



## CESARE CASADEI

The life of Cesare Casadei and the story of the footwear company of which he is currently creative director are so closely intertwined that it is difficult to distinguish one from the other.

Cesare was born in 1962 to Quinto and Flora Casadei, two artisans who, in 1958, founded Calzaturificio Casadei, just outside Rimini. Here, they initially produced sandals for tourists, later branching out onto the national and international market. For Cesare, there are no boundaries: neither his house, nor his factory, nor the warehouse in which the skins are stored have any walls: everything flows seamlessly amidst prototypes, production, skilled artisans and expert hands, resulting in those small masterpieces that go by the name of shoes.

As an adolescent, he was schooled in Switzerland, where he received an international education. It was the Seventies, a time of revolution and innovation: travel, a quest for freedom and a desire to discover new horizons were the ideals that inspired him more than anything else.

His passion for his parents' business resulted in his decision to return to his roots in order to work in their company where, in the mid-eighties, he started producing his own line with a team of 10 skilled workers. This was the hardest, most formative moment of his career: his work became a serious activity, his relationship with his suppliers became more complex and the production of his footwear began to increase at a steady pace. He started off with unisex styles, subsequently going on to manufacture casual footwear until finally reaching the height of his creativity with the production of phenomenal, spectacular pieces. Often a question of trial and error, his mistakes and his successes served as a learning curve which increasingly defined the aesthetics of the Casadei style, or rather the possibility or, better still, the need to experiment tirelessly with working techniques and materials that had never been used before.

In 1990, Casadei opened its first showroom in Milan and, in 1994, Cesare became creative director of the brand. This was possibly the most delicate and difficult transitional stage in his career: during those years, the fashion system was changing radically and the globalization of markets required a new *modus operandi*. His years of experience in production combined with his direct relationships with suppliers and retailers enabled Cesare to take the company to new heights, achieving a level of quality that other designers find hard to rival.

Today, Cesare works in close contact with a skilled team of designers, in the knowledge that he is able to count not only on the extraordinary craftsmanship of his co-workers but also on the cutting-edge production systems used for the manufacturing process, true gems of engineering creativity that only "Made-in-Italy" is able to guarantee. Each shoe style is produced in-house and the majority of raw materials used are created exclusively for the maison.

However, according to Cesare, the hallmark feature of his creative verve, is "that indescribable pleasure that I feel when I see a woman wearing one of our creations. At that moment, the magic of a shoe is truly capable of conveying the painstaking commitment and passion that I have always invested in this fantastic trade."