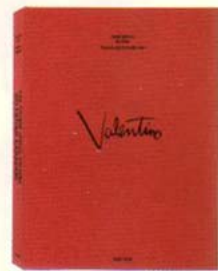


VIVIDLY VALENTINO



A new book gloriously illustrates almost 50 years of the legendary designer's couture perfection.

“I had a sister and she took me to see the films. I would dream about beautiful women, extremely sophisticated, all made up with beautiful jewelry and beautiful dresses. I think, from that time, I decided I wanted to be a fashion designer. The movie that did it was *Ziegfeld Girl*, with Hedy Lamarr, Lana Turner, Judy Garland and Jimmy Stewart. I remember all those dresses, those long gowns in white and black. For me, a young guy of 13, to see this sort of beauty, it made me dream so much.”

So says Valentino Garavani, the designer known for decades now simply by his first name, in Taschen's appropriately luxurious new limited-edition tome *Valentino* (list price: \$1,000), a 700-page ode to the master couturier collecting sketches, advertising campaigns, portraits of the designer, interviews with 20 of Valentino's closest collaborators, and essays by Anna Wintour, Graydon Carter and Rupert Everett, among others. (There's even a poem by Meryl Streep that she wrote in appreciation of the man himself.)

Valentino may have dreamt about the glamour of the silver screen goddesses, but not long after he first opened his eponymous fashion house in Rome in 1959, it was Hollywood's red carpet royalty who would dream of wearing his extravagant yet elegant designs, from Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn and Jackie Kennedy in the '60s to Gwyneth Paltrow, Sharon Stone, Julia Roberts and Jennifer Lopez today. The timelessness of Valentino's chic designs can certainly be seen in these classic portraits of Hepburn (in 1968 and 1969) and Anjelica Huston (in 1972, during her pre-acting modeling years) from noted photographer Gian Paolo Barbieri, just a tease of the ravishing visual feast awaiting style-minded readers.—Mona Mars