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FALL 2019 MENSWEAR

Massimo Alba

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VIEW SLIDESHOW



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by LUKE LEITCH

It's hard to write about Massimo Alba, and that's partially his fault: Although he's a fun and fascinating conversationalist, when you interview him on the record he becomes restless and a little tongue-tied. He roams around his eclectic showroom asking for your opinion instead of offering his. His clothes, though, are extraordinary, a fact that becomes ever more evident the more you spend time either wearing or looking at them.

Alba started his first line in the 1980s, which was named after Magritte's home address. He then worked for the Italian cashmere house Malo before a stint at Scotland's Ballantyne. Then, in 2007, he started his own eponymous label.

In slow, studied brushstrokes, Alba has carefully developed his brand, ably supported by his wife, Marilena, and their now-wheezy labrador, Jasper. All of his pieces are less designed than incepted. A cashmere hoodie, a pair of slouchy fine-wale cords, or a variant on his signature Gstaad jackets—based on the Tyrolean jacket but transported by Alba to a beautiful and pragmatic compromise between tailoring and sportswear—invariably bear a rich patina: Patina peeks out from behind patina. This season's variation was a yak and wool mix, quilted, which will be perfect fare for the punters roaming his newest store just in the shadow of Mont Blanc.

Alba also makes excellent womenswear, but his menswear is a special cult. Whether you only have one of his many emotionally printed handkerchiefs or a full look, you will be joining a club whose breadth surprises more and more every season. Unlike the output of so many brands based on surface hype over double-dyed substance, his are clothes that are more than souvenirs of a moment. Alba is a designer of garments that will fit into your life, and which will enhance it greatly.