

T1479

NC 0020883 3



**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
FACULTY OF DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES**

**HERMÈS A CACHET OF LUXURY AND
STATUS SYMBOL**

By

Bridget Quigley

**Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and
Complementary Studies of Candidacy for the
Degree of Bachelor of Design**

1995

CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	
List of Illustrations	
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 A Future Based on the Past	4
i) Looks at Hermès' Historical Background	
Chapter 2 A Scarf is Born	18
i) Analysis of 'A Scarf is Born' Exhibition	
Chapter 3 Cachet of Luxury and a Status Symbol	50
i) An analysis and discussion of the Hermès look and its connotations, particularly in relation to its phenomenal success in the 1980s	
Conclusion	72
Appendices	74
Bibliography	75

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people who enabled the research and compilation of this thesis.

Deirdre Campion, Thesis Tutor.

Diane Greer, Press Relations Officer for Hermès in New York

Anne Seton Jacoby, Special Events Co-ordinator for Hermès in New York.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration Number		Page
1	Hermès over jumping saddle, 1994	6
2	Part of treasures of Hermès' equestrian museum, 1994	8
3	The Hermès 'Cape Cod Watch'	12
4	The Hermès crest	13
5	Calèche - Hermès fragrance, 1952	14
6	Scarves printed at 'A scarf is born' exhibition	21
7	Printer showing screen - printing process	21
8	Demonstrating the variety of ways in which a Hermès scarf can be worn	22
9	Jeu Omnibus et Dames Blanche, 1937	26
10	Memoire d'Hermès, 1986	28
11	Jeux D'artifice, 1987	31
12	Photograph from L'amour ducheval exhibit	33
13	Hermès' porcelain collection for 1994 'Cocarde de Soie'	35
14	'Ecuries' Hermès ties from 1993 collection	36
15	'Hermès de venerie'	37
16	Les Cheyennes, 1993	39
17	Les Beaux jour des Bonsai, 1994	42
18	Giverny	42

19	Fantaises Indiennes	42
20	'Palamphore', painted and dyed cotton made from the European market during the first half of the eighteenth century	44
21	'Cosmos', 1994	46
22	'Cosmos' scarf on Model, 1994	53
23	'Carpe Diem', silk scarves from Hermès' 1994 year of the sun collection	53
24	Versace shirt	54
25	'Carpe Diem' mens shirt	55
26	White cotton jersey T-shirt, orange dipped lambskin jeans, Spring Summer, 1994	59
27	Tobacco and honey herringbone linen riding jacket and white stretch cotton twill short riding jacket, Spring Summer, 1994	60
28	Hunting suit in off white Donegal tweed and straight waistcoat with notched neckline in off white Donegal tweed. Button down collar shirt in gray cotton with orange checks, 1994	67
29	Morgan jacket with gussets at back in olive green trust check lambs wool, dark green cashmere turtleneck, dark gray woollen serge pleated trousers	68
30	Autumn, Winter 1993-94, Menswear collection "Morgan" jacket with gussets at the back in olive green and rust check lambs wool. Dark green cashmere turtleneck, dark grey woollen serge pleated trousers.	69

INTRODUCTION

The opportunity to visit an exhibition on the scarves produced by the prestigious firm of Hermès in Boston in 1994 prompted the interest in this form of high class quality products and in particular the scarf.

In the past Hermès was more popularly known for its production of luxurious accessories such as leather bags, purses, travel necessities and sporting equipment. Today the House of Hermès embraces an even wider range of products, twelve in all, ranging from gold and silver jewellery to men and women's wear. Today its most sought after product is the Hermès silk scarf, although it was produced some fifty-eight years ago it really came into its own in the mid 1980s and is still enjoying great success in the 1990s.

This thesis will question why and how the Hermès name has become so popular and in particular relation^{es} to its phenomenal success in the 1980s where it moved from being part of a vocabulary of dress of a particular section of society to a more widespread clientele. The adoption of a Hermès scarf to a wardrobe gives credence to a lifestyle and a presentation of certain aspirations. Indeed according to a quote "many chic Europeans feel that a wardrobe without a touch of Hermès is like a meal without wine - not so good" (*Connoisseur*, 27th Sept. 1987 : 98).

An analysis as to what extent the origins of Hermès in the luxurious accessories business has played in the development of its success, the perceptions associated with the Hermès name

and product, and the translation of these ideas to the purchaser and the onlooker.

The origins of the House of Hermès from the period of its beginning in 1837 as harness makers to the gentry of the Fauboury to present day are discussed in Chapter 1. This will establish its embodiment of ideals and values at the time and how it has evolved these ideas since.

An analysis of 'A Scarf is Born' exhibition in Chapter 2 will show the embodiment of its ideas and values and visual level and allow for a discussion on the types of imagery and themes used by Hermès, which appear to have been greatly influenced by its ancestral background. I will also discuss how these scarves may be a reflection of a culture which is socially based, and also how these scarf exhibitions can be viewed as a sophisticated and subtle form of marketing.

The last chapter will discuss the phenomena of Hermès' name in the 1980s and the factors leading to this success. The discussion will analyse the connotations of Hermès' 'country-casual' look and to what extent its name has become a status symbol for people wishing to obtain part of the lifestyle Hermès offers.

As there is no written history or analysis available on the Hermès scarf itself and the information available limited, much of the information has been researched from contemporary magazines. Information was also obtained from the press relations officer in Boston, Diane Greer, and telephone interviews with Beth Ruben and Anne Jacoby who work as part of Hermès' press relations office in New York. Publications relating to general, social and cultural analysis such as Peter

York's *Style Wars*, London, Sledgwick and Jackson 1983, and
Quentin Bell, *On Human Finery*, *Guernsey Press*, 1992, and Fred
Davis' *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, *Chicago Press*, 1992
establishing an analysis of the Hermès name and product in
society.

CHAPTER 1 A FUTURE BASED ON THE PAST

Hermès has certainly evolved since the period of its beginning in 1837, when the firm began as wholesale fabricants of fine equestrial gear. Today Hermès pays homage to its equestrian origins, and on a wider scale than had been previously possible. Today this can be seen most easily in its Hermès silk scarves, its men and womenswear clothing, its porcelain glass and jewellery collections as well as its fragrances. Thierry Hermès who founded the business as harness makers had surely not envisaged such diversification of its ancestral background into such a wider variety of items.

It was Thierry Hermès Son, Emile Charles who first took steps to improve and expand on this family run business.

When Baron Haussman began his visionary project of replacing the narrow street of Paris with today's grand boulevards, Emile-Charles had a remarkable stroke of prescience and moved the family business in 1876 from Rue du Rampart to Rue du Fauboury St. Honorè, the fashionable western sector of Paris, which was fast becoming the city's most desirable area. Emile was to make two more momentous and foresighted steps, he changed their business from wholesale to retail and added saddlery to the business, forging personal relationships between the House of Hermès, and the quality conscious gentry of the Rue du Faubourg, St. Honorè. His clients became the great coach builders of the Champs Elyseès.

Very quickly Hermès became noted for its exquisite craftsmanship and quality of materials. Its passion in the pursuit of excellence became its trademark, and one which remains

unchanged today. Jean Louis Dumas, current president of Hermès, stresses that "they will never let upon quality, true quality" (McEvoy, 1987 : 104).

The magical days of the late 1800s saw all of the Paris aristocracy parading in their ornate carriage from Rue du Fauboury down the Champs Elyseès to the various fashionable areas of Paris. Those splendid brass trimmed bridles, harnesses and saddlery, were all crafted by Hermès. Establishing for itself a tradition of superiority in quality and craftsmanship.

Hermès' reputation and clientele soon spread from the stables of France across the continent to the court of Europe's royalty.

It is said that the coronations of Queen Elizabeth the First² of England were postponed for as long as two years so that Hermès could come up with original designs for the ceremonial saddles, harnesses and crests
(Greer, 1994)

This is a clear indication of how importantly Hermès valued its reputation in this craft and also it reflects how important it must have been to the monarchs, after all they were used as an outward expression of their affluence and prosperity.

Today the Hermès tradition for prodigious workmanship remains eminent, this can be seen in the work of the Hermès oxer jumping saddle as in Illustration 1, these saddles can take up to thirty-five hours to produce as do a variety of products produced by the house. This passion for perfection is beyond fashion. It has made Hermès' name synonymous with excellence, quality and grandeur.

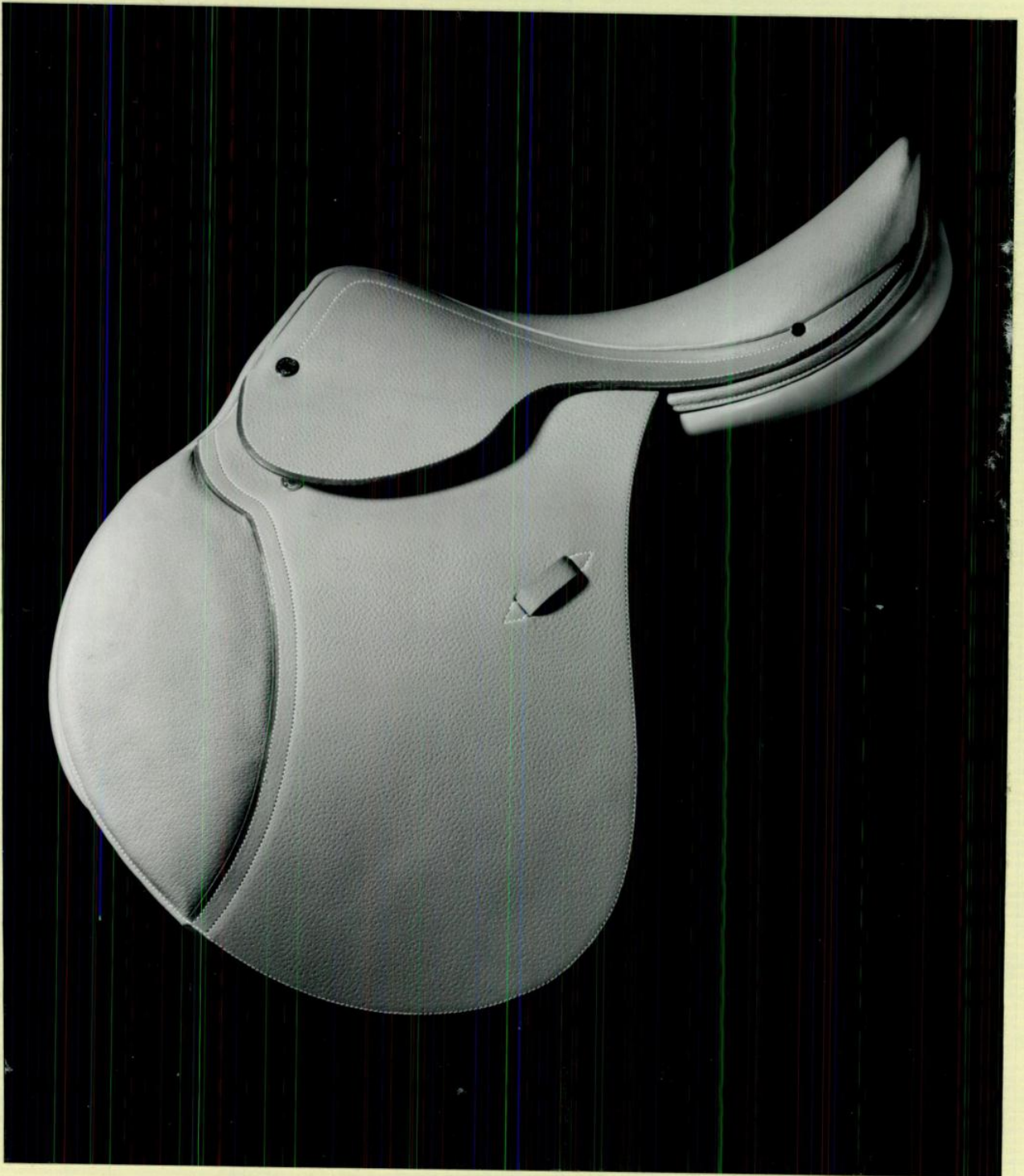


Illustration 1 Hermès oxer jumping saddle 1994
(Courtesy of D. Greer, PR Hermès, Boston, June 1994)

THE OVER HARRIER

The Over Harrier new jumping saddle made for competition was selected for the spread frame consisting of parallel sets of rails on a springing course and for the double bridge which frames the pommel while riding across country, which the rider must clear in the jump to get across fields. Superiorly hand crafted, the Over Harrier has a pigskin seat, oak back turned cowhide flaps and rich saddle pads, and affords heightened comfort and closer contact between rider and horse.

Photo credit: Frederic Dumas

Contact: Rex Lebar, Inc.
380 Fifth Avenue, Suite 510
New York, NY 10018
(212) 667-1711

Color slides are available upon request.

The Hermès business was catering to a very selected market like that of the aristocracy and royalty, as a result it had to find a way of promoting its name and reputation in places where it was less well known. The first person who may decisively take on this role was Emile-Maurice the third generation of the Hermès family. Emile, like his father, was a dedicated traditionalist, and had a great appreciation of fine things, in particular equestrian art. At the top of the Faubourg Saint Honoré ~~store~~, his father pays tribute to this, in a private museum dedicated to his passion for horse draw travel (Illustration 2).

