own.

Liz Claiborne Inc. began on January 19, 1976 with \$50,000 of her own money and \$200,000 from family, friends, and business associates. The first year's sales passed the 2 million dollar mark; the next year's sales soared to 23 million.

In 1981-82 new divisions were added: a petite sportswear, for small boned women under 5'4", and a dress division. A girl's collection was added in 1984. But, it didn't prove as successful and was discontinued in 1987.

Liz Claiborne, Inc. reached the half billion point in wholesale sales. In 1985 and '86 sales hit 1.2 billion. They were ranked 437 in the Fortune 500 list of the largest industrial companies in the United States. Not only was it one of the youngest enterprises to scale that height, it was also the first one started by a woman!

The company has now moved into retailing itself with the first of a chain of stores named "First Issue" and will compete with The Limited, The Gap, and The Banana Republic.

In 1985 Liz Claiborne Inc. bought the Kaiser Roth Corporation that produced accessories including handbags, scarves, gloves, belts, and hats. That year a new "Lizwear" label, featuring jeans, was established; also a collection of men's wear was established because of popular demand. Another gamble that paid off was a perfume called "Liz Claiborne". It is easy to recognize with its red, yellow, and blue triangle scheme of packaging.

In June 1989 Liz Claiborne and her husband, who jointly own 5.6 billion shares of company stock worth almost \$100 million, retired from active management. They plan to remain as board members and Liz still possesses final veto powers. Liz is still the "heart and soul" of the company.

Liz has a vibrant personality and is an enthusiastic runner and swimmer. She also enjoys photography.

CHRISTIAN DIOR

Christian Dior was born in Granville, Normandy, France, on January 21, 1905. He was the second of four children born to Maurice and Madeleine Dior, members of a family which grew wealthy and well known as chemical manufacturers.

Dior originally planned a career in political science at the University of Paris, and was trained for diplomatic service. At the age of 23, he gave this up and became an art dealer. Dior opened one of the first art galleries to exhibit surrealist paintings.

The financial crisis of the 1930's changed his course and he went to work illustrating fashion for the weekly Figaro Illustre. In 1938 he became an assistant designer for the leading couturier of Paris, Robert Piguet. Here he began with hat designs that led to his designing of accessories and dresses.

Dior stopped designing for a few years during World War II when he entered the French military service. He was put to work on the railroad. After the war he worked for a year on his father's farm. In 1941 Dior went back to the fashion world as a designer for Lucien Lelong, another top designer in Paris.

If the post-first World War world was waiting for Chanel, the post-second World War world was positively aching for Dior. Most of the great names from before the war were back with new energy. Some of these were: Lelong, Piguet, Patou, Paquin, Fath, Rochas, Lanvin, Nina Ricci, and Balenciaga. To this number were added two new names: Pierre Balmain, who opened in 1946, and Christian Dior, who opened in 1947.

Few designers have been so rich in talent. Buyers were attracted by the exquisite workmanship, imaginative detail, sumptuous luxury, and sheer beauty of his clothes. When Christian Dior started, he had the financial backing of Marcel Boussac. Dior described his boutique as a "small house with neat, modest proportions, and an air of sober elegance." As he wrote to a friend, "It has the atmosphere of my dreams, all in white and pearl grey, looking very Parisian with its crystal chandeliers and profusion of palms...." But it was not the decor that excited Paris; other houses were equally beautiful. It was the collection. No one who was lucky enough to be present at its debut will ever forget it.

The models entered the salon, their tiny hats tipped to one side, held on by veils tied underneath their chins. As Chanel had invented a stance, Dior had invented a walk. The models leaned back at an angle that was almost dangerous and it added to their arrogant air. His long skirts were extremely full (one contained 80 yards of material!!). It was not only the length (a foot or more from the ground) that excited; it was the contrast of the fitted bodices with their tiny waists and the grace of the full

skirts, the softly curved shoulders and the open collars. English journalists in their skimpy wartime suits thought this softness and fullness was positively voluptuous. All around the salon the overseas press could be spotted tugging at their skirts, trying vainly to inch them over their knees. Models swirled on with their heavy skirts bowling over the standing ashtrays like ninepins. "The New Look" had been born... a look which was to change the shape of fashion, whose influence was to last nearly a decade and to make the name of its designer world famous.

