

Italians Do It Better—Style-wise, of course

Marisa Iallorardo (August 07, 2008)



Who are the best dressed people in the world? A number of Italians are at the top of the list, according to Vanity Fair, together with the wife of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama.



I really like lists. “The Top” of this, “The Best” of that, “5 Reasons Why” whatever—it’s no wonder I work in the consumer magazine business, we’re suckers for these kinds of nicely drawn determinations. You can imagine, then, that I was interested in reading [Vanity Fair’s 2008 International Best Dressed List](#) [2], which is set to appear in their September issue, but was also released online early last week.

Turns out the Italians had quite a nice showing.

Gracing the cover of the magazine is none other than Italian-born, French first lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy. Born in Torino, the former top model is the subject of an entire feature in the magazine. Her style is high fashion without a doubt, and various articles have been written about her fashion choices, which tend to steer towards high-end names like Dior, Galliano and Yves Saint Laurent. They’re so high-end in fact, that [Women’s Wear Daily](#) [3] wrote in April, “Who pays for Carla’s clothes? That’s a question that has been raging ever since Dior-clad French First Lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy wowed the Brits last week on an official visit with her husband, French President Nicholas Sarkozy. British papers have had a field day speculating about who paid for the first lady’s Dior coats, dresses, bags, shoes and evening gowns.” In the same article Bruni’s agent responds by saying she either “borrows or buys”—either way, the girl has style.

Next up is Lapo Elkann, the heir to Fiat and member of the Agnelli family. Once described by [Vogue](#) [4] as “possibly the best-dressed man in the world,” Elkann is often pictured wearing a host of variously colored suits (check out [this one](#) [5], oh, and [this one too](#)). [6] his hair often slicked back. He might have survived a near-fatal drug overdose a few years ago, but it seems that from starting [Italia Independent](#) [7], a fashion company and [Independant Ideas](#) [8], an advertising agency, that’s old news.

Joining him in the ranks of powerful families are brother Andrea and Pietro Clemente, sons of Naples-born painter Francesco Clemente. I can’t seem to find much on the brothers except that they were featured in [Paper Magazine](#) [9] and seems to have an affinity for suits with t-shirts. And last but not least, Count Manfredi della Gherardesca, a descendant of the Fenzi family of Florence—who, as seen in this [pic](#) [10], has a quirky style all his own.

Taking the top honor in the 69th annual poll was Michelle Obama, the wife of presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama. The magazine calls her “Our commander in sheath,” and her style is known for being sophisticated and classic, with a look that’s characterized with lots of belts, structured jackets and color. Her style has more commonly been compared to that of Jackie Onassis and [The Wall Street Journal](#) [11] writes, “First there’s the hair. Worn flipped or curled under, Mrs. Obama’s style is reminiscent of the volumized “Swan” look that Mrs. Kennedy -- who would later be known as Mrs. Kennedy Onassis -- tucked beneath her pillbox hats. Then there are the accessories: single-strand pearls the size of grapes, as well as the three-strand version.” And it’s not just major fashion magazine’s that are taking notice: At her June appearance on the talk show *The View* Obama [wore a \\$148 Donna Ricco](#) [12] black and white print dress which only a few days later almost completely sold out in stores.

On the rest of the list you’ll find celebrities like Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, Tilda Swinton and Daniel Craig, royals like Kate Middleton (technically not a royal yet) and the Crown Princess Mathilde of



Belgium and others including Iris Apfel, Carine Roitfeld and Karl Lagerfeld.

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