

Robb Report

GRAND OPENINGS
FLORENCE, PORTUGAL, AND VIETNAM

RobbReport.com

Bring on the Nightlife

New Clubs and Bars for the
International Elite



LAMBORGHINI AVENTADOR

The 217-MPH LP 700-4 Charges into the Ring

AUGUST 2011



Plus: AN IMPERIAL PASSION
Inside the Soaring Chinese Art Market

• WARDROBE •

Bravura, and Then Some

How Valentino Ricci straightened the lapels of a style icon.

GRANDE AGNELLI, the late Italian industrialist, was renowned for his distinctive sense of style, and he is still an important inspiration for countless tailors, including a young Italian named Valentino Ricci. Ricci began studying Agnelli's wardrobe by looking at television news clips and magazine photos, and in 2002 modeled the prototype of his tailored clothing collection after the Fiat magnate's penchant for peaked lapels and high-lying buttons.

Yet Ricci also noticed a flaw: "Agnelli always had his hands pressed in his coat pockets, which forced the buttons down and caused the peak lapels to turn sideways." To his credit, Ricci solved the problem and then some by creating a suit in which the shoulders, pockets, vents, and lapels—the "spacial offices," as he calls them—are collectively seen skewed "like a ski ramp," which makes the wearer appear straighter and taller and keeps the details in place rather than letting them sag.

Ricci, a self-taught and fanatical tailor, was originally a lawyer, albeit one obsessed with style: He traded his profession's niche for a tailor's workbench after his own suit-maker died and he could not find another to make jackets to his liking. This spring, with a team of seamstresses in his compact workshop in Livorno, Italy, he introduced several new models to his innovative line of tailored clothing, Sciaman. Among them is a four-button double-breasted jacket, in which the buttons align in a cone-shaped configuration for a slimmer silhouette. A military-style, six-button double-breasted jacket with two rows of vertical buttons mirrors one Agnelli wore while visiting his friend



Prince Karim Aga Khan on Sardinia in the 1960s.

Sciaman pieces are instantly recognizable for their highly exaggerated roped-and-pleated shoulders, an anomaly even among Neapolitan tailors, who originated the set-in-crease construction. Unlike the Neapolitans, Ricci sees the drape over the shoulder rather than under it, like a shirt, to enhance and retain the distinctive arch. Ricci's precision-made suits are also devoid of shoulder pads and inner linings, so they miraculously drape the body as if fully constructed. "When I started, all of the tailors I approached thought what I was looking for was absurd; they were more focused on following sartorial traditions than giving me the look I wanted," says Ricci, adding that Sciaman—which is pronounced *sha-MOON* and means "shockwave" in Italian—is his subtle jab at those who call their clothing custom when, in fact, the pieces are made by machines.

Although he has done occasional trunk shows at Barney's New York, Ricci primarily sells the collection at his Milan outlet. The study-made Sciaman suits are about \$2,500; Ricci's custom suits begin at about \$5,500.

Ricci acknowledges that his stylized designs are not for every man, but rather for the confident gentleman who is a risk taker in life as well as in wardrobe. "Men like Agnelli are crazy for style," Ricci points out, "and always appreciate something new."

—WILLIAM BRIDGE

Sciaman, 99.000.577.7426, www.sciaman.com

Valentino Ricci's distinctive roped-and-pleated shoulder allows his jackets to hold their line, even if the wearer slouches.