The word had spread about this new house even before it opened. Even taxi drivers were excited to hear what this designer had to show. The traditional applause for the dress, which signals the end of each counter collection, swelled into an ovation. To Christian Dior it was a supreme moment. Dior said, "Nothing is ever invented. You always start with something." Dior knew that women were tired of war uniforms and were changing and recovering from the effects of the war.

Dior sensed that women needed to look and feel more feminine. They were ready for the intense femininity of Dior's clothes. With their padded, stiffened, double linings of taffeta and muslin, their whale bone and grosgrain waistbands, they created the perfect female shape as Dior conceived it, and were capable of standing alone. The full skirts swaying from the hand spanned waists made a woman look fragile.

Dior tended to give his creations English names: "Picadilly" was a favorite used for his first mink lined raincoat, "Bobby" another. After his first trip to the United States, he had one called "Bronx". None of the Americans had the courage to tell him that was not quite the appropriate name for an exquisitely wrought Dior dress.

After the war was a critical period for the Paris designers. During the war American designers had gained the leadership in fashion. Dior's collection consisting of 94 evening gowns, dresses, and suits was described as exciting and sensational.

Dior was one of the first to christen his lines. In 1953 he produced the H line; the next year the A line. There was even a Y line. Of these, the A line was the easiest to spot.

In his winter collection of 1957, Dior had moved to the unfitted line that Balenciaga and Givenchy had piloted. In an interview published in the Textile Colorist (October, 1947), Dior said that wool was his favorite fabric "because it becomes a part of the wearer, so to speak, and holds exactly and firmly the lines that have been devised by the designer".

Dior was a Roman Catholic and a bachelor who stood five feet five inches tall, weighed 145 pounds, had blue eyes and light brown hair. One of Dior's hobbies, reported a Paris release, is agriculture, "the care, study, and development of fruit trees and

experimentation in sale productivity"; he likes to say that he has "two green thumbs". In October of that year, he died at age fifty-five. Although by the time of his death fashion had begun to take a different course, Dior will always have two unique distinctions: with one collection he had achieved what all dress designers dream of, which is overnight making every woman wish she were armed with a checkbook; and for reestablishing Paris as a fashion center after the war.

GIANFRANCO FERRE

Gianfranco Ferre is an Italian designer who was raised in a lively, cozy family villa at Legnana, a small town about 20 miles from Milan, Italy. Friends say he was spoiled, adored, indulged, admired and great things were expected of him. His obsessive sense of duty and responsibility are said to have come from his mother's influence.

Ferre was an exemplary student. He obtained an architectural degree at the Milan Polytechnic. He distanced himself from the demonstrations, strikes, and sit-ins of his radical contemporaries.

His capacity for work is enormous. Ferre has been producing couture, the fur collection, the ready-to-wear for men and women, and the oaks and jeans collections. He has been offered France's most illustrious and historic couture houses and the most famous title in international fashion. Ferre just previously had an appointment in The Dior House as a designer. Now, he broadens that in his new role as designer of couture, ready-to-wear, and fur collections for Dior. He will also research, sketch and oversee fabric productions for Dior in Milan, Italy.

Gianfranco Ferre's designs are very Italian. They are clear cut, confident, and powerfully feminine. Upon his debut (in 1974), it was clear that he had something to offer fashion.

He never leaves his work until 8:30 or 9:00 at night, then goes straight to a restaurant and back to his dormitory, a shoebox of a house in the Via Conservatoria. Ferre is deeply provincial and unchanged by success. He laughs off his status with a shrug of the shoulders.

Article written in 1989

THE GAP

The Gap begins and ends with a man who is brilliant, dedicated, hard working, intense, and very difficult. He is also known to be very private. By association, Gap, Inc., with eighteen thousand employees world wide, shares trade publicly on the New York stock exchange. The man who is in charge of all this is Mickey Drexler. He became president of Gap in November of 1983.

The Gap is the 7-eleven of style: fast, affordable, one on every corner.

The campaign has won a number of awards. The most interesting was from the council of Fashion Designers of America, an organization not recognizing casual wear chains with small status.

In 1969 the Gap grossed under one million dollars. In 1989, with over 965 stores, the Gap, Inc. grossed over 1.5 billion dollars. This includes income from a very successful GapKIDS operation.