It is crammed with an electric paraphernalia, of equestrian treasures, like the horse bit dating back to the eighteenth century BC and the heavy wooden box which once belonged to Don Pedro III, King of Spain and Emperor of Brazil, which opens to reveal his basic travelling toiletry requisites

(McEvoy, 1994-95 : 15)

But it was Emile-Maurice's entrepreneurial skills which were to distinguish them from one another as father and son. By the time Emile had reached his twentieth birthday he had travelled to many distant lands and embraced himself in a variety of cultures, he used this time not only to educate himself but used this period to promote Hermès products, samples of which he had carried along, and as a result he secured orders from it. Perhaps one of his most significant was that given to him from Czar Nicholas the II of Russia, he commissioned Hermès to craft the harnesses, bridles, and ceremonial saddles of the imperial guard. Hermès greatly depended on patronage of this kind, and this form of advertisement on behalf of Emile-Hermès helped to

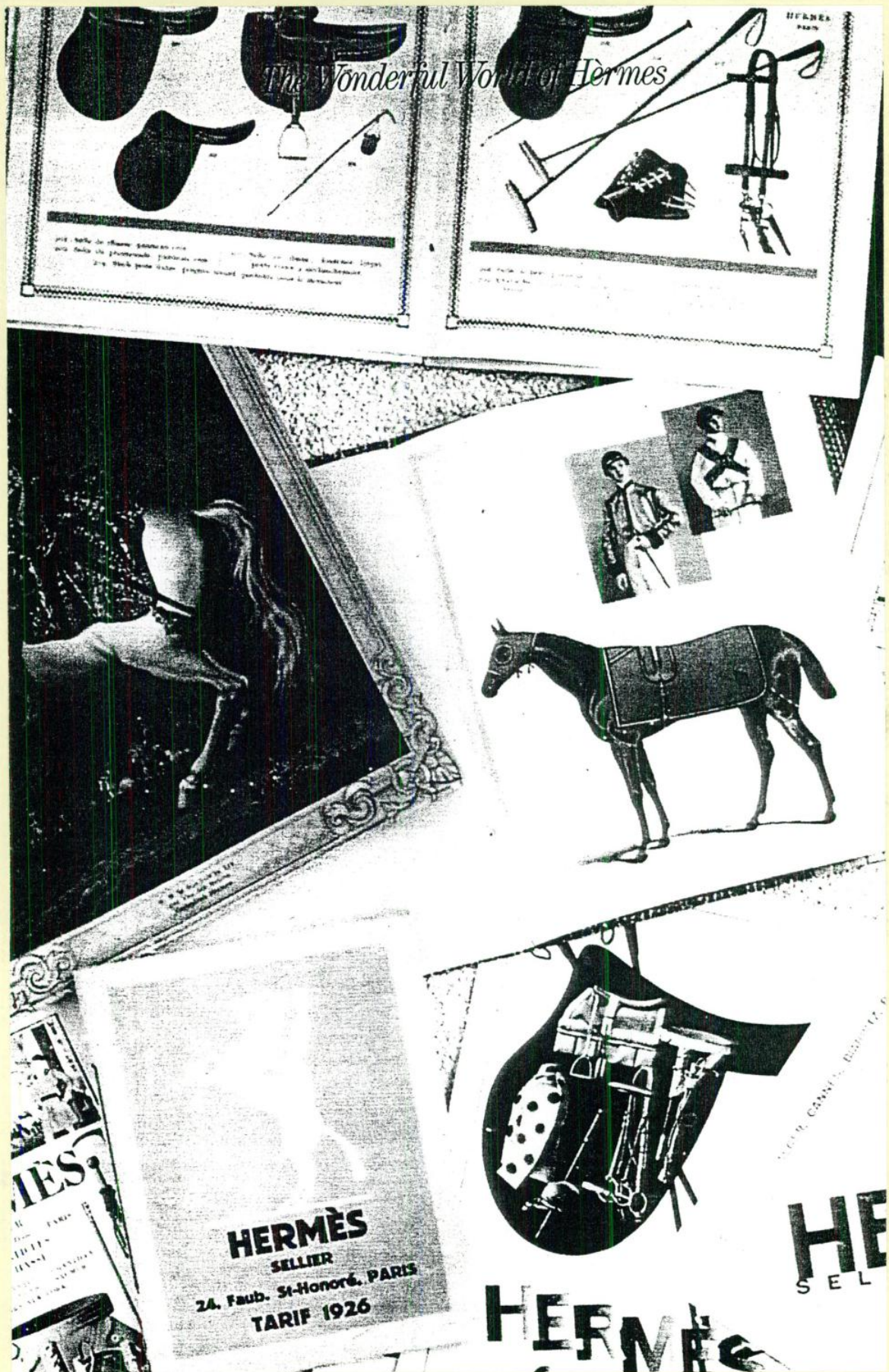
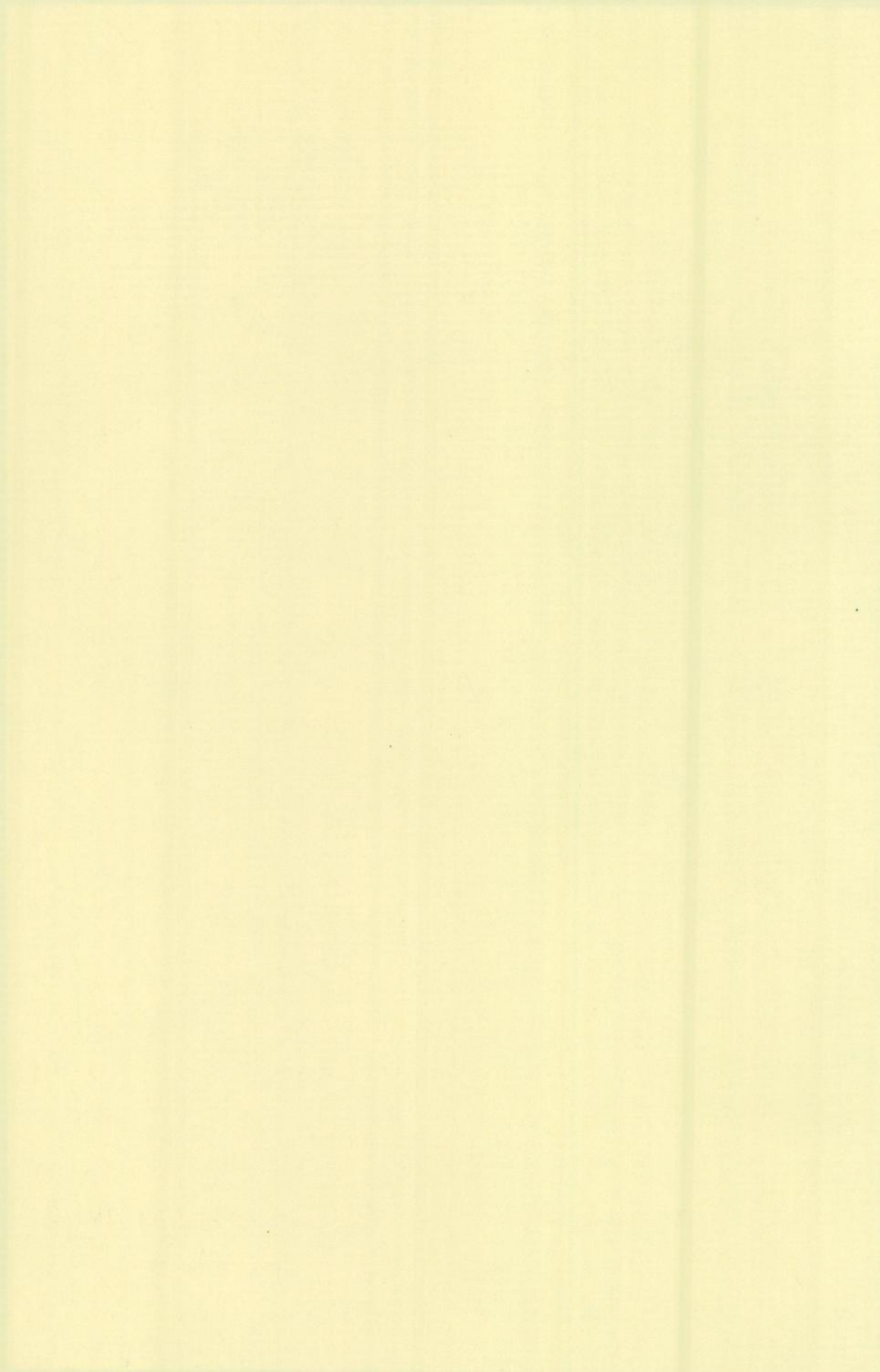


Illustration 2 Treasure from Hermès' equestrian museum in France



promote its craft. Today this form of marketing and salesmanship is more sophisticated and is taken on in the form of exhibitions such as trading exhibitions entitled 'A Scarf is Born' which will be discussed in the following chapter. These exhibitions are not only offering a commodity because they are advertised to viewers who may be potential clientele at the exhibitions, but to subtly publicise their lifestyle.

This type of promotional work which Emile-Maurice had done successfully, was at the turn of the century overshadowed for a while by the culmination of World War I. Not only was it a time of economical upheaval for Europe and Hermès' business it also greatly lessened the need for horse drawn travel which was taken over by the conveyance of the automobile.

Undaunted the house turned in a new direction and decided to utilise its two most powerful assets, leather and its skills at crafting it, setting Hermès on a path it has followed since, creating handbags, luggage, wallets and sporting equipment for the rich clientele who indulged in hunting, shooting, sailing and on a much more exotic role the safari. It also tailored certain made to measure garments for its sporting equipment.

Although the Hermès business had been altered, because of the appearance of the automobile, its values and tradition of quality still remained very much in evidence in this new production of exclusive leather accessories. The reputation it had build for itself in the grandiose days of the 1800s had established its name alongside royalty, it was because of this that Hermès' objective was still to market its products to what can be seen as a 'discriminating clientele'. The chance to

associate its name with a certain type of person was an important way of suggesting the type of clientele it wished to attract.

This type of 'dress association' appeared after one of Emile-Maurice Hermès' trip abroad. He had never lingered over the years in travelling and was always on the look out for new inventions. On a trip to Canada he saw *une fermeture à glissière*. He became so struck by its possibilities as a leather closure that he took out a two year patent on it and applied it creatively to a wide variety of designs. The dress association of it was made possible when Prince Edward VIII of England was spotted in 1918 wearing a Hermès made to measure zippered leather golfing jacket. Hermès' name was once again launched alongside royalty. From there it was a small step to zippered jodhpurs and ski jackets, and still in the sporting vein an exclusive line of gentlemen's swimwear, which were perfect for the Riviera set who had recently discovered the outdoor delights of the Côte d'Azur (Broome, 1994/1995 : 16). The appearance of Prince Edward VIII as a client greatly increased the prestigiousness of Hermès' relatively unknown exclusive accessory line.

After this success Hermès was ready to exploit other markets of accessorising in the late 1920s. Coco Chanel and Paul Poiret who were enjoying celebrity status for their clothes designs, used their name to sell a variety of other products such as fragrances, scarves and even interior design. So powerful had their name become that not only did they sell the clothes but the accessories to go with it, and in many ways they can be viewed as the precursors of today's designer label.

Hermès carefully viewed the success of these couturiers, it was not interested in competing with them on a fashion level, as it was not ready to break into that area until much later on in the 1960s. It was the way these couturiers had used its label to promote other products that had caught its interest.

Hermès' symbol of the coachman, carriage and horse which was a reflection of its ancestral past was now used as a crest and was indented on everything that was produced by the house which can be seen in Illustration 3 and 4. Today the Hermès label distinguishes its high profiled name from countless others and today it is a status symbol for those who wish to become part of the lifestyle.

Going on the success of its name Hermès began to expand on its accessories line. The Hermès silk scarf was first produced in 1937, and initially was produced to accessorise its sportswear, its popularity grew and today it is the most easily recognisable item produced by the House of Hermès. In 1951 Hermès offered its first fragrance and body lotion suitably named Caleche (Illustration 5), the French word for Carriage, which was used as a reminder to clientele of how great it was in the mid 1800s. Growing on the success of the women's silk scarf Hermès offered its male counterpart, the necktie in 1954. All of these products evoked aspects of the equestrian theme which their ancestors had become so enamoured by.

Hermès' personal relationship between house and patron, which had been established when it moved from wholesale to retail remained paramount, and a vital element to its business. The loyalty of its patrons and its growing popularity among them allowed it to open stores in several well-to-do areas of Europe.



Illustration 3 The Hermès Cape Cod Watch

THE HENRIE CAPE COD WATCH

From the exciting new Henrie watch collection, the sparkling contemporary Cape Cod is one of a variety of diverse innovative styles that reflect the creativity of the Henrie design team.

Note the company's renowned 18 Karat gold detailing. The charming contour and composition that is the worldwide symbol of the Henrie which is engraved on the back of all new Henrie watch designs.

Cape Cod is available in one size only. In sterling silver or yellow 18 Karat gold with diamonds if you desire. Prices range from \$1,500 for the silver Cape Cod to \$8,000 for the 18 Karat gold Cape Cod with diamonds.

Available at all Henrie boutiques or by phoning Henrie's Personal Shopping Service at 1-800-441-4444.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Red Lobster, Inc.
254 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10019
(212) 957-8711

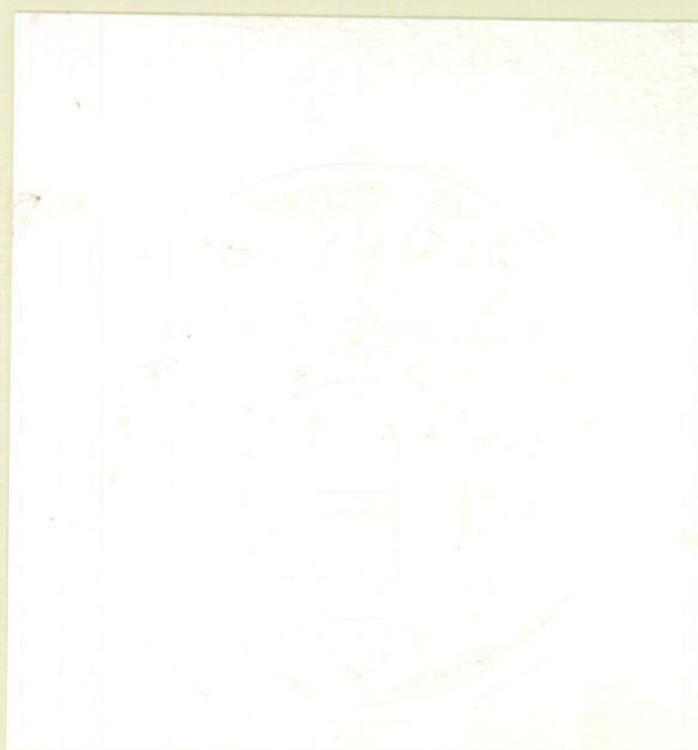


Illustration 4 The Hermès Crest

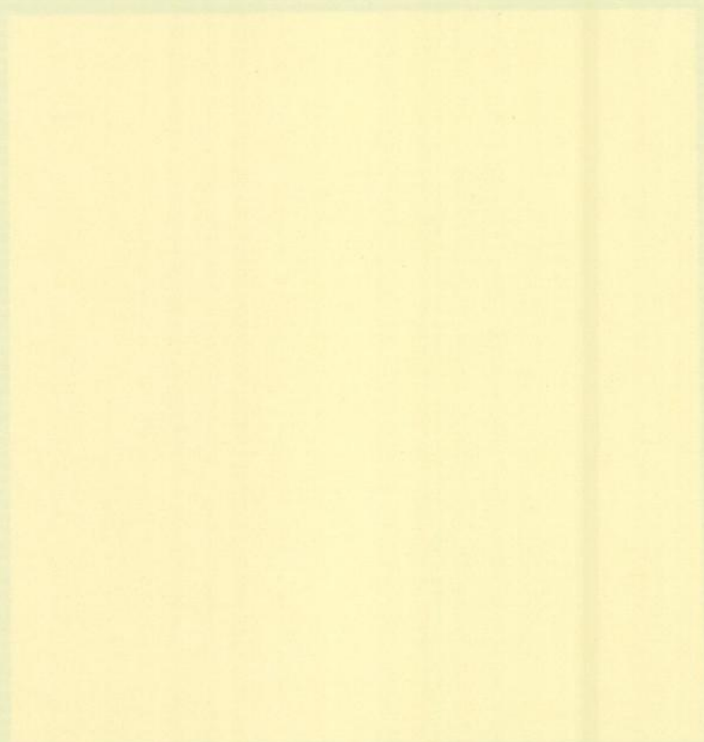




Illustration 5 The Calèche Bath and Bodyline from Hermès

THE CALÉCHE BATH & BODY LINE
A collection of fragrant essentials for today's women

The fourth generation of the family-run business, Robert Dumas, Jean Guerrand and Francis Peuch moved with their clientele and opened new stores "whenever the beau mode floated, Biarritz, Monte-Carlo, Deuville, Cannes, and eventually expanding to Switzerland, Britain, Germany and across the Pacific to Japan and Singapore" (Broome, 1994/95 : 16).

After its success in Europe it decided to exploit the American market to test its products out, it opened a small boutique at Lord and Taylor in New York in 1952. "The boutique's fixtures and fittings were made in France, and was very like the Faubourg store" (Greer, 1994). This shop carried the full range of Hermès products, its exquisite and elegant merchandise so enthralled retailers that they clamoured to have Hermès in its store.

The 1950s in America and Europe was a time of great prosperity for the company. People were keen to return to glamour after the drabness of the post war years. The silver screen like most times helped to popularise this, and it was film stars such as Grace Kelly and Audrey Hepburn who helped to promote Hermès' exclusive accessories in particular Hermès' leather bags and scarves. Grace Kelly was spotted with a Hermès leather bag, so ceremoniously Hermès renamed it 'Cadennas Kelly' after her. For Hermès she was a reflection of the ideal patron, just as Prince Edward had been when he was spotted wearing a Hermès sporting jacket in 1918.

