

# La Vita Perfetta

Jeans genius Renzo Rosso, worth a value of 3 billion, father of six children, philanthropist and an enthusiastic nature lover, is not the type that takes it easy. Because everything can, no should be better. So as well the quality of his own wines and olive oil.

{Text added to pictures}

“What Stefano and I have in common with our dad, is that we know where the sweat comes from. We also work very hard ourselves and we started from the bottom.”- Andrea Rosso

Here is where Renzo Rosso produces his own wines and olive oil and where he secretly closed the surprising deal with John Galliano for Margiela.

The Diesel farm in Marostica, on a hill in the North Italian province Veneto, is stretched over 105 acres and is populated by wild goats, rabbits, chickens, wild pigs and even wild horses. Renzo Rosso bought the farm in 1992 actually for his father who had his doubts about the career choice of his son. But pretty soon afterwards the old Rosso was full of praise because his son had saved the land. It was about to split up into several smaller pieces, with which would come an end to the peacefulness and quietness of the area.

The regular chef Gabrielle – “Renzo likes everything”- is busy in the kitchen preparing the vegetables and meat of the farm. Regularly he cooks for Kanye West, Bono and Jovanotti, friends of Rosso, but also the British designer John Galliano. With the pleasure of having a pasta and the deafening buzzing of the crickets in the background, the deal of Galliano as creative director for Maison Martin Margiela was made in the Farm.

“Here I can take decisions in solitude”, says Rosso, who turned sixty this month, what not a lot of people would give him. Dressed in a tight denim and tight fitted caramel colored Viktor & Rolf shirt that covers his tattoos - six and counting -, wild blond hairs, one marriages and a long relationship behind him. “In a next life I will become gay, he joked once to CNN. “Women have destroyed me.”

The last one of course needs to be taken with a pinch of salt, because look at his Instagram (76.000 followers); you can see that the man has a great, but especially a sportive life. Then biking in Greece or with his daughter Asia on a scooter in Myanmar, then backstage at a concert of the heavy-metal band U2, or in a restaurant close with Courtney Love. ‘*Life enthusiast*’ he calls himself on his profile.

But Rosso’s wild cowboy image is misleading. He has been living already for forty years in the small village, Bassano del Grappa, which is practically around the corner of the farm in Marostica and on a 45 minutes drive of the Diesel and OTB headquarters in Breganze. There he spoils many of his 6500 employees “my other family” with tennis courts, a gym, a kindergarten, a carwash service and a restaurant with divine food. He has been eating organic food since he was little and in his spare time he does yoga, pilates, snowboarding and

he works out heavily by a personal trainer (“The alarm goes off every morning at 5.55, I have this thing with numbers”), and every Sunday he plays soccer with his sons Andrea and Stefano. He bought the suffering club in his hometown (Bassano Virtus 55) twenty years ago, from whereon they promoted from the lower regions to the third highest division of Italy, the Lega Pro Prima Divisione.

“This year we might even end up higher”, says the energetic Italian not completely without proud. But that was not the main reason to do it. “I didn’t want to own a club to brag about, I did it to help the community. We have also one of the best soccer schools in the country, a 150 children in the age between 5 and 18 years old come here to train every day. Like this we avoid them from ending up with drugs and in criminal circles. They all come from the neighborhood and will be brought home by busses.” The youngest son Stefano, co-ceo of OTB (Viktor & Rolf, Maison Margiela, Diesel and Marni) is the president of the club. “I play right winger, and my brother plays striker and my dad, yes he is without a doubt David Beckham”.

The love for his motherland expanded to Venice, the city where he studies economics. Renzo Rosso paid 5 million from his own pocket to restore the famous Rialto Bridge. And with his Only The Brave Foundation, founded after a meeting with the Dalai Lama in 2005, he is dedicated to help less fortunate people in the North East of Italy and with a special focus on financing different humanitarian aid in Africa. “A 100% of the funds of the Foundation go to the projects and I’m very proud of it. At a lot of charity organizations, also the big names, 75% will go to staff costs. It makes me sick.” says Rosso sitting at a small table in the shadow of the Diesel Farm, right next to the soccer table that is the center during family lunches of the Rosso family in the weekends.