The Gap is the great fashion equalizer. It has redesigned the actual label in their clothes to look "statusy".

The Gap has become chic. Over the past few years the clean white stores filled with piles of colorful cotton and wool shirts and shirts, now has black and white "individual style". The Gap elevated ordinary pocket T-shirts to new and aesthetic heights in what was one of the more talked about print campaigns of the eighties.

The Gap's T-shirts are about 11 dollars. The chambray shirts are about 32 dollars. The mock turtlenecks about 23 dollars and their jeans about 38 dollars. The Gap turned the sweatshirt into a necessity. Many celebrities shop at the Gap because it allows the famous to dress like the not so famous.

There are also GapKIDS. The GapKIDS polo is about 14 dollars, reasonable for Polo. The GapKIDS pocket T-shirt is about \$8.50. Weekly sales can be found at the Gap with fairly recent merchandise.

Stores can be found all over the world showing, for the most part, the same merchandise for reasonable prices. The designers are young minded, keeping fashionable, casual styles and reasonable prices in mind, while putting a Gap label on their individual work.

ROMEO GIGLI

Romeo Gigli lives and works in Milan, Italy. He is a "bashful and soft spoken man with wonderful manners", but is never too discreet when talking about himself. His friends say he comes from "a very good family"; they mean aristocracy. He is said to care for women and the clothes he designs.

Gigli doesn't talk about his parents much. They both died suddenly while he was quite young. His father, like his grandfather, was an antiquarian. They collected and sold rare, old books. His mother was an elegant woman who wore Dior and Balenciaga. Romeo grew up in Emilia, Romagna, Italy.

Gigli is not like most fashion designers. He has never had any training, at least in fashion. He started to train in architecture but dropped out part way through his schooling. He started to work in Milan but decided to move to New York. He then went to work at Dimitri couture. He stayed in New York only a short time because he decided he liked being his own boss better. So he packed his bags and moved back to Milan.

Gigli's first two seasons were so excellent that one fashion scout advised Macy's to buy his line, but when they tried to look up his phone number, it wasn't even there. He supported his ready-to-wear business with a line of "Su Misura", or made-to-measure clothes.

Gigli's style has grown more every year but it generally is characterized by a close fit that follows the line of the body. It is usually soft draping, asymmetrical lines, or tailored with grace and fluidity. His clothes work well with the body and his colors are muted. He tried to use only deep blues, gray-greens, pale rose pinks and saffron, all shades he says are found in nature. The fabric Gigli uses are of superior quality like stretch linen, silk chiffon, cotton gauze, wool, cashmere, and gazer. Gigli says he has no interest in designing for haute couture. He doesn't want to design clothes "that look lavish to justify their prices". He also enjoys getting to know his clients.

The other Milanese designers, like Fierro and Armanio, have their collections displayed at the Fiera, a huge white tent-covered convention center. Gigli prefers to show his fashions in more natural light, rather than the theatrical light, and on models who don't parade in front of the audience. Romeo prefers his models to walk among the audience. The models are young and wear little make-up. They don't twirl their skirts or flirt with the audience either.

These shows take place in his studio, a loft above a Renault garage on the Corso Como. Gigli prefers his music to be Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony. He also stays back stage at the end of his show instead of taking the customary bow.

ROY HALSTON

Roy Halston was born in Des Moines, Iowa and brought up in Evansville, Indiana by his parents, Hallie and James.

Halston became interested in designing at the very young age of 7 when he could be found playing in his grandmother's hats. In high school he was fascinated by women's fashions and was interested in well dressed women. Halston's career choice was not a surprise to anyone.

Halston went to Indiana University and Chicago's Art Institute. After that, he began to design and sell hats in the Chicago Ambassador West Hotel. Soon after he moved to New York and got job with Lilly Dache. Halston was in charge of millinery for Bergdorf Goodman, where he attracted a lot of attention from Vogue magazine. Eight years later he started his own business.

He had talent, designing the daring pillbox hat for Jacqueline Kennedy that started a national craze. He had style and energy. He lived a "fast" lifestyle. He was the first American designer to rocket to international stardom. "His was a style as spare and unrevealing as the mirrored sunglasses behind which the real Roy Frowick surveyed a curious world. He was suave and gracious, mysterious and aspiring, he re-created himself in a tanned and tuxedoed image of breathless glamour."