In the 1960s Hermès decided to enter the rat race of the fashion world. Caroline de Caroli was appointed as head of womenswear collections. Her Paris ready to wear collections were seen by Bonwit and Teller the famous merchandiser, and

penario

he brought Hermès' Paris collection to New York for an exciting premier. She embodied the ideals of quality craftsmanship and materials that Hermès was famous for, such as leather, and combined them with sturdy tweeds which in turn made beautifully fabricated leather trimmed tweed jackets, then came women's jodhpurs and riding jackets. She then utilised the Hermès silk scarf designs and incorporated them into blouses. With Hermès' name already firmly established by its fashionable accessories and Caroline de Caroli's classic cuts, they became an instant success. But this success was short-lived.

By the early 70s people's attitudes and tastes in lifestyle had changed, it reflected a return to a more 'natural existence' and a reflection of the material wealth consumed after the 1950s. "Anything expensive smacked of the devil" (McEvoy, 1987 : 100). It was during this period that Hermès became almost completely dependent on its patrons. From 1972 to 1978 Hermès had a series of stores within stores in America called L'Monde d'Hermès. By the end of the 70s it would expand and open its own free standing boutiques.

The dawn of the 1980s heralded designer label, accessories like that produced by Hermès were back in fashion. Glamour and material wealth were the values of the early and late 1980s. The reason for Hermès' success was not just because it appeared to be a time of economic and political progression, but because the house had evolved under its current generation, Jean-Louis Dumas Hermès.

When J.L. Dumas took over the family business in 1978, he re-interpreted the Hermès image, with contemporary tastes in mind. Expanding on the fashion front Hermès began a menswear

line in 1988, Veronique Ninchanian was appointed to direct this debut. The success of tailoring that she enjoyed while working under Italian designer Nino Ceruti was now evident in the classical clotheswear that she created for Hermès. Both men and womenswear at Hermès became hugely successful, its look was decidedly traditional, in a classical way and Hermès collections were suitably dubbed country-classics. This look became enormously successful in the 1980s.

The way in which Hermès created a high quality name for craftsmanship of product and design and the concentration of those products in the echelons of upper society, indeed the status and prestige of a name such as Hermès enabled it to use its name for what is noted an even wider variety of products such as porcelain glass and silverware, and interior design.;

The fact that Hermès can continue to be run by members of the original founder helped keep a certain look and tradition throughout the century.

The association of upper society and the products themselves appeal to those who are not part of that society and is perhaps something which adds to the cachet with the growing consumer market of the 1980s, allied with high wages and an upwardly mobile society, it expanded the clientele of those who could afford Hermès products and also promoted associations with success.

CHAPTER 2 A SCARF IS BORN

Hermès' silk scarves, currently account for almost 50 per cent of the company's profits. Why is this so? In analysing a selection of the Hermès scarves we can establish where its embodiment of ideals and values were derived from. How have Hermès marketed its scarves? Are these scarves a reflection of practices and values which can be viewed as socially based?

The focus for this discussion will be based on 'A Scarf is Born' exhibition, which took place at Skinner's Appraisers and Auctioneers, Heritage on the Garden, Boston, June 13th 1994. At this exhibition more than one hundred Hermès silk scarves were put up for display. Scarves which date back as far as 1937 when the first Hermès silk scarf was produced.

The Hermès silk scarf is perhaps one of the most famous and popular scarves in the world, popularised in the 1950s by film stars such as Audrey Hepburn and Grace Kelly and today by diverse people as that of Grace Jones to the Queen of England. In France the scarf enjoys the role of national symbol of refined elegance.

Young Parisienne girls emerging from the Lycee beg Maman for Bride de gala en Rose, the pink version of one of Hermès' oldest design
(Broome, 1994 : 15).

The silk scarf throughout its sixty-three years of products is now more than ever before enjoying great popularity. They have become more popular with all ages, who are eager to have this designer label in their wardrobe.

In the past the scarf in general was not considered as part of a woman's wardrobe, at least not until the beginning of the twentieth century.

The Ballet-Russes added scarves to elongate its exotic ballets

Long draped pieces of fabric preferably silk added Chicness to slinky dresses and tailored outfits
(Baseman, 1989 : 20)

The surrealist movement and its manifestation of couturiers such as Elisa Schiaperrli and Paul Poiret began to adopt the scarf as an accessorising tool. All of which helped to popularise the scarf.

During the first world war the scarves were sent to wives from their servicemen, husbands or sweethearts because they were inexpensive gifts and relatively easy to mail. But very often these scarves indicated the battles and hardship of war. In the second world war they took on a more utilitarian use, when women used them to keep their hair out of their work, when they began to work in factories, the scarves were also used to add glamour to their unglamorous working clothes and place of work.

Whether the scarf was used to commemorate political or historical events or used to accentuate women's fashions, it must be seen as a powerful object of taste, style and culture of any given time. In this way the Hermès scarves will allow judgements and evaluations to be made about Hermès, not only about the imagery, but the way it uses it to attract certain and deliberate clientele.

The one overwhelming and almost claustrophobic element is that of the equestrian theme. It was in 1937 that Hermès produced the first of what was to become thousands of Hermès inspired scarf designs. They were 90 x 90 cm square and made of 100 per cent silk, which can cost up to £130 today. They have become a status symbol not only for those who can afford them, but with those who have sound expectations of acquiring one.

The 'A Scarf is Born' exhibition gives a unique insight not only to Hermès' scarves themselves but to that of the aesthetics upheld by this family run business. A past, which has a 151 year old tradition. These scarves are a visual reflection of those ideals and values.

A very subtle form of marketing and salesmanship is also presented at the exhibition, where not only the scarves are presented as commodities as to what is on offer. The fine art as presented in this exhibition of Hermès scarf making allows present representation¹⁶⁵ of the House of Hermès to market their scarves in a sophisticated way. It carefully uses its Lyons silk printers to discuss and explain the process involved in the making of a Hermès scarf. It then suitably screen prints a scarf to try and demonstrate this part of the process as in Illustration 6 and 7. After viewers have been impressed by the demonstration they are shown how to wear the famed scarf. A special events co-ordinator is on hand to demonstrate how to wear the scarf in a variety of artful ways, for example it can be worn as a bustier, a concertina, a wrap over skirt, and even a coat, as well as other ways of wearing it at the neck, Illustration 8 also shows this. So successful are these exhibitions that they are taken all around the world from Germany, Hong-Kong, Italy, London to Honolulu

Illustration 6

The scarves printed for demonstration -
Cavalier D'or, 1994

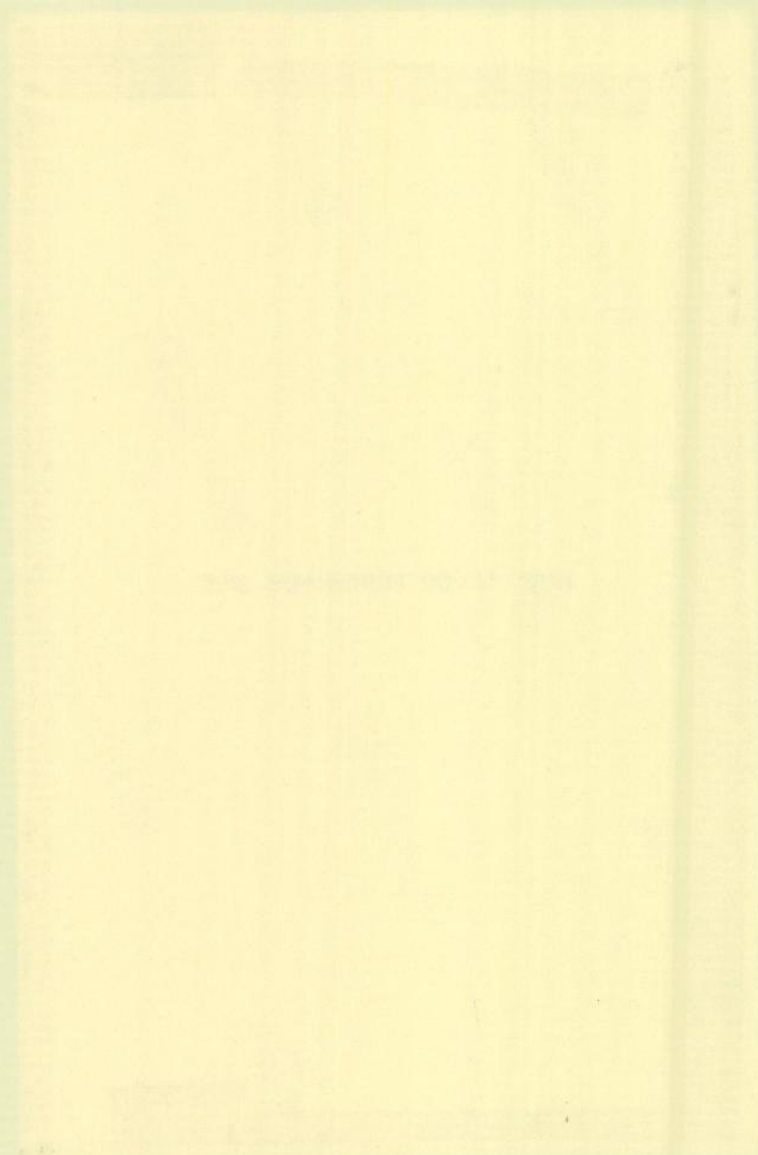


Illustration 7

Printer showing the screen printing process



Illustration 8 Special event co-ordinator showing the various ways to wear a Hermès scarf



and Boston to mention a small few. It is not only the famed scarves which are exhibited in this way, Hermès promotes other products like this such as Hermès watches - this time the exhibition displays the art making of a Hermès watch, as well as its designs and timeless classics. In Boston on the 12th, 13th, 14th of October 1992, such an exhibition took place, suitably named 'Time and Again'. And again on the 17th, 20th January of 1994 it held a 'Shoes is Born' exhibition at the Hermès Boutique, 22 Arlington Street, Boston which demonstrated the making of a Hermès-John Lobb shoe. It is clear that these exhibitions are vital to its success and allows it to re-iterate its craft that it already shows on a daily basis in over the two hundred stores it owns all over the world. A tradition which stems from the past when Emile Maurice went abroad with his products, which led to him securing orders for the firm.

A Scarf is Born

Owing to the enormity of scarves on display at the exhibition, I will focus only on a selection of scarves. These selected scarves are indicative of the ranges and variety of themes used by Hermès.

Two themes appear to dominate, primarily we see Hermès the glorified traditionalist and Hermès the cultured traveller. In general many of the scarves possess the same graphic-like style. Nothing about the scarves appears to be instinctive or spontaneous. The themes, colours and designs are all carefully considered, to the point where one feels it is overly contrived. Nothing is left to chance, everything is considered. Perhaps the

reason for this lies in the way Hermès scarves are produced, a Hermès scarf cannot be made quickly.

After a designer has started working with a theme, it takes around three or four months for a final pattern to be created and approved. Colour testing requires another three months and printing one month.

(Greer, 1994)

Screen printing is a process that requires a great deal of precision and craftsmanship, which must be upheld at all costs. The reputation Hermès has acquired over the years for its unique scarves, has much to do with using this screen printing process. To change these processes today and maybe use other forms of printing, such as devore, discharge or transfer printing (see Appendix) might not ensure a market it is already admired by. The screen printing used in the scarves is a Hermès trademark and in which it offers cultural and uncomplicated themes, like that of the equine theme. Nothing borders on the controversial edge. It is because of its conservatism and traditionalism that they have become fashionable again. This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Diane Greer, press agent for Hermès in Boston believes that these exhibition display "strikingly diverse themes" (Greer, 1994). I strongly disagree, there are only endless variations on the two themes I have already mentioned, such as Hermès the traditionalist and Hermès the cultural traveller. They may appear to be different because of a change in scale, colour, tone and arrangement of imagery, but they all stem from these themes. Is it lack of imagination or creativity? Surely this is unlikely as there are fifteen scarf designers at Hermès, or is it because it

wants to appeal to specific markets? The first scarf I will discuss is Jeu Des Omnibus et Dames Blanche, 1937, Illustration 9. This scarf is very significant in the exhibition not only because it was the first scarf produced by the house almost sixty-three years ago, but because it is the first visual association of the values of the House of Hermès, which were passed down to Hermès from its ancestors. Emile-Maurice Hermès was actively involved in the production and development of this line of scarves.

First he created the designs himself, then he assembled a team of artist - illustrators, a team that now numbers around fifteen.

(Greer, 1994)

This scarf was originally painted by hand from a woodcut, the motif was taken from a document depicting a popular board game of the eighteenth century and remains a worldwide favourite today. The depiction of the horse and carriage in the scarf, paying homage to its ancestral origins, when it served as the harness and saddlery makers to the gentry of the Rue du Fauborg St Hencre. In Illustration 10 this is shown in an updated version. Jeu Des Omnibus et Dames Blanche is not indicative of its time but of that of its ancestors in the eighteenth century.

Images are carefully placed in order to perform certain functions, for example three circles are employed in the square scarf, to stimulate your eye to move in a circular motion around the scarf, before your eye focuses on the central piece, allowing the viewer to appreciate all of the scarf in its entity. One of the many principles involved in scarf designing is to ensure that the eye does not become transfixed on the focal area, and that the eye should flow through the design from one end to another.



Illustration 9 "Jeu des Omnibus Et Dames - Blanche", 1937

(Courtesy of D. Greer, PR Hermès, Boston, June 1994)

"JEU DES OMNIBUS ET DAMES-BLANCHES"

"Jeu des Omnibus et Dames-Blanches" was Hermès' very first scarf, introduced in 1937 by Robert Dumas, the father of Jean-Louis Dumas, today's chairman of the House. Originally painted by hand from a woodcut, the motif was taken from a document depicting a popular board game of the 18th century and remains a worldwide favorite today.

"Jeu des Omnibus et Dames-Blanches" is one of a hundred scarves that will be on display at "A Scarf is Born," a retrospective showing of Hermès scarf designs created over the past half century.

For Information:

Diane Greer
Kortesshaus Communications
Nine Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 536-5352

PRINCE 34

Hermès' designers have incorporated this principle very skilfully, and makes you feel as if the horse, carriage and coachman are on a victorious race to get to the central area. The scarf is also well resolved in its layout, if the scarf was folded to be worn in any kind of way, enough of the design is left in evidence.

In this first scarf produced by Hermès we see how the beginning of their graphic-like style. A style of design which remains individualistic to Hermès today. This scarf was to provide a background knowledge to the Hermès family, future generations on the ways of styles and traditions which must be retained.

Memoire d'Hermès, 1986, Illustration 10

It is in this scarf that we see how the present generation at Hermès has remained faithful to its ancestors. It is also clear evidence of how little the House of Hermès has changed in its values. Again Hermès decided to return to the past to celebrate its future. The depiction of the horses and wonderfully ornate carriages of the eighteenth century, the richness of these carriages is also a reflection of Baroque tastes of the time.

At Versailles, the greatest of all palaces, Louis XIV made opulence the most overt and unmistakable symbol of his kinship. ()

This extravagance was also carried outside, into its carriages. It is here in Memoire d'Hermès that Hermès combines this Baroque style which is not only a reflection of the tradition but also of its culture. It combines this Baroque style with 1980s tastes in mind. The Baroque style became very popular in the 1980s.



