

# Massimo Alba, and the beauty of being of independent

By [Godfrey Deeny](#) - June 18, 2018



One of the more original new brands in Italy is Massimo Alba, a highly experienced designer with a refreshingly different take on casual chic.



Massimo Alba Spring/ Summer 19

“In my view the future of fashion is the independents. In order to be independent, you have to know and own your own concept. That’s internal to the project. The concept is the fountain of the company, and the brand does not depend on outside power or financial resources. So when I began as an independent I chose the smallest possible label,” smiles Massimo Alba, sitting in his headquarters on a quiet walking street between Milan’s two Navigli canals.

His own office sums up the brand’s eclecticism: hand white linen curtains hand embroidered with men’s tailoring patters; Chinoserie boxes; antique men’s fracks and dress shirts; worn kilims, beaded African armchairs classic rock records. Like the great David Sylvain LP playing when we meet.

Originally from Treviso, Alba opened his eponymous label in Milan a decade ago. That was already after a long career; designing for Malo (for 17 years) and then Agnona before being part of team that acquired, and right-sized and sold off the Scottish knitwear brand Ballantyne.

With his own line he proposes dusty violet and burgundy blazers; feathery soft velvety corduroy blazers; excellent light cotton micro stripe pants made in Naples or bubbly cashmere-cotton cardigans from Novara. Alba sources all his clothes from a wide range of factories throughout Italy. “That way I get to taste all the different regional wines,” chuckles the 58-year-old Alba, whose name means dawn in Italian.

The whole collection reeks of a lush Mediterranean island. Not so odd, seeing as his wife Marilena hails from the elegiac island of Ischia.

“And if you want to own your concept, you need to believe in it at retail,” adds Alba, who has opened flagships in Brera, Milan’s most elegant inner city neighborhood and on Rome’s via Coronari, in Palazzo Lancellotti, a beautiful palace built for a cardinal in the late 16th century on a supremely atmospheric street in the heart of the Eternal City.

Today, Massimo Alba retails in over 250 stores, with sales of just over 5 million euros. It’s not a mega brand, probably never will be, but its very purity seems certain to guarantee a happy future – and one making exactly the sort of fashion a gent or lady wears when they are properly at ease.

Just like Massimo.

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