It was the Halston parties that helped transform Studio 54 into the disco of the decade. His friendships with Liza Minelli and Elizabeth Taylor established him as the "walker to the stars." And it was Halston whose simple designs in cashmere and ultrasuede defined a newly self confident American fashion sense. "The 1970's belong to Halston", boasted Women's Wear Daily.

Halston designs were "quiet styles", loosely structured and flowing. He designed for celebrities such as Liza Minelli, Elizabeth Taylor, Martha Graham, Margaux Hemingway, Betty Ford, Lauren Bacall, and others.

In 1973 Halston sold his business to Norton Simon, Inc. for \$16 million, a price that sent gasps through the industry at the time. Halston stayed on as principal designer and guiding spirit. In 1983, Simon, Inc. sold to Esmark, Inc. and this cost Halston the little control he had left. He eventually found himself relatively powerless and unable to create much of anything under his own name. Halston Enterprises is now owned by Revlon, where anonymous designers continue to turn out fashions bearing the Halston label.

Another blow came that same year when he agreed to design clothing for J.C. Penny, prompting upscale Bergdorf's to drop his haute couture line.

Depressed and embittered, Halston stopped designing professionally in 1984, though he drew a handsome salary from Revlon until his death. He became increasingly reclusive, seldom partied, and saw only a few good friends.

Unfortunately, the '80s proved to be the opposite of the 1970's for Halston. A chain of business blunders cost him control of his empire and, eventually, the right to design under his own name. In late 1988 he found he was carrying the AIDS virus. Halston had an active social life. Stories abound of drug use and homosexual and heterosexual involvement, the apparent source of the virus.

The end had to come but Halston couldn't take the pressure he felt in New York. He moved to San Francisco to be closer to his family and doctors. Many of his celebrity friends didn't know what had happened to him since he only kept in touch with very close friends.

At 11:22 p.m., March 26, 1990, in room 670 at Pacific Presbyterian Medical Center, Roy Halston died of kaposi's sarcoma, an AIDS-related cancer. He was only 57 years old.

Taken from People magazine, 1990

DONNA KARAN

Donna Karan is a fashion designer from the United States of America. Donna is a women's clothing designer whose creations send department store executives into fits of giddy optimism. The Queen of Seventh Avenue, as the fashion press calls her, Karan is the chief executive officer and head designer of a five year old company that expects to rake in \$115 million in revenues this year. (1989) Her sportswear line arrived in stores eight months ago in one of the most successful launches in fashion history. Joan Kaner, senior vice president of the Nieman Marcus chain, said, "Donna's name is magic now."

Karan, 41, has earned a reputation as the sartorial savior of the modern working woman who is fed up with bow ties and sexless designs. Karan's clothes are comfortable and practical, stylish and feminine. Among her trademarks are: one-piece silk bodysuits, easy fitting jackets, and wrap skirts. Fashion doyen, John Fairchild, says, "Donna understands a woman's body the way Coco Chanel did." A size 12 herself, Karan boasts the rare and eternally marketable talent of cutting a skirt or pair of pants so that they flatter a woman even if she is not runway thin.

Karan studied at Parson's School of Design in Manhattan and then worked as an assistant to the legendary Anne Klein. When Klein died in 1974, Karan was named as her successor. In 1982, when Karan launched Anne Klein II, a lower priced line, she experienced for the first time the creative rush of designing an entirely new collection. She was restless but still afraid to leave the security of Anne Klein. Finally, her boss at the company, Frank Mori, pushed her out on her own. Takihyo, the Japanese textile conglomerate that owned Anne Klein, put up an initial \$3 million to help launch Donna Karan, Co.

The firm is planning to enter the exciting but highly competitive fragrance market. At the same time, her clothes have bright prospects overseas. Karan's lines are now sold in London and Browns, and in two leading department stores, Harrods and Harvey Nichols.