Illustration 10 M'emoire d'Hermès, 1986



At the beginning of the 1980s people began to speak seriously of the imminent demise of the Modern Movement, although reports were premature there could be no doubt that a most profound cultural shift was in progress
(Calloway, 1994 : 80)

Hermès recognised this and elements of Baroque twists and curves are evident in quite a number of the scarves such as Cosmos.

Hermès also draws inspiration from the other great places of art, in *M'emoire d'Hermès* shows how Hermès draws inspiration from Renaissance art, which can be seen in the depiction of these Renaissance cherubs, as part of the carriage. Raphael used cherubs like these in his art, such as those in the *Madonna Cistine*. The cherub is a 'deep symbol' that has been meaningfully used at different times by different cultures (Nagel, 1994 : 14). The cherub is used here as part of the celebration of all great art, like Baroque art, Renaissance art and Hermès art.

In *M'emoire d'Hermès* we can see how Hermès has advanced technically since *Jeu Des Omnibus et Dames Blanche*. Its graphic imagery is more defined, Hermès incorporates a variety of people to ensure that every stage in making the scarf is carefully controlled, engravers, designers, colourists and printers all help in the making of the Hermès scarf. No barriers are held in the pursuit of excellence which has become its trademark. The coloration, printing and finishing techniques as well as production of the Hermès scarf are explained in the appendices. The brilliance of colour for which Hermès has become noted worldwide is because of its excellent printing facilities and vegetable based dyes to facilitate the dying of the scarf before the finishing process. Hermès constructed what is

now the largest printing table in the world, all 152 metres of it. This helps them to produce two scarf collections each year with six new designs, six re-editions in totally new colour schemes and a re-introduction of twenty classic designs. A choice of around 320 scarves, thirty to forty per collection, each in around eight different colours, is made available in stores each year.

Many Hermès scarves incorporate up to thirty or forty colours. Most other scarf designers perhaps use only up to ten, fifteen or even twenty colours and that is for expensive scarves. This abundance of richness of colour in itself makes Hermès scarves exclusive.

The imagery is used very effectively in M'emoire d'Hermès. The background silhouettes echoing the horse and carriage are repeated several times. The integration between the background and foreground allowing the design to knit together, which makes this design very successful. The skill of the designer must not be overshadowed.

Feaux D'artifice, 1987, Illustration 11

This scarf demonstrates the skill of the designer. Again we see the appearance of circles which is incorporated here to add movement as it was in Jeu Des Ombibus et Dames Blanche. This time the circles are altered slightly, by incorporating four smaller circles in each corner of the silk square and a larger circle framing the boundaries of the centrepiece. Touches of navy blue



Illustration 11 "Feaux-D'artifice"

(Courtesy of Greer, D. PR Hermès Boston, June 1994)



and bright yellow are taken from the centre square frame and incorporated in alternating navy blue and yellow stripes in the inner part of the circle. This helps to balance the weight of colour and to add movement to this very stiff imagery like that of the depiction of the eighteenth century horseman and his fireworks in this scarf. Again we see the company of Hermès returning to its ancestral origins for inspiration in particular the horse. So enchanted is Hermès by the horse that it celebrated 1993 as year of the horse and in commemoration of this it mounted L'amour du Cheval Exhibition (Illustration 12). This exhibition embraced work of exceptional object d'art, an extraordinary example of horse craftsmanship that express the unique and intimate relationship between Hermès and the horse. Further evidence of Hermès' lasting love of the horse in Hermès' private museum above the Hermès Boutique in Rue Faubourg St. Honoré, Paris, which is dedicated to the era of horse-drawn travel and most serve as a rich inspiration for designers at Hermès. Hermès' famous leather saddlery feature frequently at horse shows, which glorify the beauty, elegance and skill of the horse, the rider and Hermès' craftsmanship.

L'amour du Cheval gives a unique insight to see the hand worn tools of the old ateliers that have been cut, sews, forged for harnesses, saddles and blankets
(Greer, 1994).

The royal pageantry focused on the horse through the elaborate trappings of bits, buckles, stirrups, and collars must have been enormous. One can certainly sense the pageantry in Memoire d'Hermès and Feaux D'artifice when the horses are actually depicted and also when the horses memorabilia are evoked.



Illustration 12 Sketch on fabric of a groom presenting the collar to the horse from *Conduite enguide*, driving with long reins, 1889, and etching of partially clothed horse, from *L'amour du Cheval* exhibition

(Courtesy of Greer, D. PR Hermès, Boston, June 1994)

Struck on photo of a groom presenting the collar to the horse, from *Companion* photo.

Driving with Long Reins, 1899, and riding of partially clothed horse (shown with no saddle, only tack and blinkers). Photo: *Hermès L'Annuaire du Cheval* Exhibition.

Photo credit: Alan Cox

Contact: Lynne Kortstam
Lynne Kortstam & Associates
9 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02416
617 536-5352

Additional Public Relations:

Box 1, 1234, Inc.
375 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10018
212 957-1711

Box 1, 1234, Inc.
Herald of Paris, Inc.
745 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10151
212 759-7385

Hermès has used the equestrian theme endlessly in the past as they do today. When not obviously depicting the horse, it uses imagery associated with it. This is seen quite clearly in Hermès; 1994 porcelain collection *Cacarde de Soie* (Illustration 13). Here the equestrian world is evoked rather than depicted. The motifs are taken from *Ruban du Cheval* scarf design. The horse is not seen but suggested through a rosette of motifs which literally adorn all of its twenty-three pieces. In Hermès; gold and silver jewellery for the 1994 collection, bracelets have saddle studs and rings, buckles, carefully and subtly suggesting the equine theme. Other equestrian inspired designs include men's ties which include a compromise between fanciful and classical horses such as *Cheval à Basculè*, picturing a charming small rocking horse, *Cheval Attachè*, depicting hitched horses and in *Ecuire* we see the lodgings created for the horse (Illustration 14). Men and women's wear at Hermès also draw inspiration from this theme, silk skirts and coats in side saddle style, sensational leathers all of which help to create a country-casual look.

Hermès de Veneriè 1964 (Illustration 15)

In this scarf we do not see the horse but depictions of a hunting scene, which is usually associated with the aristocratic, who used hunting as a form of enjoyment. Circles are incorporated again this time, but for a different reason, this time they are incorporated as part of the story of deer hunting. Primarily we see the hounds picking up on the scent of the deer,



Assiette américaine Ø 27,5 cm
American dinner plate Ø 11 in.
Teller flach Ø 27,5 cm
Piatto piano Ø 27,5 cm



Assiette à pain Ø 16 cm
Bread/Butter plate Ø 6 in.
Brotteller flach Ø 16 cm
Piatto da pane Ø 16 cm

Assiette européenne Ø 25,5 cm
European dinner plate Ø 10 in.
Teller flach Ø 25,5 cm
Piatto piano Ø 25,5 cm

Assiette calotte Ø 19 cm
Deep cereal plate Ø 8 in.
Teller tief Ø 19 cm
Ciotola Ø 19 cm



Assiette dessert Ø 21 cm
Dessert plate Ø 8.5 in.
Dessertteller flach Ø 21 cm
Piatto da frutta Ø 21 cm

Assiette à gâteaux Ø 19 cm
Salad/Cake plate Ø 7.5 in.
Kuchenteller flach Ø 19 cm
Piatto piano da dolce Ø 19 cm



Tasse déjeuner + soucoupe 50 cl
Breakfast cup + saucer 17 oz
Frühstücktasse + Untertasse 50 cl
Tazza colazione con sottopiatto 50 cl



Tasse thé + soucoupe 20 cl
Tea cup + saucer 7 oz
Tee/Kaffeetasse + UT 20 cl
Tazza te con sottopiatto 20 cl



Tasse café + soucoupe 10 cl
Coffee cup + saucer 5 oz
Kaffee/Mokkatasse + UT 10 cl
Tazza caffè con piatto 10 cl



Verseuse (grand modèle) 125 cl
Large Tea/Coffee pot 45 oz
Kaffee oder Teekanne 12 pers. 125 cl
Caffettiera o teiera 12 pers. 125 cl



Verseuse (petit modèle) 95 cl
Small Tea/Coffee pot 35 oz
Kaffee oder Teekanne 6 pers. 95 cl
Caffettiera o teiera 6 pers. 95 cl



Sucrier 25 cl
Sugar bowl + lid 8.5 oz
Zuckerdose 25 cl
Zuckerier 25 cl



Crémier 20 cl
Cream jug 10 oz
Giesser 20 cl
Lattiera 20 cl



Plat à tarte Ø 31 cm
Large cake platter Ø 12.5 in.
Tortenplatte rund Ø 31 cm
Piatto per torta Ø 31 cm



Plat à gâteaux Ø 28 cm
Eared cake plate Ø 11 in.
Kuchenplatte rund Ø 28 cm
Vassoio dolce Ø 28 cm



Plat ovale 39 cm
Oval serving platter 16 in.
Platte oval 39 cm



Plat rond creux Ø 30 cm
Round deep dish Ø 11 in.
Platte rund und tief Ø 30 cm



Plat rond plat Ø 30 cm
Round flat dish Ø 11 in.
Platte rund flach Ø 30 cm



Ravier
Oval pickle dish
Beilaveschale

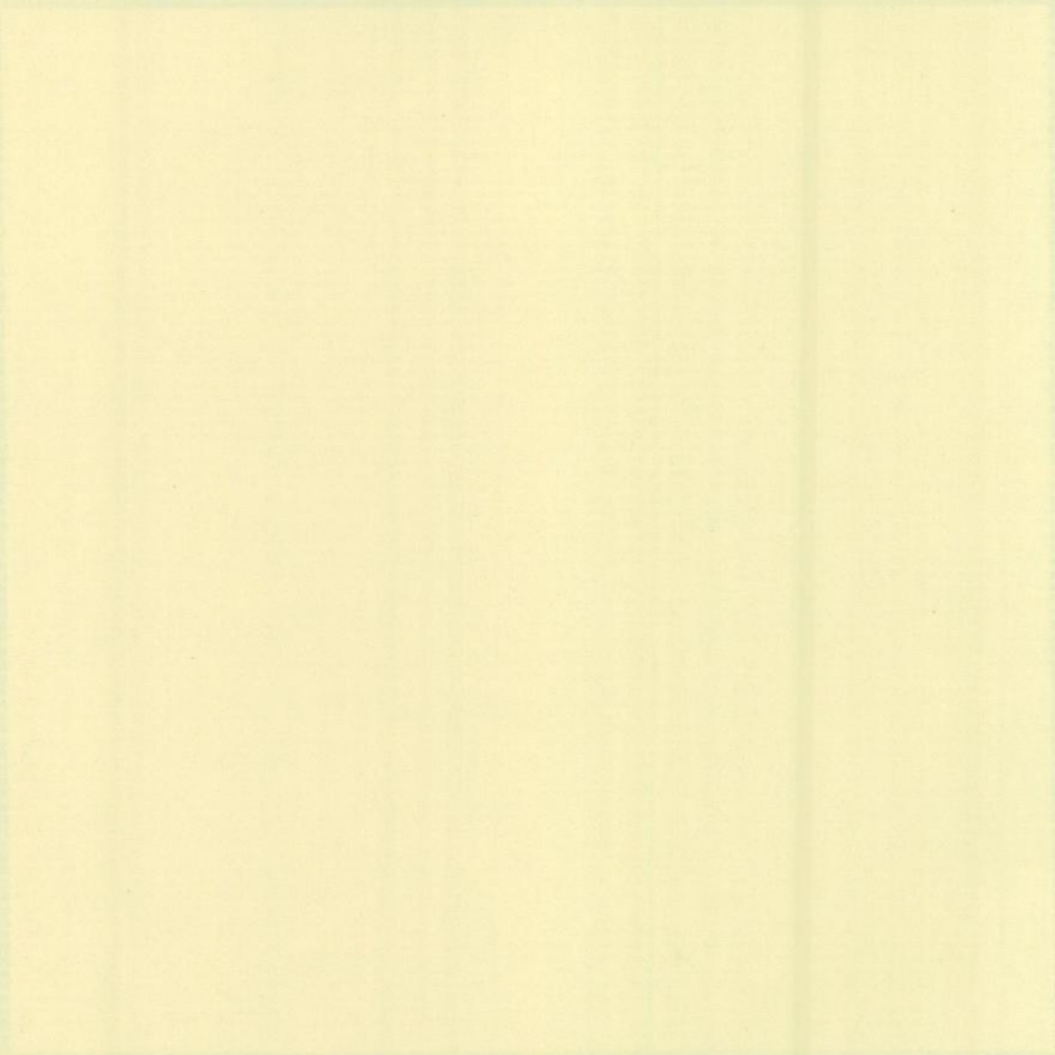
Illustration 13 Hermès - Corcarde De Soie



Illustration 14 Ecuries, 1993



Illustration 15 Hermès de Veneriè



we then see the frightened deer running for its life from the hounds and hunters, and eventually we see it dead. This sport so often enjoyed by the royalty and upper class is a time honoured tradition. The scarf is an offer of tradition and culture and an embodiment of the country look mentioned previously. One which was to become very popular in the 1980s which will be dealt with extensively in the following chapter.

Let us now investigate how Hermès "the Traveller" markets itself in different cultures?

Les Cheyennes, 1993 (Illustration 16)

"This scarf symbolises the interdependence of the native American tribe and its mounts" (Greer, 1994). It is here that we see the equestrian art of Hermès used to pay tribute to the saddlery and other horse inspired arts and crafts of the native Americans. Les Cheyennes is a painting by Texan artist Kermit Oliver. The scarf is barely recognisable not only because it is painted very realistically, but because it is mounted in a black frame as are all of the Hermès scarves at the exhibition. Are they to be viewed as paintings? After all the exhibition is about the fine art of Hermès scarf making and must be viewed as such or do they feel that by framing the scarves it lends them more credibility and then taken more seriously by the public? It is in Les Cheyennes that we see Hermès bordering between fine art of painting and textile design, which artists in the past have done. The most famous of them being Zisa Ascher who commissioned artists such as Cocteau, Moore and Matisse



Illustration 16 Les Cheyennes

LEE CHAPMAN

Harpur Collection "The Year of the Flower" with Lee Chapman and a veritable rainbow
come to life. Created by Kenneth Cole, Harpur's first American designer, the scarf
symbolizes the interdependence of this native American tribe and its Indians. Lee
Chapman print is also available for men as a vibrant, minimalist t-shirt, a silk twill scarf
shirt and vest, and for women as silk shirts and blouses.

Contact: Lee Lohar, Inc.
335 Fifth Avenue, Suite 510
New York, NY 10013
(212) 987-1711

Color slides are available upon request.

to produce scarf designs for couturiers such as Chanel and Dior. The appearance of the famous name of these artists were thought to be enough to sell the scarf and for a time it did but it eventually died out. Hermès do not need to commission famous artists to do designs for itself, its own name, is quite famous enough to sell its product as well as other related products. The distinction is that Hermès uses a certain type of artist in Les Cheyennes, a Texan artist. The commission of a relatively unknown artist like Kermit Oliver is part of Hermès' skilful marketing and salesmanship. His nationality is carefully advertised to the American market, he is also employed because of his knowledge of the plight of the American Indians as well as the American market. Beth Ruban PR for Hermès in New York says that

They do not have designers for specific markets, that they can be worn, by anyone, in any place
(Ruban, 1994)

While this may be indeed true, it is also true to say that history of the native American Indians and the colours used in the scarf of Les Cheyennes are more likely to appeal to the American market, than for instance an Irish or English market.

