

Dolce he began
studying science at a
university



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Dolce and Gabbana, an Italian ready-to-wear line, was founded in 1982 by Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana. Since the distinguished duo established they have become influential and innovative to the fashion industry. Their clothes signify a sanguine, sexy glamour, which, however raw, never over powers the wearer's character, making them one of the most momentous design forces to emerge from Italy in recent years.

Domenico Dolce was born in Palermo, Italy on August 13, 1958 to a Sicilian tailor. He worked in his father's shop at the young age of six, " I was obliged by my parents to work in the atelier, where I started drawing and sewing and I loved it.

I was making miniature clothes as samples." He began studying science at a university but quickly grew bored of the monotony of the subject and dropped out to attend art school. After graduation from the art school Dolce left his native city and traveled to Milan seeking fame and fortune. Stefano Gabbana was born in Venice, Italy on November 14, 1962. Gabbana always had an admiration of clothing, but never fantasized becoming involved in the fashion industry, " Since I was a child I really liked fashion. When I was thirteen I was going to Fiorucci to buy the most trendy things; but I didn't think the pleasure of dressing myself would become my job." Although he studied art at a college in Monza, he left before receiving a degree and became an advertising art director. While working for the same Milan based fashion designer Dolce and Gabbana met and found they shared many similar idols and influences.

Although Gabbana was from Northern Italy, they both alike profess their prominent influence is the Mediterranean. Stefano claims his admiration

evolved by watching classic movies with Southern Italian actresses such as Sophia Loren and Gina Lollobrigida, whose voluptuous bodies are constrained by tight suits, stockings and suspenders. Adoration and glorification of the female body is the departure point for all of Dolce and Gabbana's female collections. The two have been quoted as saying that breasts are the points of departure for all of their designs. Other inspirations include films of the fifties by directors like Roberto Rossellini and Luchino Visconti and photos of Enzo Sellerio as well as by Giuseppe Lampedusa's. In 1981, one year after meeting, they formed a partnership and began to work as subcontractors to factories and thread companies.

For the next five years they remained faithful to their fantasy of one-day working independently, refusing lucrative opportunities, which would have sacrificed their autonomous nature. Finally their determination and perseverance paid off in 1985 when Beppe Modenese invited them to show their designs at the New Talents Forum of the Milan Collections. The next spring Stefano and Domenico had their first design on the catwalk. With borrowed money and girl friends as models, they launched 'Real Women' which were quickly being purchased from stores like Browns and Harvey Nichols. When their fall collection, 'Transformations', hit the runway the fashion world was beginning to sit up and take notice to Dolce and Gabbana. In 1987, with their first knitwear show behind them, they set up their own showroom in Via Santa Cecilia.

From that point on, Dolce and Gabbana were in the big time, showing in Tokyo and broadened their horizons by adding lingerie; beachwear and men's wear collections. By 1990 they had become full-fledged international

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designer label with all associated accouterments. New shops opened in huge cities such as New York and Milan.

In this same year the company did \$66 million, doubling that of the previous year. The two have really come a long way from the days of sewing their own garments. Both claim they would not continue on their own, " If I had to stop working with Domenico, I probably wouldn't be in the fashion industry anymore," claims Stefano. Domenico holds a similar attitude, " I wish I could go back, to be in a room with a shelf full of fabrics, a mannequin, a sewing machine and two women- I would be very happyWe don't know what it would be like to be like to work alone." Dolce and Gabbana take equal responsibilities for both