Now the company is going through a challenging transition from the cozy, family style operation to a more structured organization. Says Karan, "The growth is frightening. It truly is. My biggest dream is to allow this business to grow and not lose the integrity of what we have." Much of that task will fall to president, Stephan Ruzow, a former executive at the Warnaco Apparel Company. Ruzow, 46, hired five months ago, is also attempting to smooth out production snags that have sometimes led to uneven quality in Karan's garments, which are mostly made in Manhattan and Hong Kong.

CALVIN KLEIN

Calvin Klein was born on November 19, 1942 in the Bronx, New York. His parents' names were Leo and Flore Klein.

Calvin Klein always wanted his own business. At the age of five, he and his best friend, Barry, wanted to open their own pet shop. Barry was going to keep him from going broke and Klein was going to find the fauna. Even when he was older, his intentions were the same, but he headed in a different direction. He decided to go to FIT, Fashion Institute of Technology. While Calvin went to FIT, Barry decided to go to New York University and work in his family's business. Klein's best friend is now his business partner.

During Klein's adolescent years, while his friends were playing in sand lot sports, Klein would be sewing, sketching clothes, and would go to a high fashion discount store in the Bronx called Loemann's. He would look at Norman Norell samples and other couture.

Klein graduated in 1962 from the Fashion Institute of Technology. Then he went to work in the garment district as an apprentice designer for Dan Millstein. He earned \$75.00 a week. Now this company is owned by Calvin Klein, Inc.

In 1968 Klein decided to open his own company called Calvin Klein, Ltd. He took \$2,000 of his own money and \$10,000 of Schwartz's, who had taken over his family's supermarket in Harlem. For five years this small company operated out of a suite at the New York Hotel. Then Klein bought out Millstein and moved Calvin Klein, Inc. to that spot on 205 West, 39th Street.

The early years of his company were marked by a low period in the fashion industry. The fad was dressing "down", hippie style. All of the designer clothes were mini skirts and plastic boots. But during this time, Klein did succeed with a snappy trench coat that was always in style. His first big order was from Bonwit Teller for \$50,000 worth of coats. One Newsweek reporter said that the styles of his lines were full of purity. He also said that the simplicity of the designs impressed him.

Klein designed mostly two-piece suits until 1972 when he came out with a coatless collection that was quite sporty. He designed sweaters, skirts, dresses, shirts, blouses, and pants that could be intermixed and worn as a complete day and evening wardrobe. He was sensitive about the changes in a woman's lifestyle and he said, "I felt that the American lifestyle had changed and there was certainly a need for clothing to express and relate to the change." He also said that women couldn't be dictated to anymore.

In 1973 Klein and Stephen Burrows were selected winners of the

Coty American Fashion Critics Award. They were chosen by a group of 400 reporters. The following October he was commended for "his superlative and consistent taste, his innate but nonconformist sense of classic line, never banal but always strong and feminine and his unique understanding of today's blend of casualness, luxury, and moderate price."

In one of Klein's fashion shows that year, he had his models in pea jackets, fur collared melton overcoats, wool turtle necks, and slacks. He was noted for the styles that had been borrowed from the men to begin with. His philosophy for women was to make them feel comfortable.

Calvin Klein told a reporter in 1978 that he hated polyester; he said that it was a synthetic and it was fake. His prices rose that year because his styles were more exclusive, and because he stopped using man made fabrics. In 1974 his resort collection stressed shocking shades of pink, red, and green.

Calvin Klein only uses the best natural fabrics, usually earth tones and neutral colors. Some of his designs are sweaters, jackets, shirts, blouses, pants, skirts, bikinis, capes, coats, and many others. "I never try to overpower the woman who wears my clothes." He also thought that it was ridiculous to spend everything on wearing apparel. He said that he designs for the new look but with an everlasting feeling.

RALPH LAUREN

To fashion conscious men and women, the clothes of New York designer, Ralph Lauren, are unmistakable; clean lined, adaptable, imaginative, and at the same time classic and contemporary. Lauren first attracted attention in the late 1960's with his casually elegant "Polo" menswear collections.

Then, in 1972, he unveiled his first "Ralph Lauren" collection for women. His timeless designs, turned out in quality fabrics with impeccable tailoring and painstaking attention to detail, have won him more Coty awards than any designer; three for men's clothes and three for women's. "I stand for a look that is American", he said in a recent interview. "It's an attitude, a sense of freedom. I believe in clothes that last, that are not dated in a season. They should look better the year after...the people who wear my clothes don't think of my clothes as fashiony. They like good clothes, and they like to look good in them."