At Hermès it does not openly admit to exploiting certain markets, it might take away from its exclusivity.

In Hermès' catalogue entitled *Love Letters in Silk* or in French *Carrès de Voyage* 1994, a variety of silk scarves are on display, which supposedly recall fascinating, foreign and oriental destinations. But in reality it is just a chance for them to exploit other cultural markets like some daring adventure setting off

across continents, turned by the will of the client, Hermès embarked on a world tour. The function here is now less to secure orders and what more appropriate way is there than to depict national symbols and imagery associated with a specific culture as in Les Bonnes Jours de Bonnet, Givenchy and Indiennes.

Les Bonnes Jours de Bonnet (Illustration 17)

This scarf carefully illustrates the when designers at Hermès arrange a much loved symbol of Japanese culture (the bonnet) and employ it several times in the design. The scarf is harmoniously arranged in a minor repeat and it well resolved in design terms. Hermès is careful to use imagery that will not irritate or offend those people in any way. It offers a combination of a known loved and appreciated symbol of Japanese culture and the skill and quality and of course price of the Hermès scarf. Decoration is minimal in the scarf design which is also in keeping with its minimalist dress sense, which are all carefully researched as part of their marketing techniques.

Givenchy (Illustration 18)

In this scarf Hermès conjures up images of Claude Monet's Japanese garden in France. Claude Monet wrote in

1893

Illustration 17 Les Beaux Jour des Bonsai, 1992

LES BEAUX JOURS DES BONSAÏ

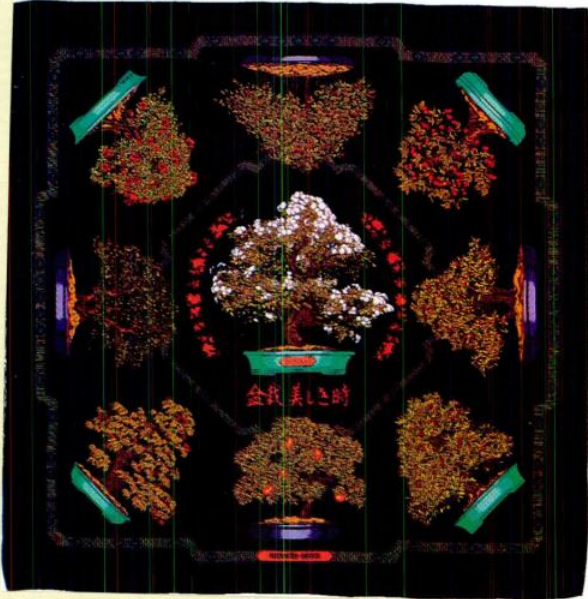


Illustration 18 Giverny, 1994

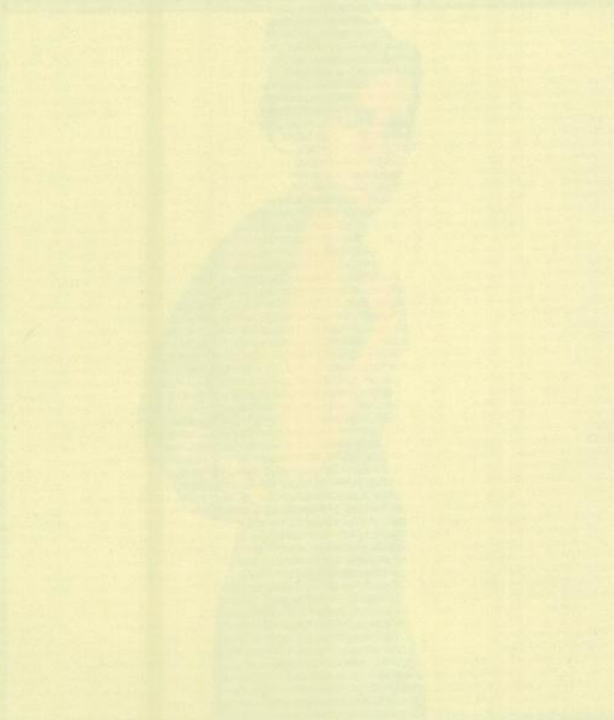
GIVERNY



FANTAISIES INDIENNES



Illustration 19, Fantaises Indiennes, 1993



"Giverny is a wonderful place for me." Giverny remained Monet's base for the rest of his life, a haven which he constantly referred to, his trips to Holland, and the Normandy.

(Mathieu, 1987 : 136)

Giverny is a place of particular love and interest to the French, it was the place where their beloved Claude Monet worked from most of his life until his death. The Giverny depicted in this Hermès scarf acknowledges the beauty and splendours of the place in its array of pastel colours. The layout of the design is typically Japanese in its appearance. Maybe the design then could also appeal to the Japanese market and Hermès would have successfully exploited both the French and Japanese targets. The arrangement of the design is very interesting, again a circle is incorporated, this time more subtly. This time the circle helps to link all areas of the design together, as in each opposing panel, the small side bridges also help to bring the design together and ultimately adding to the harmony of the scarf.

In **Fastaisies - Indiennes** (Illustration 16) we see Hermès marketing towards the Indian market, the symbols of India are introduced, the tree of life and at the foot of it two peacocks. Animals appear in abundance, the sacred elephant, the camel and not least that of the horse. The scarf is full of the riches and opulence of the oriental world. The imagery used in the scarf pays a striking resemblance to Illustration 20 Palanpore. It is interesting to note that Hermès is selling this look to the Indian Eastern market, when in the eighteenth century travellers from the East brought back these exotic cotton floral designs. They

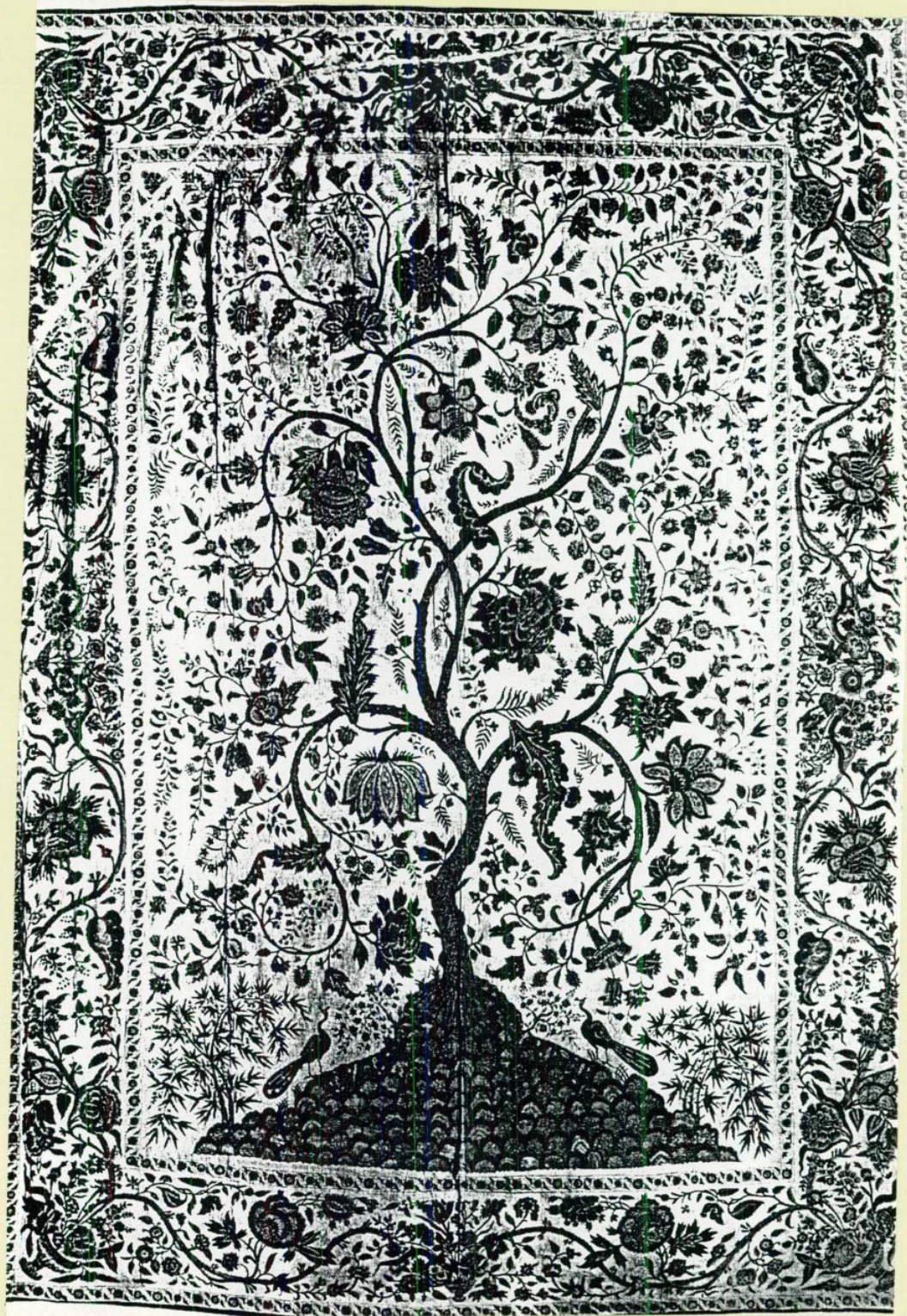
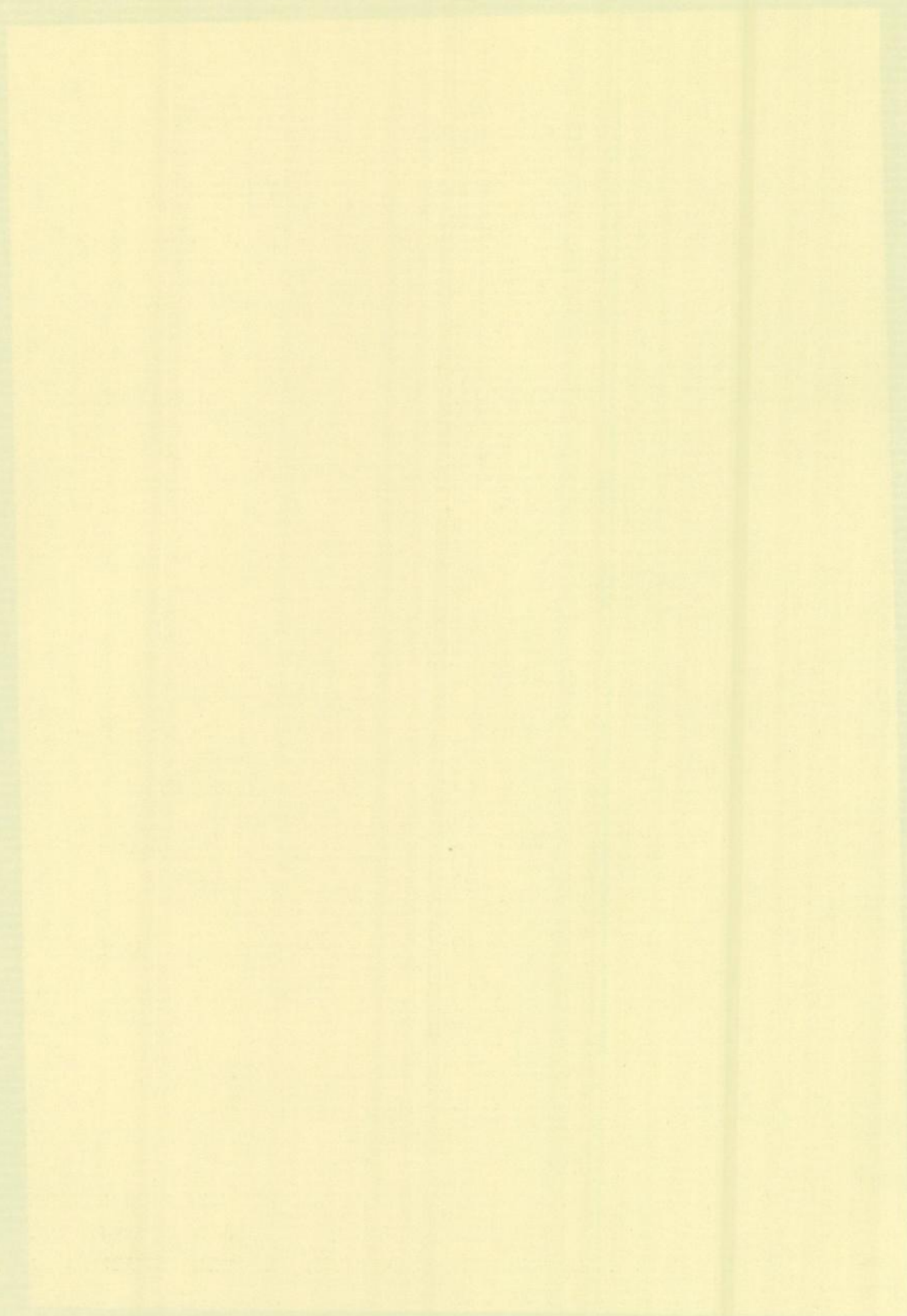


Illustration 20 Palampore (painted and dyed cotton) made for the European market during the first half of the eighteenth century.

(Courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto)



came as quite a shock to European society and they began to import these cottons from East Indian companies.

It is true to say that while these scarves will appeal to a particular culture more than another they will also appeal to people perhaps of a certain ethnic group for example Japanese who may live in another country such as America (America because of the abundance of ethnic groups) and therefore widening their market even wider, which truly shows the skill of the Hermès marketing. What other markets do they appeal to?

Cosmos, 1994 (Illustration 21)

The scarf depicted in illustration²¹ demonstrates how Hermès uses its mythological type setting to appeal to a more youthful clientele. Hermès designer store altered the surroundings of the horse to suit its market target, yet again. It is in Cosmos that we see for the first time the horse not depicted in its stereotypical settings such as Feaux D'artifice, Les Cheyennes, etc.

