



1970s



FRONT ROW

The Italian designer presents yet another elegant collection

MR ARMANI

will dress you now



1980s



With an A-list clientele book spanning 40 years and bursting with stars, Giorgio Armani rules the red carpet – and he’s showing no signs of slowing down

by CIARA SHEPPARD

Giorgio Armani is often regarded as the ‘inventor’ of red-carpet dressing. In 1980, just five years after launching his label, Armani was called in to dress a relatively unknown Richard Gere, who was starring in *American Gigolo*. The job became an effective, albeit unintended, advertisement for his fledgling brand. In the decades since, Armani has added everyone from Céline Dion and Beyoncé to Millie Bobby Brown to his client list, and he made nothing short of a sartorial clean sweep at this year’s Oscars, dressing three out of ten of the Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress nominees. But Armani’s most celebrated red-carpet look of all time? Jodie Foster’s simple yet elegant tuxedo jacket at the 1992 Oscars. “I had suggested that she wear it, and she trusted me,” the designer says. We grilled the fashion kingpin on his golden rules to live and dress by. ➤



2000s



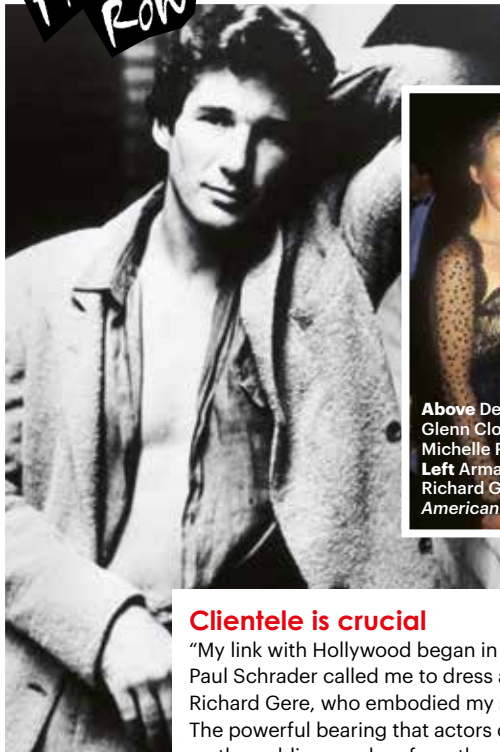
1990s



Above Jodie Foster in the famous tuxedo. Right Beyoncé works it in an Armani gown



FRONT ROW



Above Devotees Glenn Close and Michelle Pfeiffer. Left Armani-clad Richard Gere in American Gigolo



Clientele is crucial

"My link with Hollywood began in 1980, when Paul Schrader called me to dress a little-known Richard Gere, who embodied my style perfectly. The powerful bearing that actors could have on the public was clear from the start. From this point, it was a natural progression to dressing stars on the red carpet, where the glamour of old Hollywood still reigned supreme. They were all young actors who were seeking a new public image. Richard Gere, Lauren Hutton and Jodie Foster were my first clients."

Say ciao to the rules

"I do not like conformism. I remember one occasion very well: it was the 1989 Oscars, and Michelle Pfeiffer wore a blue suit (above) for the event. It was simple, suited her well, and she wore it with great aplomb. It was a radically different image and was very well received, judging from the enquiries that I received afterwards. The masculine look, re-imagined in a feminine version and worn by a woman with elegance and class, is perhaps the most successful of my contributions to fashion. It's not just a look, but a way of being, which expresses the wearer's strength and self-awareness."

Awards season is key

"Seeing Nicole [Kidman] and Isabelle [Huppert] choosing to wear my designs once again on the red carpet at the Oscars, and witnessing

Viola [Davis] collecting her [Best Actress in a Supporting Role] award in one of my dresses at the 2017 Oscars, were priceless moments. The awards season is always a very important time and a showcase for any fashion house."

Work case-by-case

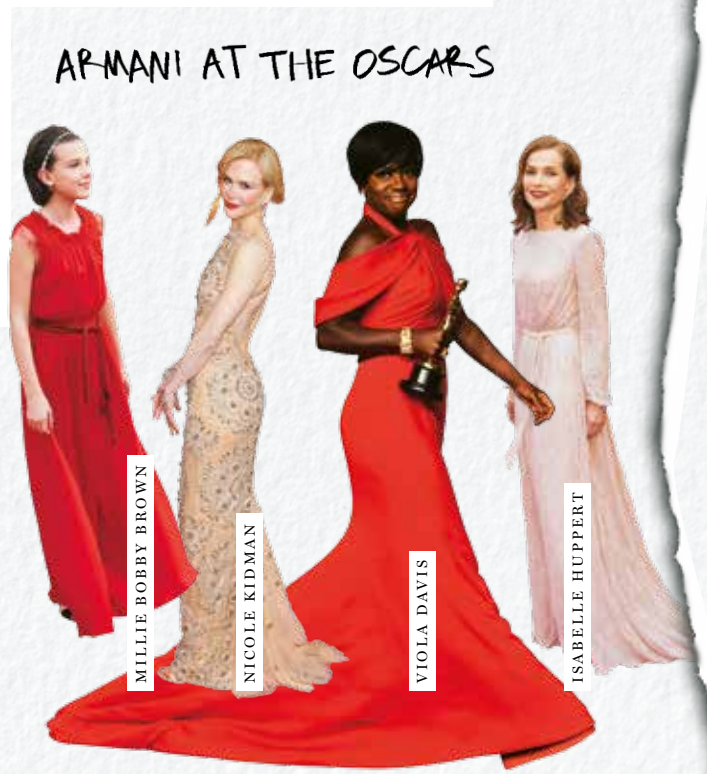
"Every celebrity has their own character and personality, and I work around that. My job is simple yet complex: devising a special look that enhances them and makes them unforgettable. And this applies to all young, and less young, actors and actresses. Working with Millie Bobby Brown was really inspiring, because she is mature far beyond her 13 years. I designed a dress that I thought would be right for her, and even I was surprised at the result. Millie wore Armani in a way that was incredibly fresh and new."

Do it for the love of it

"I like fashion because it forces you to keep going and to observe what's going on around you. This is why I love my job and why I devote myself to it with passion. My days are really intense, but I must say that dividing my attention between many different things is an invaluable stimulus. It gives me energy, and I still face new challenges with the same enthusiasm I had right at the start. The motivation for this is always the same: to create something that makes a difference, that lasts over time, that responds to a need and expresses an idea of what is beautiful." ●



2010s



MILLIE BOBBY BROWN

NICOLE KIDMAN

VIOLA DAVIS

ISABELLE HUPPERT