The youngest of four children, Ralph Lauren was born Ralph Lifshitz in the Bronx, New York, on October 14, 1939. He and his sister and two brothers legally changed their surname to Lauren in the mid-1950's. As a youth, Lauren was as much interested in sports, especially basketball, as any of his peers, but he was also addicted to movies and to the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

He first became interested in clothes when he was in the seventh grade. "My friends were the hoods wearing motorcycle jackets," he has recalled as quoted in Forbes, "but I was wearing tweed Bermudas and button down shirts." While he was a student at Dewitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, he worked part time as a stockboy at Alexander's department store. He spent most of his \$50-a-week salary on clothes and often saved for weeks to buy a Brooks Brothers suit.

After graduating from high school, Lauren stayed on at Alexander's as a full-time salesman and signed up to take business courses in the night school program at the city college of New York but he found his studies so boring that he dropped out a few months later. After a stint in the United States Army, he took a job as an assistant buyer for Allied stores. Determined to break into designing, Lauren applied to Brooks Brothers and to other manufacturers of menswear, but they all turned him down. "I had no portfolio and no sketches," he explained years later. "All I had was taste."

He was eventually hired in 1967 by Beau Brummel Ties, Inc. "I started in a drawer of a chest in a little room in the Empire State Building," he told Eugenia Sheppard in an interview for the New York Post. "I hadn't the faintest idea how to make a necktie, but I was pretty sure I knew what men wanted."

Using unusual fabrics, Lauren designed ties that were four or five inches wide compared to the standard width of three. The ties sold so well that within the year, Lauren left Beau Brummel to form his own tie company which he named Polo for its connotations of class and elegance. "It couldn't happen today," he told Bernadine Morris in an interview for her book, The Fashion Makers. "So much is happening in fashion, the tie is only a small part of what's going on. You couldn't start a business based on the shape of a tie. But then men weren't used to having too much happen in the style of their clothes. The tie was a big change, but not so bizarre that men couldn't accept it."

Because his wider ties made larger knots, Lauren began, in 1968, to design shirts with larger collars, then suit jackets with wider lapels. Over the next few years he added shirts, suits, knitwear, coats, shoes, and even luggage to the Polo line. Openly courting "the man-in-the-gray-flannel-suit-the Jack Lemmon guy in sackcloth", as he put it, Lauren created for the young executive, classic suits that had more style than those of other American menswear designers, but were not as stiff and formal as the European designs. "All I want is the old money look," he explained. "I want the same kind of thing Ambercrombie and Fitch used to have or that Brooks should have gone on to."

Typical of his first major menswear collection, produced for the 1970 fall season, was an unorthodox dinner suit consisting of a jacket with wide lapels, a white textured shirt, and red and black checked trousers. Taken by his relaxed, elegant styles, executives at Bloomingdales, New York City's trendy department store, decided to open a special shop to showcase his clothes. Lauren's precedent setting designs won him the 1970 Coty Menswear Award.

Having established himself as a menswear designer, Lauren, who had been designing his wife's clothes for several years, launched, in 1971, a women's line with small collared, man tailored shirts in soft cotton and handkerchief linen. "I didn't think it was necessary for a woman to dress like a vamp like Jean Harlow or Marilyn Monroe to look attractive," he contended, as quoted in The Fashion Makers.

The following year he presented as his first complete women's collection a wardrobe designed for, in his words, "the young suburban women in the so-called horsey set." The line included shirts, blazers, slacks, suits, coats in camel's hair and leather, and for the warmer months, striped or plaid shirt dresses. "My clothes are a combination of the narrow French fit...with the tweedy English look," he explained to one enthusiastic fashion correspondent, "the overall effect is very lean."

One of his most ardent early admirers was Barbra Streisand, who accessorized Lauren's tailored one buttoned jacket of white raw silk and his double breasted blue flannel blazer, with slouch

hats and walking canes.

The following year, he introduced shawl collared shaker knit sweaters in black or white as a contemporary substitute for the standard dinner jacket; for informal wear, a casual shirt jacket instead of a blazer.

