



RALPH LAUREN

Whether discussing the man himself or his eponymous brand, Ralph Lauren is an American Icon. What began with a single necktie at a rented desk, is now a globe-spanning multibillion dollar enterprise. From Olympians and First Ladies to kids and street style stars, Ralph Lauren transcends time, place, and person as a cultural touchstone of American identity.



THE EARLY YEARS

After serving in the United States Army, Ralph Lauren began his career in fashion as a sales assistant at Brooks Brothers in Manhattan. After moving to the manufacturing side of fashion for a necktie company, Lauren asked the boss to start designing his own label of ties. The first run were sold in 1967 under the moniker The Ralph Lauren Company to great success. With a label and sales record, Lauren decided to jump in head first as a menswear designer immediately. The following year, he opened the Polo line inspired by his love of sports.

With a single rented desk in the Empire State Building, Mr. Lauren designed, sewed, and sold his designs as a one man stop and shop. Despite the humble circumstances, he was able to make a big enough splash in the menswear market to attract the attention of Bloomingdales and broker the first ever deal of its kind to set up his own shop inside the department store.

MOMENTUM



Once Lauren's name and cohesive brands broke onto the scene, the 1970s became all about upward momentum. '71 saw the first womenswear line and '72 was the year Polo released its now signature cotton Polo Shirt with the iconic polo pony logo. Lauren then used Hollywood to advertise his impeccable tailoring by outfitting Robert Redford in ***The Great Gatsby*** and taking on both the men's and womenswear of ***Annie Hall***.



In his first two years of business Lauren won the American Fashion Council Designer of the Year Awards for men's and womenswear after launching his female line in 1972. In the subsequent years he won numerous other fashion industry awards and obtained an honorary doctorate of fine arts. In 1992 he was awarded a lifetime achievement award from Audrey Hepburn and an humanitarian award for his work towards cancer research from Princess Diana. He holds countless CFDA awards and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II and granted the noble rank of Chevalier in France. Even decades after winning multiple lifetime achievements Lauren is still pioneering the space of luxury brand identity by opening a restaurant chain and coffee shop in 2015.

CONTINUED GROWTH

In 1986 Ralph Lauren opened his flagship store on Madison Avenue in New York City. Its trademark opulence and lustre drew inspiration from the already successful Ralph Lauren home line and harkened back to the splendor of the Gilded Age. Designed to feel like one of the mansions of old and less like a retail space, Lauren cemented the brand's aesthetic in what would become known as traditional American style and design and become a global arbiter of taste. In recent years the brand has also now added large mansion-style flagships in Chicago, London, and Paris to bring the full Ralph experience to customers around the world.



CHARITY

Since 1989 Ralph Lauren has been one of the leading donors and advocates in the fight against cancer. He has donated twice to the Georgetown University Medical Center to better research for breast cancer. Beyond The Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Prevention, he also establish the the Fashion Targets Breast Cancer fund in 1994 to link his two passions and spread the message to colleagues around the world. He has created the Ralph Lauren Center For Cancer Treatment in Harlem, NY, and played a fundamental role in establishing the Royal Marsden Research Institute in Europe - the largest cancer research center in the world.



In an homage to the American heritage encapsulated by his many brands, Mr. Lauren also personally donated \$10 million to the Smithsonian in order to repair and preserve America's first flag from 1813 which underwent full restoration between 1998 and 2008.



Thanks to these endeavors and because of his innumerable contributions to fashion history, Ralph Lauren is among the most influential tastemakers of all time and shall remain so as part of his enduring legacy.