Next to being a family man and a philanthropist Rosso is above all the creative business man that has a keen eye and vision to bring aboard the right kind of people. First he chose Nicola Formichetti as the artistic director of Diesel and recently he chose John Galliano. When half of the world was done with the fallen British designer after his anti-Semitic comments, Rosso put the sober Galliano back in the saddle again at Maison Martin Margiela (nowadays known as Maison Margiela). A surprising and brilliant move, completely fitting the strategy of the company to never go along with the herd. Be Stupid, for successful living was the slogan of one of his award winning Diesel campaigns. Rosso build with it his empire which is estimated by the American business journal Forbes on a 3 billion. He says to love all of his bands that are on board, but that Maison Margiela has a special place in his heart. “Because of John I see the world in a different way, he only wants to dream and create beauty. You should see him now, he’s doing very well, he doesn’t want to do crazy things anymore and he doesn’t want to give interviews, he wants to be in the background, so that all the attention can go to the gorgeous products.”

Renzo Rosso himself loves to be in the picture – there are already three books published about him, but he tries to stay humble. A consequence of his humble upbringing on a farm in Brugine, he says, a 30 kilometers from Venice, a village with back then ‘a car and two televisions’. Where he helped his dad after school on the country side. ‘I learned what respect and loyalty is, and I’ve gained reliable norms and values. Nowadays it’s not that usual anymore. I try to give my children the same humble raising, but times have changed. I see

already differences between the children of my first and my second wife. Between the oldest and the youngest there is a deviation of 25 years. If I'm a good dad? You have to ask them. I can only say that I do everything I can for them. I am certainly a lot away from home, but I barely feel the distance because I have WiFi in my helicopter and airplane. My oldest daughter Alessia works and lives in New York, but we skype a lot so she doesn't feel far away."

His sons, that live on walking distance from their dad, state that it's not always easy to be the son of Renzo. 'But in a good way ' says Andrea (37), formerly creative director of 55DSL, now responsible for the creative direction of all Diesel licenses (including watches, fragrances, bikes, lamps, furniture, ceramic) and his own new project MYAR, giving a new life to military gear. 'My dad is a real Virgo, a perfectionist, he is rarely satisfied with the result and challenges us always to do more. Furthermore he travels a lot, and then he returns with 1001 ideas that he all wants to carry out. Which means a lot of work.'

Stefano (36) is the rational thinker and calls his dad 'more volcanic'. Andrea is the dreamer that loves to experiment, surf and the nature. Stefano: 'We are very honest to each other. That we work in the company is our own choice, Renzo never pushed us. But he gave us all the opportunities to study abroad, where after we could decide ourselves which path we want to choose. His best life lesson? Share precious moments with others, never be selfish but human and generous, and enjoy the moment to the fullest.' Andrea: 'What Stefano and I have in common with our dad is that we know where the sweat comes from. We work very hard and started from the bottom. The fact is that we are not the annoying, spoiled boys, that some people think we are, what makes those same people uncomfortable when they meet us.'

The relationship with the 17 year old twin Luna and Asia and India of 12, is according to the brothers very close. Andrea: 'Even though we didn't share the same roof, we have a big age difference and not that we all fought in the shower for the soap, like Stefano and I did. '

Both the guys are inspired by the Rosso mentality that there are no obstacles if you really want something. Just like their dad in 2001 wanted his own vineyards. With as a result the in the meantime famous Bianco di Rosso (A Chardonnay of 142 euro for a bottle), the Rosso di Rosso (Merlot & Cabernet Sauvignon) and the Nero di Rosso (Pinot Noir), with a year production of in total 15.000 bottles. And then there is also the Grappa di Rosso and Olio di Rosso, from the last one the Diesel farm produces 2000 liter a year, and the olive oil is so famous that it's sold out for the following three years. The white wine is recently distinguished as the best of North-Italy. "I am so proud", says Renzo Rosso, "because when we started there were a lot of skeptical people, the wine business is very conservative. But now that the best restaurants want to serve our wine, we finally get the respect we deserve."

A bigger production is not on the agenda. "The vineyard is exactly at the right position on the mountain, when you take the grapes somewhere else, the taste will change. There is the goal to improve the quality, we're now on 94 points and we want to bring it to 100".

Also since two years he is also the partner in NaturaSi, with about 300 stores the biggest organic supermarket chain in Italy. "Honestly, I learn every day." All though cooking was never his territory. "But because I always eat in good restaurants, I exactly know how I want a dish."