The aptly named "Vanderbilt", a belted Donegal tweed jacket with bellows pockets, worn with a matching vest and white flannel trousers, perhaps best illustrates the elegance that characterized his 1973 collections. The same assured and affluent look was evident in the clothes he designed for Robert Redford, Bruce Dern, and Sam Waterston to wear in the motion picture version of The Great Gatsby.

YVES SAINT LAURENT

Yves Saint Laurent was born in Ouan, Algeria. He studied in Paris at the age of seventeen and entered a competition sponsored by the International Wool Secretariat. He won first prize for a cocktail dress. Shortly after this success, he was hired by Christian Dior as a designer.

When Dior died four years later, Saint Laurent took over the house. In 1958 he introduced, "Trapeze", a little girl look with narrow shoulders, a semi-fitted bodice, and a short flared skirt. The next year he revived a shorter version of the Hobble Skirt. In 1960 he showed black leather jackets, turtle neck sweaters, and fur trimmed hems. The audience watched modern, street fashion redesigned in the hands of a couturier.

In 1960 he was called to serve in the Algerian War. Several months later, discharged because of illness, he returned to Paris to find that Marc Bohan had taken over as head designer for Dior.

Undaunted, Yves, with business partner Pierre Berge, opened his own fashion house in 1962. His first collection featured a successful gold buttoned navy wool pea jacket and workman's smock in jersey silk and satin. Year after year he made contributions to fashion. In 1966 he showed the "smoking", or Tuxedo jacket for women, one of his most successfully innovations. In the same year he opened a string of Rive Gauche ready-to-wear shops. Velvet knickerbockers were an important feature of the 1967 collection.

In 1968 Yves St. Laurent showed see-through blouses and the classic safari jacket; in 1969, the pant suit. 1971 was the year of the blazer. Throughout the 1970's he continued to reign in Paris. One of his most memorable collections of the decade, in 1976, became nicknamed Cossack, or Russian. It featured exotic peasant costumes with long, full skirts. Bodices and boots were widely influential. His use of scarves and shawls returned their popularity and they have been a permanent fashion fixture since.

He is one of the most important post-World War II designers. From his early days at Dior, where he was part of the movement of "rethink fashion without couture", he has been a leader. Until 1964 his outfits were basically for the young at heart but in the mid-1960's his designs became increasingly sophisticated. He put large numbers of women into pants and adapted many garments from the male wardrobe; blazers, raincoats, and overcoats, into fashion items for women and promoted black velvet to such an extent that it came to be associated with him. Strictly tailored, yet tactfully cut, Saint Laurent's inspired garments were ideal for the executive woman emerging in the 1970's. Smart, stylish and casual, they reflected the feelings of the time. Yet, Saint Laurent also showed considerable softness with his black cocktail dresses, sweaters, and billowing skirts. He is hailed today as the father of a whole new way of dressing. Many designers and fashion critics have called him the most influential man in fashion in the 1990's.

PAUL POIRET

Paul Poiret was born in 1897, in Paris, France. His father was a cloth merchant. In his teens, he became an umbrella maker's apprentice but his interest lay in fashion and he eventually sold some of his sketches to Madeleine Cheriwit at the house of Raudnitz Soeurs.

In 1896 he joined Doucet, where his first design, a red cape, was extremely popular. Then, in 1900, he moved to Worth. In 1904 he opened his own house and was assisted by Doucet, who sent him Rejoine, a famous actress of the period.

In 1906 Poiret was responsible for loosening the former silhouette of fashion and achieving a more relaxed shape by extending the corset to the hips and reducing the number of underclothes.

Then, in 1908, Poiret published a brochure illustrated by Paul Iribe entitled "Les Robes de Paul Poiret". The drawings showed simple, elegant, softly fitted gowns; quite unlike the tightly corsetted, over-festooned dresses of the period. He actually flirted with the basic shape created by the corset for many years. Despite his claim to have freed women from its shackles, this claim was unfounded. He promoted the kimono shape in the early 1900's and was patronized by Isadora Duncan for his exotic flowery garments.

In 1909 he featured turbans, aigrettes, and harem pants, all inspired by the Ballet Russia, which had provoked enormous interest in Eastern and Oriental dress. He fashioned garments of boldly colored silks, brocades, velvets; simply constructed but rich in texture.