The title Cosmos refers to

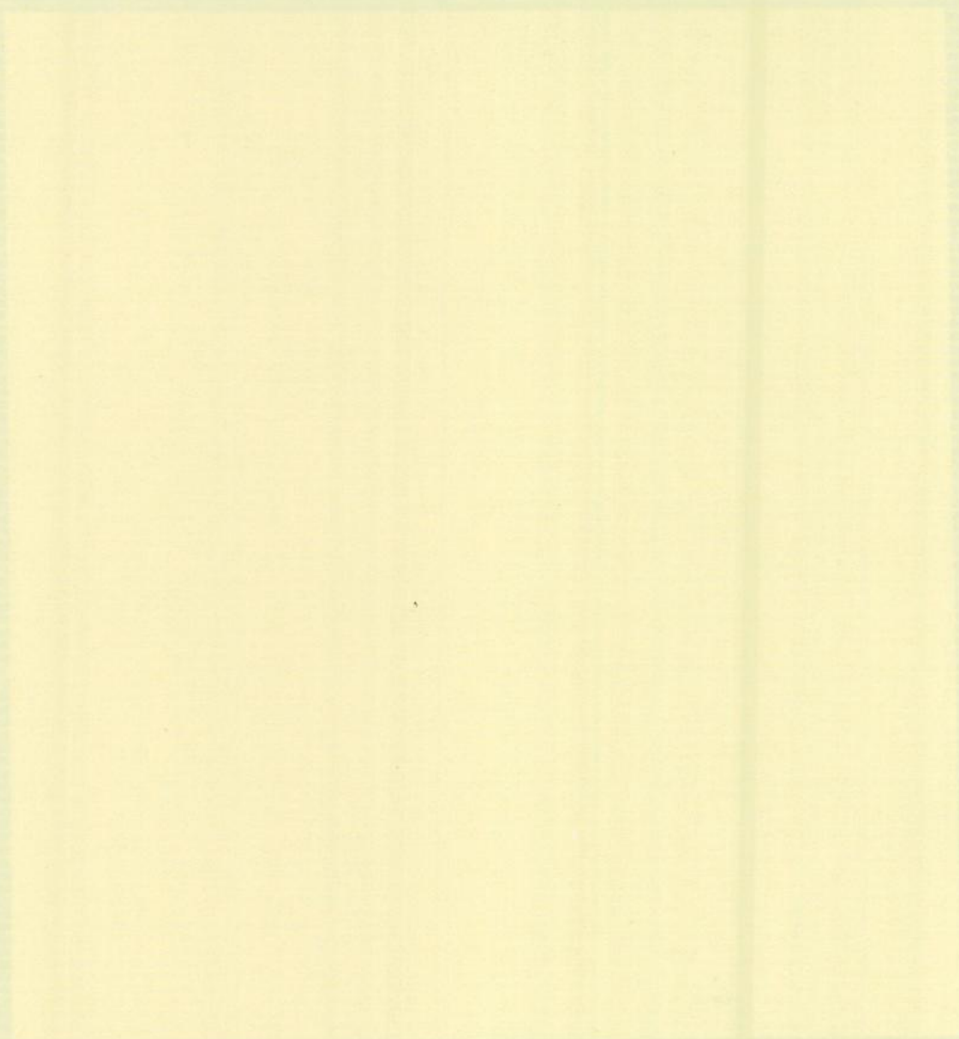
everything in creation from the smallest atoms to the most distant celestial bodies, the ancient Greeks originated the term. In theory the Cosmos was a well ordered and harmonious system, the earth, sun and planets made up their Cosmos

(*World Book Dictionary Field Enterprise, USA, 1977 : 854*)

It is from this that we now know that Hermès has decided to draw inspiration from the classicism of Greek times.



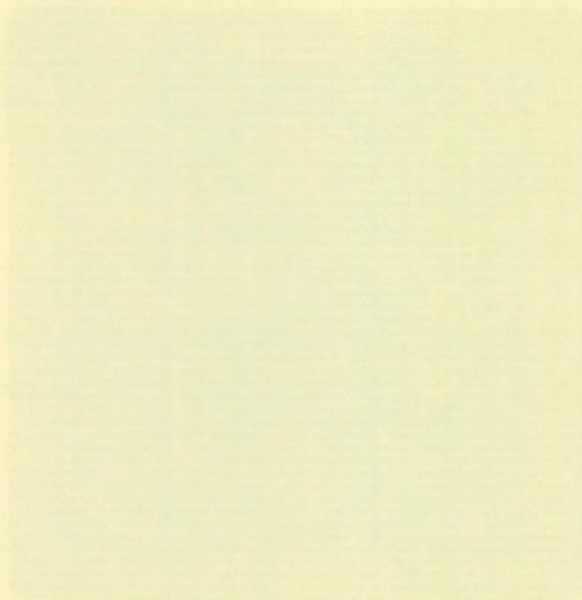
Illustration 21 Cosmos, 1994





Cosmos Design 94

GRAND MANÈGE



Summer, 1844, somewhere.

How matter the weather.

You've at least tried to trade for a new of some sort do
specific or other goods. You want to find out how to
keep your mind on the matter to find a friend
I'd like to see you do this.

A.

From the square school in America, the weather is
from riding horses.

A jumping of the air, or maybe my return to you, returned me
to a full and full, you'd like to be. I don't want to be
replaced together. You can put a picture on the wall and
and hang up a picture of your sign.
Oh, to be in your old days.

B.

END OF THE

The importance of the horse is not lessened here for in Greek times they were valued for their beauty and intelligence as well as their strength in fighting.

Certainly one feels that there is a physiological, spiritual and even mystical understanding between the man and horse

(Greer, 1994)

The diffusion of colour is very carefully controlled in the background of the scarf, which gives the impression that you are in some unknown galaxy. Circles are again incorporated to add to this movement. The combination of imagery and motifs in each corner together with a decorative centrepiece balance this mirror repeat design.

In Cosmos the decoration of swirls and twist are also reminiscent of Baroque art. In Illustration 21 Hermès combines its mythological Greek setting and Baroque twists and curves

Historically Baroque is a style in architecture, decoration and the decorative arts, the Baroque grew out of the intellectual conceits and bizarre visual excess of the mannerist phase of the late Renaissance, bringing a new and unparalleled vigour equally to religious and secular art and architecture

(Calloway, 1994 : 91)

In Memoire d'Hermès (Illustration 10) Hermès carefully combines traditions of its past namely from the days when the serial, with Baroque art. The richness of these carriages are a reflection of Baroque tastes.

At Versailles the greatest of all palaces, Louis XIV made opulence the most overt and unmistakable symbol of his kinship

(Calloway, 1994 : 90)

Hermès used this extravagant style as an embodiment of its own style as well as culture. It also draws inspiration from the other great places of art. The cherubs which feature as part of the carriage in Memoire d'Hermès may be derived from Renaissance art. Raphael's used cherubs in his art

the cherub is a deep symbol that has been meaning full used, at different items by different cultures.
(Cherubs - Angels of Love - Alexander Nagel, Thames and Hudson, 1994)

This Baroque style became very popular in the 1980s.

At the beginning of the 1980s people began to speak seriously of the imminent demise of the modern movement, although reports were premature there could be not doubt that a most profound cultural shift was in progress.
(Calloway, 1994 : 90)

This shift was back to a more traditional style such as ^{The} Baroque, Hermès recognised this, and although Hermès alter its theme^s to attract its name to a particular market, such as cultural. It always employs the same values and principles for each one. Many retain the same graphic-like style, many employ the equestrian theme, it is these two unmistakable characteristics which is typical of a Hermès scarf.

Hermès also uses certain elements of a given particular culture such as a romanticised Indian in Les Cheyennes to appeal to a specific cultural market.

This analysis of the two thematic forms of the scarf show that there are lots of references to historical sources, but each time it is a reflection of a past opulent society which is clearly shown in both Memoire d'Hermès, and Cosmos.

CHAPTER 3

CACHET OF LUXURY OR STATUS SYMBOL

A discussion and analysis on the connotations of Hermès' equestrian theme in relation to its scarves is undertaken in this chapter. Clotheswear and other related products ^{se} have become a status symbol for those who wish to obtain the Hermès lifestyle. Primarily my discussion will look at the factors leading to Hermès' success in the 1980s, when sales rose from 33 million in 1978 to over 260 million at the beginning of this decade.

The early years of the 1970s as I have already mentioned, proved to be a difficult era for Hermès to sell its luxurious products. The political and economic mores of the time influenced people to supply from the designer label. The reason for the rejection of luxury products was due mainly to the fact that society in general appeared to becoming overmerchanised, after the period of increased production after the war years. Many people identified with the handcrafts as a return to a more natural existence.

The status had been changed by many looks the most popular being the flower child and ethnic looks. Natural fabrics such as silks and cottons were pushed aside by new easycare synthetics. Jeans ^{what} and T-shirts ^{the} and dark colours were in Hermès style was out. Women's lib was at its height, but not the kind of liberation Hermès offered. Hermès' luxurious silk scarves and chic fashion accessories were at odds with society's ills. There were many reasons, that is disillusionment with the Vietnam war, the Watergate scandal, the great oil crisis, the rise of terrorism, increased drug taking and major recessions. Hermès' once exclusive production of leather, snake, crocodile, lizard, calf and

frog skin also made them hugely unpopular with animal rights activists. It was during this period that Hermès relied almost exclusively on its patrons. This fashion revolution lasted well into the late 70s until like all fashions died away. The dawn of the 1980s was to alter the damaging effects they had incurred in the last decade. Jean Louis Dumas Hermès took over from his father Robert-Dumas in 1978. Under his new aegis new lines were added such as porcelain, glass, the men's fragrance Bel Ami and Equipe, sales outlets sprung up in exotic locations from Palm Springs to Singapore, his appointment as company president of Hermès significantly helped in increased sales. Jean Louis Hermès noticed how stylish Parisiennes were beginning to experiment with Kenzo, Montana and Versace's fashions. The Hermès clothing industry had been before 1981 anything but stylish and in the main appealing to great aunts and middle aged women, it came up with

beautifully fabricated leather trimmed jackets, but the accompanying skirts were more matronish than modern.
(*Connoisseur*, 1987 : 99).

Jean Louis Hermès decided he did not want to appeal to just a few middle aged and loyal patrons. He also wanted to appeal to his cosmopolitan contemporaries. It was as if he wanted to keep one classically booted foot firmly in the past, whilst the other fashionably toyed with the future.

To appeal to this new and unfamiliar crowd, Hermès hired Eric Beligerè, a young graduate from the Esmond School of Fashion Design in Paris. Jean-Louis Hermès wanted Bergère to provide a re-interpretation of Hermès, while remaining faithful to

its spirits and traditions. "To set off a few bombs while remaining faithful to the terrain" (*Connoisseur*, 1987 : 100). Bergerè was carefully selected because of his disciplined chic, traditional style and integral quality. Bergerè brought Hermès into the fashion world of the 80s, Bergerè's collections included suede separates, bra tops made out of Hermès silk scarves, outrageous jodhpurs in all colours and fabrics. He lined sophisticated satin knotted Hermès scarves on and around every possible appendage as he still does today in Illustration 23 by using the Carpe Diem scarves.

Other successful fashion designers of the time such as Gianni Versace also use its scarf design to incorporate into its clothes wear which can be seen in Illustration 24. Versace like Hermès gave silk shirts a new lease of life for both mens and women's wear. Versace's inspiration for prints came from a variety of sources, old style Rome, geometric shapes and pattern, art deco, opart, but Versace is ultimately Baroque in his fashion thinking, he loves ambiguity, fantasy, he loves to renew old styles by writing apparently opposite and contrasting elements, whereas Hermès is classical in its thinking even when it uses Baroque elements, this is perhaps most clearly seen in M'emoir d'Hermès and Cosmos, which were previously mentioned in Chapter 2. In contrast to this Versace is Baroque even when he is classical, that is of course when the social moment leans towards a return to simplicity or tradition which is when his inspiration seems to be based on a revisited classicism or romantic element.



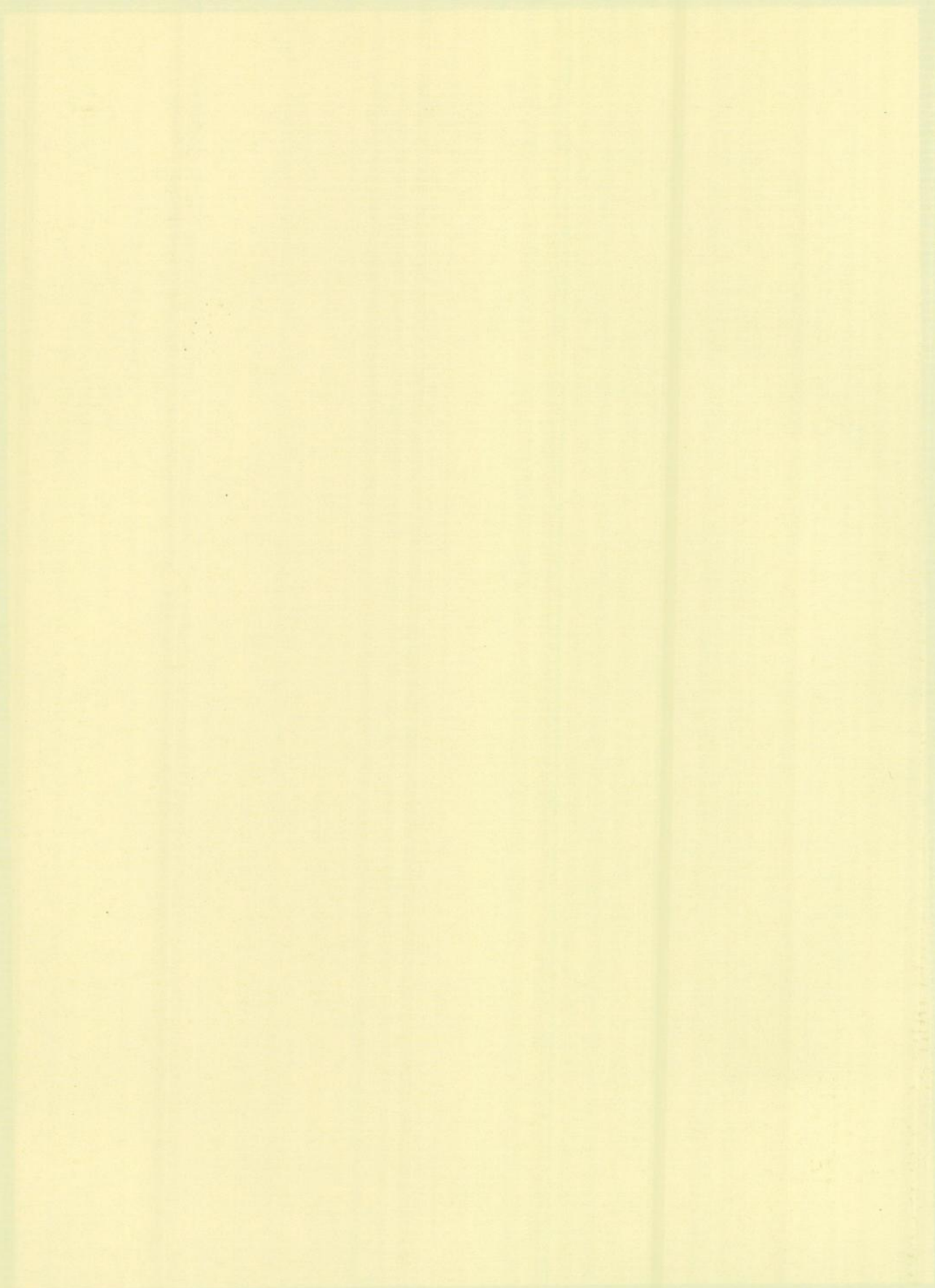
Illustration 23 Carpe Diem silk scarves from 1994 year of the Sun collection

(*The World of Hermès*, magazine, 1994, Vol. 1)





