



Emilio Pucci and Livio di Simone

Two of our favorite lines couldn't be more different but share common origins.

Marchese Emilio Pucci di Barsento was an Italian aristocrat who began designing clothing completely by chance. During the winter of 1947 he was photographed by a *Harper's Bazaar* photographer wearing his own ski outfit. After negotiations he designed a collection which was ultimately featured in the *Harper's Bazaar* issue of December 1948. That issue launched Pucci.



He led the emergence of the casually chic, Italian style from his boutique in Capri. His signature clothes and patterns were cutting edge style in the fifties, sixties and early seventies. Despite his boutique in Capri, he was the embodiment of Milanese sophistication. When Mary Wells wanted to get Braniff Airlines on the map they dressed the flight attendants in Pucci uniforms. The Apollo 15 crew carried a Pucci designed flag to the moon.

His style was always about his beautiful prints. In the 1960's and 1970's Pucci prints appeared everywhere, on shoes, purses, luggage, billfolds, bathing suits, nightgowns, and bras and bikini underpants. When I first met Rod in the late 1970's I was wearing Pucci. Needless to say, he loved it. It was all about his fantastic prints then and it still is today

In the seventies the Marchese was elected to the Italian parliament. In the 1980's his attention to his label seemed to flag.

The Marchese died in 1992 and his daughter Laudornia took over.

Laudornia ran it until the label was sold to Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy (LVMH) which owns it today. LVMH has worked hard to restore the label to its former glory. They have hired new designers but they are using predominantly the legacy prints designed by Emilio Pucci. When you come in to Santangelo & Sandridge you will find almost entirely the legacy prints.

We've been in Milan twice to buy Pucci. The LVMH operation is a well oiled machine.



The Livio de Simone showroom in Milan is about three blocks away and it is anything but a well oiled machine.

Livio de Simone was an attorney from Naples who started an enterprise in 1960 which produced unique hand printed fabrics. In 1962 he married Graziella and together they built Livio de Simone S.p.a. Graziella told us that Livio had been a fabric designer for Pucci but we've never been able to confirm that anywhere else.

We first met Graziella, in Naples a couple of years ago. The company has its atelier and its main shop in Naples. The atelier is wonderful and is redolent of the Company's history. It's a half block up from the Via Caracciolo which circles Naples' incredible harbor. Their shop is about three blocks away on one of Naples' main shopping streets.

Graziella, Livio's wife, and now Benedetta, their daughter, run the company today. It's not a machine but it's a creative process. When we buy there they have a couple of dozen designs and dozens and dozens of prints and fabrics. This is fun because I get to be creative mixing and matching colors and designs.

Like Pucci, they are still using many of their legacy prints. The Pucci prints are sophisticated Northern Italian prints. And they are wonderful. The Livio de Simone prints are earthier. Most of them are hand printed from the original designs. If you look at the articles published about him



they talk about his "Mediterranean fabric" and "Il Batik alla napoletana" (Neapolitan Batique). The tones are earthier and more sensuous than Pucci whose patterns are hard edged and elegant. Moreover, the fabrics are totally different. Pucci uses predominantly silk and jersey while Livio de Simone uses linen, cotton and knits.

Ironically, Livio de Simone has an even closer connection to Capri than Pucci. His clothes have always been sold in the boutique on the Via Camerelle, just off the Piazzetta, called La Parisienne (it was where Capri Pants were invented). Jackie Kennedy was a buyer there. Audrey Hepburn was as well.

One of Jackie's Livio de Simone tops was sold in July 2003 in the auction of Jackie and Jack Kennedy memorabilia.

I love both labels for different reasons.

On Thursday April 6th we're going to introduce the Spring collections of Pucci and Livio de Simone with wine and cheese from 4:00 to 7:00. Come in and see for yourself.

I'll see you on Thursday.

Georgia