Then in 1911, he commissioned another brochure, "Les Choses de Paul Poiret", illustrated by Georges Lepape. He introduced a hobble skirt which freed the hips and confined the ankles. This fashion was not widely adopted though it attracted a great deal of attention and criticism. He also established the School Martine, where he employed untrained girls to design textiles and furnishings that were made up later by skilled craftsmen. A man named Dufy worked with him on many fabric designs for the textile company, Bichini-Perier. Around this time, he produced one of his most famous shapes, "The Lampshade", created by wiring a tunic so that the hem stood out in a circle around the body.

In 1912 Poiret toured Europe with a group of models and followed this with a tour of the United States. Then in 1913, he made several attempts to promote the wearing of harem type pants below tunics. He was also noted for trimmings, scarves, and hair ornaments.

In 1914 Poiret was instrumental in the creation of Le Syndicate de Defense de Las Grande Couture Française, which was an attempt to protect member designers from piracy.

At the outbreak of World War I, he closed his business and joined the French Army. Although he was active after the war, he could not regain his former status. Post-war fashions were far more straight forward than his exotic garments. His fashion career ended in 1925. He died in 1944. Some have paralleled his downward trend with the rise of Coco Chanel. Her fashions changed to meet the need and desires of the post-war women; Mr. Poiret's fashions did not.

Poiret was the first innovator of the "New Fashion" of the twentieth century. He revolutionized fashions by seeing women in a straight line. He made dresses with high waists, tunics, side and shoulder closings, all with a straight and easy flow. He replaced the dedicated, washed-out palette of the Edwardian age with brilliant and primary colors; clothes of red, green, violet, orange, lemon-yellow, cobalt blue, and the colors of the Russian Ballet Corps. He surrounded himself with many French artists and hired them to work in his clothing house. Raoul Dufy and Matisse, both famous in their own right, were there designing fabrics.

Poiret adored Turkish trousers, little turbans, and huge tassels. His dresses and evening wraps gleamed with embroidered leaves and flowers, shimmered with gold and silver arabesques; he used beaded Persian brocades and metallic bands circling hemlines and cuffs. He loved the exotic.

Poiret caught the essence of Paris at the turn of the century and was THE designer in Paris for 20 years, from 1904 to 1925.

BOB MACKIE

Bob Mackie was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1940. Mackie studied at Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles before he began his designer career as a sketch artist for Jean Louis. He also worked for Edith Head, a prominent costume designer at Paramount Studios.

While continuing his work in films, Mackie gained further design experience by creating costumes for the Judy Garland Show in 1963 and later for the Carol Burnett Show. He is best known for his glamorous clothes, swimwear, and also for his line of furs.

He's been called the P.T. Barnum of beads, a man who never met a sequin he didn't like. For the past decade he has drawn serious snickers of disapproval from the serious Seventh Avenue set, the fashion center in New York. That was before last fall, when Bob Mackie's razzmatazz "Viva Las Vegas" show had the Plaza Hotel's audience cheering for his newest fashions, casino chic: Lucky Seven satin jackets, sequined dice appliques rolling down the backs of silk dresses, and an electrified, one-thousand-points-of-light "Wheel of Fortune" cape. It was so heavy it left welts on the model's shoulders. Mackie says Las Vegas is a "Fantasy Land for adults who never want to grow up."

At a time when major American designers have been straight jacketed by taupes and beiges, Mackie has emerged with his own brand of witty, wildly sexy designs that are anything but safe. Mackie says, "Fashions shouldn't be a religion, but some people take it very seriously." Mackie doesn't dress the working woman.

His Manhattan offices are in the same building as those of Oscar de la Renta, Ralph Lauren, and Donna Karan; a not so subtle attempt to be considered in one of the major leagues. "He's been snubbed by the fashion press, and wants to be taken seriously." Sometimes when Mackie gets snubbed it upsets him. While he has attempted to break into the serious fashion world, where he met with some success, most notably in evening wear, Mackie was never seen as a major force in the press or on the racks.

Because of his success as a costume designer for such notables as Cher, Ann Margret, Tina Turner, and many others, there are people who still see him as only a costume designer. Bloomingdale's buyer, Bill Cave, thinks so himself. "He is a really good fashion designer." His designs usually have feathers, fringe, or sequins on the outfits.