

heritage_



GUCCI

by Donatella Zappieri

HIGH WATCHMAKING

**Founded in Florence
in 1921, Gucci is one
of the world's leading
luxury brands, led by
President and CEO
Marco Bizzarri and
Creative Director
Alessandro Michele.**

Following the House's centenary, Gucci forges ahead into the next 100 years, continuing to redefine luxury, while celebrating creativity, Italian craftsmanship and innovation at the core of its values. Gucci is part of the global luxury group Kering since 2004. Gucci history starts in 1921 when Guccio Gucci establishes in Florence the eponymous brand aimed to produce leather goods, gloves and luggage. Guccio worked for many years in London at Savoy Hotel as bell boy and thanks to this experience he developed the understanding of English style and above all nurtured a profound love and passion for horses and horse riding, starting to be acquainted with brackets, clamps, saddles, bridles and the equitation world which still today plays such an important role in Gucci heritage.







Already in the 30's, many of Gucci's customers are aristocrats with horse riding hobby and their request for clothing and accessories pushes Guccio Gucci to develop some of his still today very famous icons, for example the miniature of a horse saddle with a double ring held together by a barrette and the green-red-green ribbon, reminding the typical saddles girths. In the 50's, Gucci inaugurates the first store in New York in 58th street and this opening represents the American expansion and its international success. When Guccio Gucci dies, the house is left to his sons who contributed to further develop its success. In the 60's and 70's, Gucci collections start to be very well known because of their exclusive design and conquer many cinema stars and iconic people, bringing the brand towards a worldwide recognition. Hollywood stars such as Liz Taylor, Grace Kelly and later on the First Lady Jackie Kennedy opened the doors to Gucci

success also in Asia.

At the end of the 80's, the house is sold to Investcorp to be then acquired in 2004 by Kering Group.

Since 2015, Alessandro Michele is the Creative Director and since his appointment he has been pushing the boundaries of aesthetics hence always re-exploring and enhancing the brand heritage and its iconic elements. He has been able to create a universe mixing femininity and masculinity, past and innovation thanks to collections which are post gender and at the same time infused by elements of Renaissance, gothic and fairy tale. By simply following the #gucciCommunity you will soon realize that for Alessandro Michele creativity is a moment of escape but at the same time a sign of solidarity and kindness, a message shared by the many artists, talents and activists guided by his artistic direction.

In the last few years, Gucci has enriched its collections with a deep dive into the codes of high jewelry and high watchmaking in order to answer to the strong request of international clientele who is intrigued by the brand's stylistic codes and wishes to enjoy their evolution also in the universe of super precious and exclusivity of one of a kind creations.

The latest High Jewelry collection was presented in Rome last June whereas the High Watchmaking collection had been unveiled in Geneva in April during Watches and Wonders days.

For both presentations, uncommon locations were selected: Villa Albani for jewelry and a private villa for watches.

Enriching Gucci vocabulary with a fairy tale and gothic lexicon, with this new high jewelry collection, the third of Hortus Deliciarum (Garden of Delights) collection, Alessandro Michele was able to create a rare and coherent



design language, a summa of all codes which we find in the Maison clothing and accessories, with the aim to imbue each jewel with poetic as well as social values. The High Jewelry collection draws on the symbolic motifs that are dear to Alessandro Michele and Gucci, taken from the extensive and multifarious canon of the House's iconography. A collection of memories, made of unique pieces divided into five themes, a creative ode to specific historical and architectural eras suspended in time and space. The journey is inspired by the Grand Tour and reveals romantic, maximalist jewels made with mastery. Like a passionate collector, Alessandro Michele writes an allegory that holds within dreams, experiences, stories and secrets showcased within the five chapters of a travel diary in the shape of "souvenirs in the form of a jewel": a collection of memories where micro mosaics, gems of pure rarity and exceptionally skilled manufacturing embrace in a narrative which is never understated but, on the contrary, plays with unexpected and sophisticated manufacturing techniques.



To evoke the narrative behind Alessandro Michele's third Hortus Deliciarum High Jewelry collection, Oscar-winning American actress and film producer Jessica Chastain plays an eclectic collector of mementos and memories. Shot by Mert & Marcus in the film and photographs, a peek into the protagonist's home reveals an opulent trove of souvenirs accumulated throughout her life's travels. Mimicking the splendor of a voyage, these special items, masterfully crafted with precious gemstones including emeralds, aquamarines, opals, and rubellites, tell stories and secrets of faraway places.

Gucci is a certified member of Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) and among its missions the brand promotes responsible practices from an ethical and environmental point of view.

When it comes to High Watchmaking collections, to fully appreciate these specific product launches we have to date back to 1972 when, in the watchmaking heartland of La Chaux-de-Fond, Gucci presented the world with a new horological design proposition - watches

combining unparalleled Swiss technical know-how with the best of Italian design. In 2021 Gucci made its long-awaited debut in high watchmaking with a series of Swiss made designs showcasing technological flair, noble materials and unique decorative artistry.

2022 in Geneva marks the 50th anniversary with a collection named Gucci Wonderland. Once again, the mood of this kaleidoscopic collection is inspired by a magical fairground, where the most refined watchmaking complications appear alongside rainbow-like gems and celestial wonders.

Both High Jewelry and watches launches represent an additional statement of Alessandro Michele's creative vision bringing the viewers and customers into an artistic gothic fairy tale where heritage, savoir-faire and innovation perfectly merge together creating a magic and sophisticated imaginary world.