Illustration 24 Versace shirt



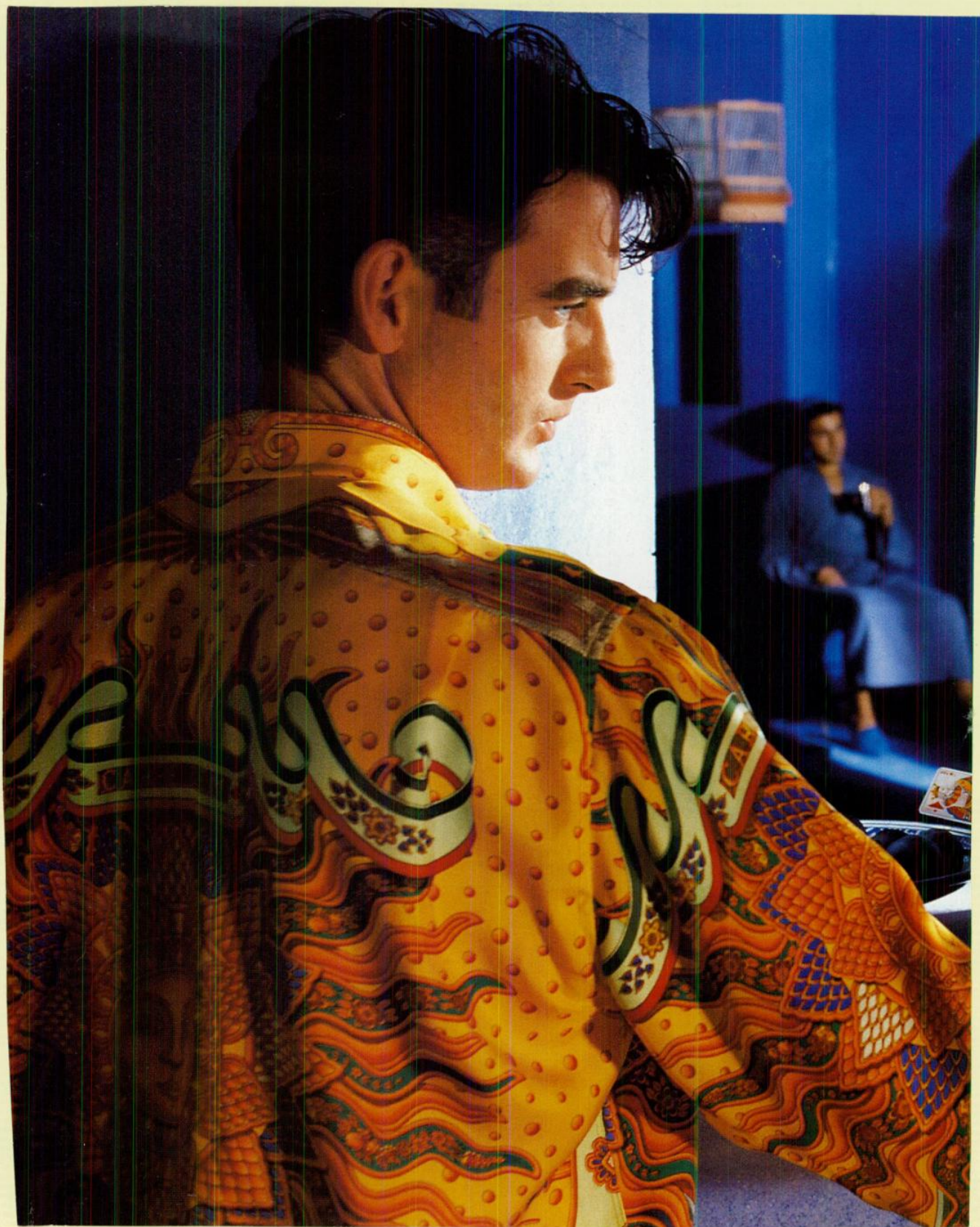


Illustration 25 'Carpe Diem' mens shirt
(*The World of Hermès*, 1994, Vol. 1)

Both houses are similar in the way they design their shirts, both have persuasion of design completeness, oneness, depth of field and absolute intelligibility. (Illustration 25) shows again the Carpe Diem scarf design from the Year of the Sun Collection in 1994. Ber gerè's wonderful designs once again re-establishes the Hermès' label this time as a designer label. The 1980s heralded the work of the fashion designer, houses like that of Hermès became as successful as movie stars "After years of unofficial classlessness people once again welcomed glamour back into fashion (Coleridge, 1988 : 42).

The success of the fashion designer in the 1980s not least that of Hermès, were because of a series of political, social and economic factors. Women had asserted themselves more firmly in the workplace than ever before, women carefully choose their clothes to reflect not only of their femininity but their profession, wealth and social standing, a designer label like that of Hermès was indicative of all these traits. The silver screen like most other periods also played an enormous part in the promotion of fashion and designer labels. Soap operas such as *Dallas*, *Dynasty* and *Falcon Crest* popularised Hollywood glamour. Coleridge refers to how the 'Shiny Set' openly began to enjoy themselves again and could lavishly spend vast sums of money on designer clothes and the accompanying accessories. In Europe, Princess Diana of England popularised glamorous clothing, when she was frequently featured in magazines such as *Hello* wearing designer labels. But it was American women in particular who flocked to see the Paris, New York and London collections at the couture shows. American women appear to have indulged in their purchase of exclusive clotheswear such as

Hermès. But it was the computers and advanced technology which increased the amount of visual information being distributed around the world which ultimately accelerated fashion. People appeared to be spending more money than ever before those who had money certainly felt confident enough to spend in on clothes and luxurious accessories like those provided at the Hermès stores.

Industries who firmly recovered from the great oil crisis of the 70s, the social climate in the United States seemed good, taxes were reduced in America and Britain, and in general the early years of the 80s appeared to have been a period of economic growth.

Fashion designers such as Hermès started to enjoy its celebrity status. The media not only focused on their fashion collections but on their lifestyle. The media became interested not only in their private art collections but their private lives. For Hermès it enabled itself to promote its ancestral background which was steeped in culture and tradition and use it to attract customers to the prestige and distinction of the Hermès label. Hermès used this media attention also to market other products such as the Hermès porcelain collection, glass and silverware and new fragrances for men such as Bel-Ami in 1988.

Indeed this head to toe look was instigated perhaps by Italian designer Emilio Pucci in the 1950s and 60s. Pucci was an absolute expert on using his prints for a diversity of products, he had gone to where many of his contemporaries had feared to tread, he delved into shoes, hats, scarves, tights, perfume, home decor. The list is endless. He appeared to be Jack of all Trades. Other designers ^{Labels} such as Hermès, Versace, Lacroix, Donna

Karan, used Pucci's diversification ideas as a reflection of their creative talents. But Pucci initiated the whole concept and made it feasible for business.

Although the political and social mores of the 1980s helped to shape Hermès' success, it was ultimately its country-casual look which consumers wanted to become part of. "The old class number had been absolutely no go territory in the past" (York, 1983 : 15). Hermès' womenswear line combined its tradition and classicism with updated fashions in mind as in Illustrations 26 and 27. In both Illustrations 26 and 27 we see how Hermès updated its country look again for the then Spring, Summer 1994 collection. The country look reflecting a time of leisure and those who can afford to take leisure such as this was important to an upwardly mobile section of society who had to work to earn high salaries and perhaps only indulge in such pursuits at weekends if at all. Often it was just the association of these pursuits which was enough in the wearing of those clothes and accessories.

Hermès' touch of class was really the most exciting thing ever. It was because Hermès fashions were conservative reliable and easily recognisable of belonging to a certain social strata, that led to their demand. the fashion industry loved how Hermès used its tradition, culture and craftsmanship to make these new look clothes. Both Eric Bergerè and Jean-Louis Dumas recognised that the Hermès customer of the future is not the teenage scarf collector, or middle aged great aunt, but for a woman looking to acquire a 'look' one in which Hermès is keen to offer.

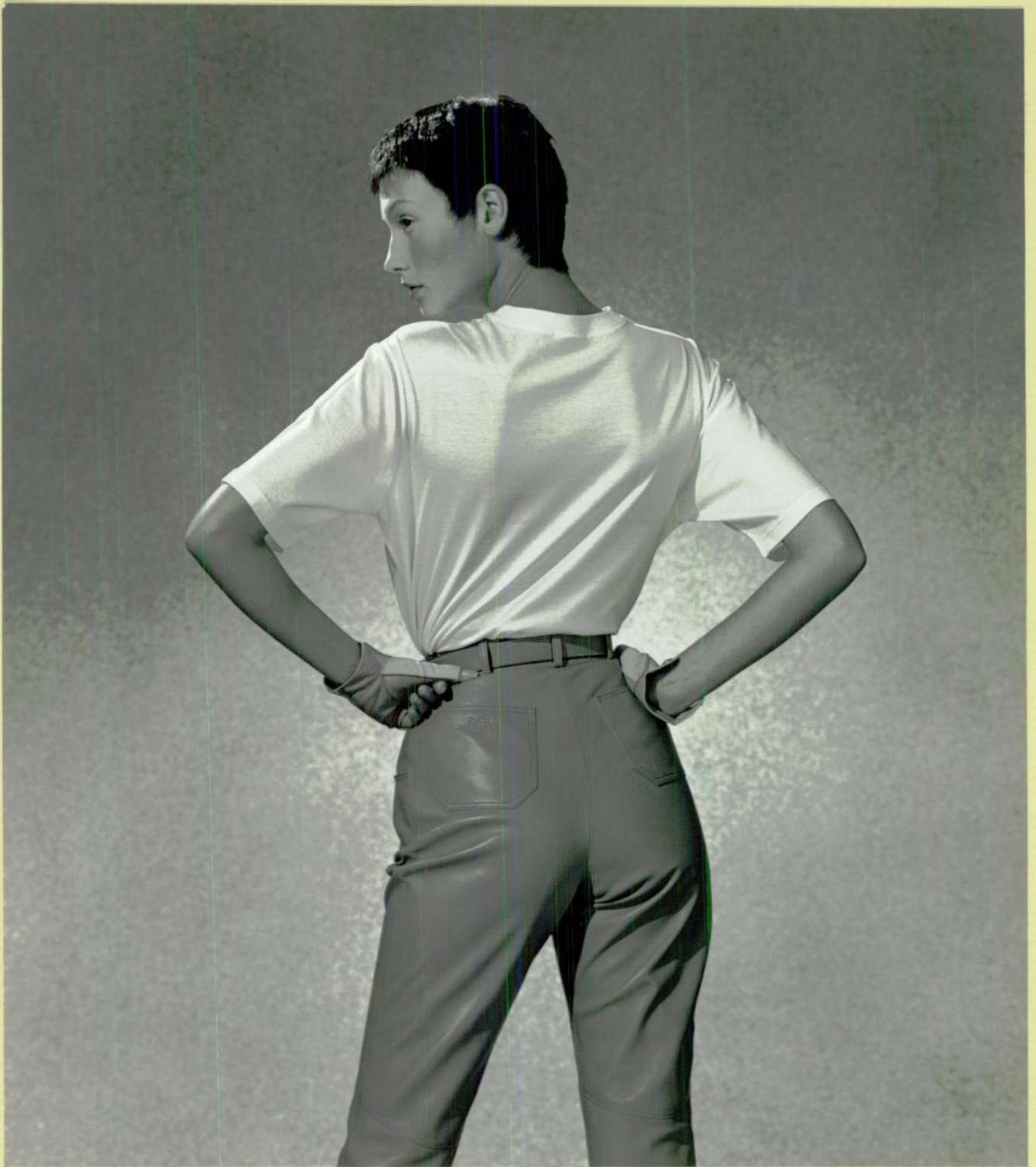


Illustration 26 White cotton jersey T-shirt, orange dipped
lambskin jeans, Spring, Summer 1994

(Courtesy of Greer, D. PR Hermès, Boston, June 1994)



COLLECTION PRINTEMPS-ÉTÉ 1994

Tee-shirt en jersey de coton blanc.
Jeans en signature plonge orange.

SPRING-SUMMER 1994 COLLECTION

White cotton jersey tee-shirt.
Orange dyed denim jeans.

Attachée de Presse Hérès : Michelle Gaudard

Service de Presse Hermès

28, rue du Faubourg Saint-Hippolyte - 75008 Paris

Tél : 49 17 47 17 - Télédirect : 49 17 47 57

Fax : 49 17 47 18

Photo : Christian Nègre

États et demandes

État en request



Illustration 27 Tobacco honey herring bone linen riding jacket - white stretch cotton twill short riding pants. Spring, Summer 1994 collection.

(Courtesy of Greer, D. PR Hermès, Boston, June 1994)



COLLECTION PRINTEMPS-ÉTÉ 1994

Veste d'équitation en lin à reverss blancs et noir.
Pantalon riding court en toile de coton stretch blanc.

SPRING-SUMMER 1994 COLLECTION

Vestace and honey herringbone linen riding jacket.
White stretch cotton tail short riding pants.

Intérieur de Presses Hérès - Michèle Gifford

Service de Presse Hermès

24, rue de l'Éclairage Saint-Hippolyte - 75002 Paris

Tél : 40 17 47 17 - ligne directe : 40 17 87 87

Fax : 40 17 47 12

Photo : Christian Mores

Eds sur demande

Eds en anglais

Other fashion designers such as Ralph Lauren recognised the popularity of the new countrified look. Hermès was keen to let consumers know that this was the look it had been selling all along and as a direct result of the popularity enjoyed by the industry of this look, the multi-million business of licensing began. Due to the power of conspicuous displays of wealth through association it was realised that a high status garment may not be of superior quality, it need only be recognisably more expensive. Therefore they incorporate the price of each garment with a name such as Hermès which would justify it. This was followed up by a campaign of hyped up publicity through marketing its name through certain magazines such as *Vogue*, *Marie Claire*, it also advertised its name through catalogues and exhibitions. All of which Hermès carefully exploited to its aim needs. This can be seen in not only Hermès' exhibition of scarves, watches or shoes, but of the marketing of its own catalogue such as *The World of Hermès*. This allows itself the freedom to carefully create its image.

Twice yearly Hermès brings out a catalogue which emulates its exclusivity, by the power of photographs.

Photography may not be everything to Hermès, but everything Hermès has would be nothing without it
(*Novum*, 1989 : 38)

The illustrated pages of the catalogue show off the high level of luxury that the Hermès products offer. The graphic design also employed in the catalogue also plays a major role in the exclusiveness of a product and its brand name. Hermès is well aware of the cachet of exclusiveness; shoes for instance,

especially those for men, are produced in house by the famous English shoemaker - John Lobb - and like A ^{Shoe} Scarf is Born exhibition, which travels around the world to exotic locations

to demonstrate the making of the shoe and to answer questions regarding special order, repairs and refurbishing of shoes

(Greer, 1994)

Curiously enough prices never feature in the Hermès' catalogue like that of its shoes which range from \$540 to \$630 and they are the cheaper purchases. Silk waistcoats and jackets usually carry tags over the \$1,500 mark, Hermès' watches such as that of its 1994 collection, range between \$7,500 to £12,300 depending on carat weight. The exclusion of prices in this exquisite catalogue is part of the exclusivity, but carefully placed in the front few pages are a list of Hermès' boutiques throughout the world, so that you can choose which one is nearest to you. How can such exuberant prices be justified, when Veronique Ninchanian, head of menswear, was interviewed by *Collections* magazine in 1994. She answered

The simple reason for this is that quality, true quality of workmanship and materials means high prices
(*Collections*, Autumn, Winter 1994-95)

But is she realistic enough to know that not everyone lives in the Palace of Versailles or has a chauffeur driven car? The only brief for both the fashion designers of the men and womenswear collections,

is to produce luxury clothing for people, who find money no object when it comes to style
(*Collections*, Autumn, Winter 1994-95 :14).

which carefully illustrates the answer to my question. If the designer feels like splashing out on reams of top quality cashmere, or experimenting with Shark in so much the better because Hermès is selling its product to a very select and discriminating clientele, it feels it can afford to splash out on quality materials, to make the jacket, or skirt extra special for the extra rich person. Hermès is world known for its exclusive products. Hermès is setting itself beyond and apart from the means of most people and creating a social barometer for which only rich people can attain.

A certain minimal display of wealth is usually considered essential, no excellence of cut or design will serve to redeem the sin of poverty

(Bell, 1992 : 20)

At Hermès it believes that nothing can compensate for the lack of 'real' products. The materials used and employed must be difficult to obtain or laborious to produce which in turn adds to the exclusivity of the product. At Hermès it is careful to re-iterate this at every given opportunity. For example a saddle could take up to thirty-five hours of handiwork, a suitcase thirty and a handbag not less than fourteen. The Hermès silk scarves may take up to twelve months and it may take forty colours to produce a single scarf, necessitating forty separate impressions and in total taking up to hours of time. The laborious and skilful craft involved is meant to impress on us, we are meant to be astonished by the amount of work put into the product. This kind of "conspicuous consumption" is really a way of justifying its exuberant prices, but also to entice customers to purchase a

product because of the amount of hours and real material employed. Jean-Louis Dumas says that

His product will live on and take on the personality of the possessor. They will accompany him through life, this is Hermès.

