



**VALENTINO** The recent inundation of one-named celebrities whose talents are attending parties and appearing entitled is enough to give most people pause. Surely one earns the right to drop their surnames when they embody so fully an undeniable gift. While few might recognize the surname Garavani, Valentino instantly conjures the seduction, pleasure and glamour interwoven into each delicate fold of his legendary gowns. It's this legacy that's commemorated by *International Herald Tribune* fashion writer Suzy Menkes and *Vanity Fair* writer Matt Tyrnauer in *Valentino: Una Grande Storia Italiana* (in Art Edition and Collector's Edition), both volumes as stunning as his creations.

Reminiscent of Valentino's signature red dresses, the red clamshell casing of the silkbound Collector's Edition readies the eye for what the reader will



discover amidst the volume's photo-laden 700 plus pages (the Art Edition is encased in a leatherbound clamshell). Images from decades of fashion photos abound, but the true visual splendor of the collection is actually found in the final pages. Breathtaking full-page, high-gloss color photographs present gowns created throughout the span of his career. Arranged by color and captured with close-up shots, they reveal intricate construction usually reserved for a fortunate few. Perhaps that's why these pages are also the most personal, as they display the grace and emotion in every detail.

"I always wanted to make women beautiful," says Valentino, and for close to five decades he's designed for the captivating—his loyal clientele has included Jackie Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn, Gwyneth Paltrow and Jennifer Lopez. Still, this edition doesn't become enmeshed in cheap celebrity showcasing. Instead, it offers thoughtful musing from past and present models, photographers, designers and fashion experts and, of course, Hollywood personalities. Stories from Anna Wintour, Diane von Furstenberg and even Rupert Everett, offer candid and intimate glimpses into the fashion icon's life: captivating views for the reader matched by the pages that reveal Valentino's fascinating palatial Roman and Parisian estates. It is evident his eye for design is not limited to fashion.

"There are two kinds of fashion designers: the one who designs a garment as though it were an 'objet d'art' and the kind like Valentino, whose designs are made with the woman in mind and aim to make her even more beautiful," recounts Italian tastemaker Marella Agnelli. Created for fashionable lovers of all things beautiful, these editions are designed objects of adoration, worthy of the man they capture. Each edition bears the signature of Valentino and the coveted Art Edition (a limited edition print of 100 copies) also includes four signed prints of original drawings of Valentino's early works. Having been kept to a modest 2,000 copies, the Collector's Edition is an important addition for the devotee. In either manifestation, *Valentino* is an unparalleled collection that celebrates the man whose muse is woman

■ James Weske ~ *Valentino: Una Grande Storia Italiana (Art and Collector's Editions)*, Suzy Menkes and Matt Tyrnauer, 738 pages, \$4,000 leatherbound clamshell set/\$1,000 silkbound clamshell hardcover edition, Taschen