(*Connoisseur*, 1987)

Is this also a way of encouraging us to buy something that will be with us forever and remain faithful through passing fashions. It is a sophisticated way of persuading the consumer to become part of a 'look' which surpasses fashion. Veronique Ninchanian shares this Hermès value as well. "The spirit of Hermès is about clothes that will last forever" (*Collection*, magazine, Autumn, Winter 1994-95 : 15). Are we to have the good sense or cash to have chosen these clothes, that may become even more valuable in years to come? Will we have lost out on a missed opportunity if we did not become part of the tradition? At least it is what we are made to believe.

The Hermès name and its renowned exhibition crest depicting coachman which is the worldwide symbol of the house, has become famous all over the world, but most significantly in America. An examination of the reasons for this show that "American society is very much based on the philosophy of upward mobility" (Coleridge, 1988 : 21).

It appears that wealth and income do not mean anything until they can be seen in the right kind of visual association such as clothes, manners, education, accomplishments, and profession. American women in the 1980s appeared to wish to belong to a class deeply rooted in traditional snobbery. Their search for culture and credibility became important. Hermès

fashions and accessories were associated with this because of its equestrian look which suggested connotations of snobbery, the upper class and traditionalism. Hermès' love of traditionalism and its country field look, which is clearly reflected in both its scarves which I have previously discussed and its clotheswear became extremely popular because of these values and ideals. The "horsey look" also suggested that you were involved with hunting, shooting, fishing which were traditionally associated with the royalty or upper-class. By wearing "the look" such as Hermès' as in Illustration 28 you were perceived as taking part in these traditional hobbies. To acquire the look was all important.

Another factor arising from this sporting fashions of wealth. High status sport as of these mentioned above usually require a great deal of expensive equipment, re-emphasising the amount of money incurred. This method of Hermès dressing was used as a means of entry to a higher social strata. For most people who wished to acquire the country-casual look the Hermès scarf offered the most accessible entry. It oozed of prestige, tradition, and culture by its constant appearance of the equine theme used in its scarves. In general the scarf was becoming popular. Lucid designers tied scarves on the heads of their models, as Eric Bergerè had done constantly in his fashion collections this greatly helped to re-establish the Hermès scarf as the most sought after product of the house. *Women's Wear Daily* in its coverage of the Paris Spring 1989 fashion shows advises that the "only item to collect by the dozen next Spring is the scarf" (Baseman, 1989 : 60). The Hermès silk scarf

became popular with a wider variety of clients from stylish Parisiennes to royalty.

It was worn with irreverent wit, by a younger generation,
playing with elements of status dressing
(Bowles, 1989)

In Bloomingdales in New York a Hermès silk scarf is sold every thirty seconds. The Hermès scarf was one of the first steps in gaining entry to this elite world, for people who had aspirations to belong to that group.

This kind of dressing was also used to suggest what kind of person you were or wanted to be. For the men, Hermès offered them the country squire and gentleman look as in Illustration 28, 29. 30. Veronique Ninchanian disagrees

The man who wears Hermès has the nonchalant elegance
that comes from having nothing to prove
(*Collections*, Autumn, Winter, 1994 : 18)

But only because he has enough money to wear clothes wearing the Hermès crest, which in itself is a display or indication of wealth.

In the 1980s "there was a move from display to identify" in clothes (Elizabeth Wilson, 1985 : 155). Hermès offered women the chance to be a lady. "The men don't want glamorous they want a **lady**, especially when they're not sure were they picked her up" (Coleridge, 1988 : 75). Hermès offered both sexes the chance to belong to a tradition which was steeped in the delights of ladylike and gentlemanly ways.

Hermès offered not just fashions but the promise of a lifestyle, this is perhaps mostly easily demonstrated in its twice

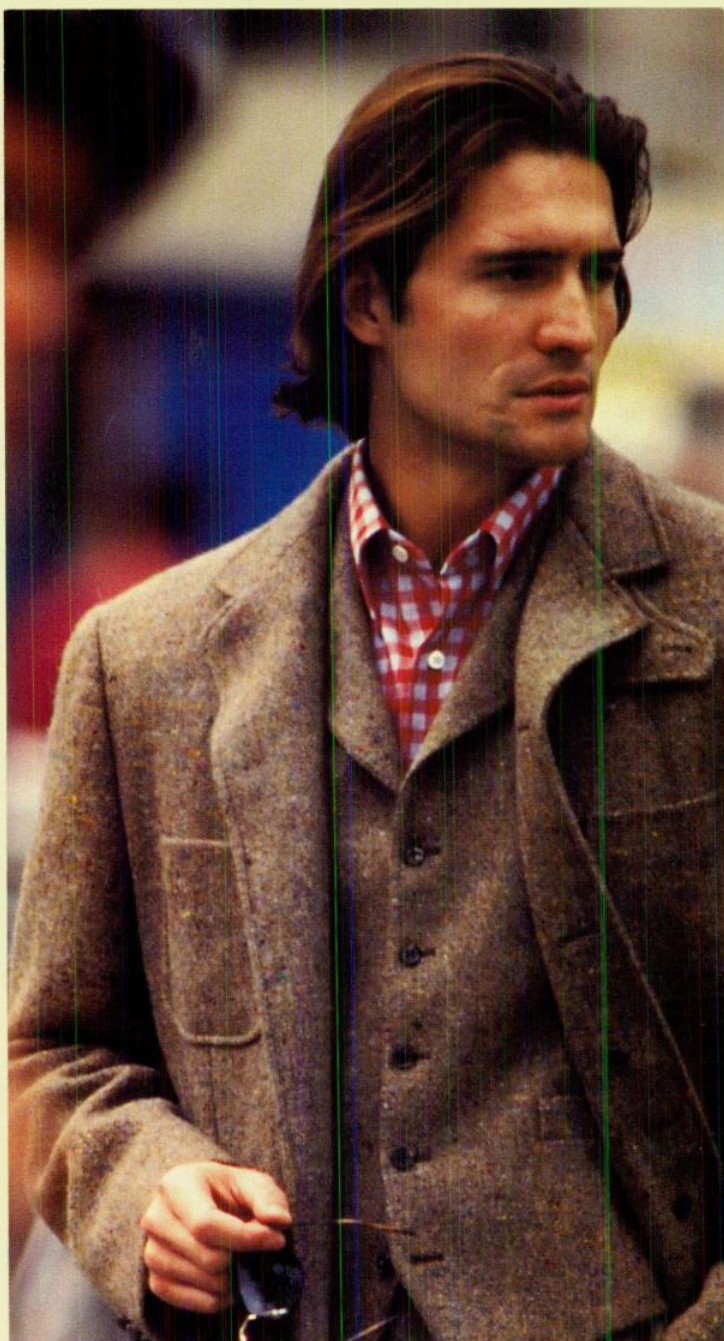


Illustration 28 Hunting suit, in off white Donegal tweed, straight waistcoat with notched neckline in off white Donegal tweed. "Button down" collar shirt in gray cotton with orange check.

(The World of Hermès, 1994, Vol. II)



Illustration 29

Short overcoat in thick grey tweed. Navy blue cashmere and wool cableknit Guernsey sweater, navy blue corduroy pleated trouser shoes by John Lobb Paris.

(Courtesy of Greer, D. PR Hermès, Boston, June 1994)



COLLECTION HOMME AUTUMNE-HIVER 1993-94

Le "Morgan" à l'effigie d'un cheval à crinière et à queue
Cet effet est obtenu par une
Finition en soie de haute qualité.

AUTUMN-WINTER 1993-94 MENSWEAR COLLECTION

"Morgan" jacket with pattern of the back in olive green and dark chest
brown.
Dark green cashmere knit top.
Dark grey cotton-wool blend trousers.

Available at Paris 14th Avenue - 14th Avenue Collection

14th Avenue Collection

24, rue de l'Opéra, Paris 14th - 75002 Paris

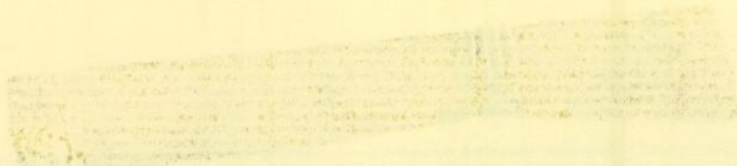
Tel: 47 43 47 43 - Fax: 47 43 47 43

Fax: 47 43 47 43

Paris 14th Avenue

14th Avenue

14th Avenue



Autumn-Winter 1993-94 Menswear Collection
"Morgan" jacket with pattern of the back in
olive green and dark chest brown. Dark
green cashmere knit top. Dark grey
cotton-wool blend trousers.

Courtesy of Green & PA Manager, Boston, June 1994

yearly catalogue where the clothes and accessories, are all part of the idyllic lifestyle. It offers the right colour, the perfect scent, the ideal riding boots, etc. all which aid in the pursuit of the lifestyle. It is also very careful to select what kind of other advertising it will display. An advertisement which has been displayed several times in the Hermès catalogue is the Swiss Bank Corporation, advertisements which is in keeping with not only Hermès prestigiousness but also its culture of 'mutual trust' with its patrons which both today as in the past Hermès has established.

In a free market the relationship between consumer and the producer is in its essence one of unity. The great houses like that of Hermès, dictate orders, and offers a lifestyle. But the houses are great, only because their clientele make them so.

Most fashion designers in the eighteenth century were almost completely dependent on the status of their client. Like the fashion ascribed ladies of Versailles and if they reflected a certain fashion then that would be the end of that particular fashion.

(Hollander, 1980 : 48)

It is precisely for this reason that Jean-Louis Dumas is hesitant to speak of Hermès in terms of fashion.

The very idea of fashion seems antithetical to the Hermès self image - classic clothing beyond the ebb and flow of changing tastes

(*Connoisseur*, 1987)

If this is so why did he want Bergerè to provide a reinterpretation of the image of Hermès or does he just want to combine a touch of fashion with the classic Hermès look and values. I think like most of Hermès' ideals it is deeply rooted in astute and excellent

marketing and salesmanship strategies. It is because it was easily recognised as an unchanging fashion that Hermès became popular once again. If Hermès was like many designers to come up with the latest designs for the catwalk, it would be unsure of how long its popularity would last, and it would not be in keeping with the Hermès values.

Hermès clothing is "beyond fashion" (Veronique Nenchanian, *Collection*, Autumn, Winter 1994-95).

CONCLUSION

The phenomenal popularity Hermès' high status name enjoyed in the 1980s was primarily due to its offer not only of a fashion but of a lifestyle and the accessories to accompany it.

With families becoming smaller in the 1980s because women were pursuing more professional careers, people in general began to display their wealth in materialistic terms. Clothes that were notably more expensive like that of Hermès was one of the most obvious ways of doing this. But Hermès' product also became popular because of its press association with the reinterpretation of its country look with contemporary day styles, tastes in mind, the Hermès look was enjoying a Renaissance in fashion it had never known before. This look which had many elements of Hermès' ancestral origins in it, became popular because it associated people with tradition, wealth, and social standing, and therefore offered consumers in particular American women, a tradition in which they never had and one in which Hermès was keen to offer. But at what expense? and does it not just widen the gap between rich and poor? Does it mean that this display of wealth in an inconspicuous manner will increase social tensions among the classes? In my opinion it will, people who are poor will feel poorer, and the rich will look richer, and it does unfortunately look like high status name such as Hermès will live in society for quite a while yet. Fashion creations usually last a short time, because of the necessity of replacing them every season with a

new emerging taste. Even so it is possible for a stylist such as Hermès to achieve continuity amid the contemporary, to conquer a permanent track in the changing variations obliged by fashions. I believe Hermès is such a stylist and will remain in fashion.

APPENDICES

Production - The actual production of a silk scarf brings together many different crafts, all based in the Lyon region where Hermès has its own printing facility. First is engraving, which involves breaking down the artist's sample designs into as many screens as there are colours.

Coloration - Next is the coloration process, the result of close collaboration between the Lyon team and that of Hermès in Paris, who examine a large number of trial colour schemes before choosing eight or ten different combinations of colours for each scarf.

Printing and Finishing - Printing is accomplished on 150 metre long table using the same method of printing as art lithographs. This beautiful work of art on coloured silk must then be protected like a fine jewel, which is the goal of the process known as "Ennoblissage", comprising fixing the colours, washing and drying the scarf and finishing the surface of the fabric. The nimble fingers of "rouloleuses" then roll and hem each scarf by hand, the last touch before the scarf can be offered for sale.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Baseman, Andrew (1989). *The Scarf*. New York, Stewart, Tabori Chang.
- Bell, Quentin (1992). *On Human Finery*, The Guernsey Press Co. Ltd.
- Brown, Helen Gurley (1983). *Having It All*. London, Sedgwick and Jackson.
- Colchester, Chloe (1991). *The New Textiles, Trends and Traditions*. London, Thames and Hudson.
- Coleridge, Nicholas (1988). *The Fashion Conspiracy*. London, Heinman.
- Calloway, Stephen (1994). *Baroque Baroque*. London, Phaidon Press Ltd.
- Davis, Fred (1992). *Fashion, Culture and Identity*. University Chicago Press, Chicago and London.
- Dubbs, Joanne, Torem Herl Dorty (1993). *The Art of Fashion Accessories*. US Schiffer Publishing Ltd.
- Deyan, Sudjic (1985). *Cult Objects*. Paladin Book, London.
- Flugel, J.C (1971). *The Psychology of Clothes*. Hogarth Press, London.
- Hollander, Anne (1980). *Seeing Through Clothes*. New York, Avon.
- Laurie, Alison (1981). *The Language of Clothes*. New York, Random House.
- McDowell, Colin (1992). *Dressed to Kill*. Hutchinson, London.
- Wilson, Elizabeth (1985). *Adorned in Dreams*. London, Virago.
- York, Peter. (1983) *Style Wars*, London, Sidgwick and Jackson.

Periodicals

- Aillaud, Charlotte. (1989). "The Hermès Museum". *Architectural Digest*. January : 30.
- Bowles, Hamish. (1989). "Hermetically sealed". *Marie-Claire*. 14th October : 86-87.
- Broome, Geoff. (1994/95). "The wonderful world of Hermès". *Collections*, Autumn, Winter : 14-18.
- Coatts, Margot. (1987). "Essential accessory". *Crafts*. No. 88. September, October : 28-31.
- Fleming, Herp. (1989). "Hermès". *Novumgebrauch Graphix*. September : 32-39.
- Greer, Diane (1994). "Kortenhaus Communications". *Interview By Phone*. July.
- Howell, Georgina (1990). "Scarves back in fashion". *Vogue USA*. January : 20-21.
- Hermès, Jean-Louis (1994/95). "The wonderful world of Hermès". *L'Monde d'Hermès*. Vol. 1, Vol. 2.
- Jacoby-Anne (1994). "Hermès". *Interview by Phone*. Boston, June 30th.
- Mathieu, Caroline (1987). "Guide to the Musée d'orsay". *ISBN*.
- McEvoy, Marian (1987). "Turning Hermès around". *Connoisseur*. May 27th September 1987 : 98-105.
- Ruben, Beth (1994). "Hermès". *Interview by Phone*. New York, September 29th.
- Vickers, Graham (1992). "Not shocking but different". *Design*. No. 523, July.

