

# Caraceni Part II: A. Caraceni – Rome – Paris – Milan

BY SVEN RAPHAEL SCHNEIDER

After introducing [Domenico Caraceni](#), we will focus today on Augusto and Mario Caraceni, who became famous for their Sartoria *A. Caraceni*. Augusto's real name was, in fact, Agostino, but he was commonly called Augusto.

As Domenico's younger brother, he learned the craft of tailoring in the same way: at their father's workshop in Ortona a Mare. After Domenico had successfully established the family name as the epitome of fine bespoke tailoring in Rome, he reached out to his younger brothers, Augusto and Galliano, convincing them to open tailor shops in other major cities.

## A. Caraceni – Paris – Rome – Milan



Agostino "Augusto" Caraceni 1930's

Consequently, Augusto Caraceni went to Paris, where he opened a huge tailor shop under his own name at 92, Avenue Jena in 1935. There, he maintained much more than a simple tailor shop. In fact, Caraceni Paris was located in an impressive three-story building which allowed Augusto to cut, sew and tailor every garment in house. Due to his skill and probably partly due to his famous family name, he rose to become the most desirable tailor in the French capital in less than five years. Commissions included making the evening tailcoats for stars like Josephine Baker and Charles Boyer. However, when WWII reached France, the Italian Augusto was considered to be in hostile territory. Consequently, he had to close down his operations against his will and leave to country in 1940. He decided to go back to Italy, where his older brother, Domenico, died the same year.

After the war, Augusto's younger brother, Galliano, decided to continue the Caraceni tailor shop in Rome. Augusto opened his own tailor shop, for the second

time, under the name A. Caraceni – but this time in Milan at Via Fatebenefratelli 16 in April 1946. Interestingly, the atelier has always been on the second floor and never had a storefront. You will only find it if you are looking specifically for A. Caraceni! Nevertheless, the business has prospered and has remained at the very same address to the present day.

With regard to tailoring, Augusto was always a proponent of the ease of movement. He used to say, “Se un abito é fatto bene si deve poter tirare di scherma” which means as much as “If a garment is well, you should be able to fence.” What he meant is that you have to be able to lift your arms freely without the whole [jacket](#) moving with you.

## Mario Caraceni



Mario

Caraceni

Initially, A. Caraceni tailored exclusively for the Italian nobility (denying all others), but during the 50's and 60's, Augusto opened up the atelier for the rich and famous as well. In 1972, the business was taken over by his son, Mario, who was then 47 years old. In honor of his father, Mario – a third generation Caraceni – decided to keep the name A. Caraceni under which the atelier still operates today. Just two years after his retirement, Augusto Caraceni died in 1974.

Luck would have it that Mario turned out to be an extremely talented bespoke cutter and tailor, which resulted not only in a huge clientele, but also in numerous prizes and awards. Among them, Mario received the *St. Omobono* prize, the gold medal and certificate of the *Milanese Tailor's Guild*, as well as the Grand Prize of *A Life As A Tailor* from the *National Academy of Tailors* in Rome.

## His Style and How His Fine Taste For English Clothing Almost Killed Him



A. Caraceni Team Photo Milan 1948

Mario continued his father's philosophy of the ease of movement and he learned a lesson in style from Gianni Agnelli. When the late Fiat mogul came first to the A. Caraceni atelier, he always wore a [pocket square](#) that would harmonize with the [shirt](#) and [tie](#), but never match it. However, Mario's affinity to good clothes almost cost him his life! In 1943, the family moved from Milan back to Ortona a Mare and found refuge in a farmhouse along with a number of others escaping the war. On September 8, somebody in the house gave light signs to the British, and when the Italian authorities came to the house to investigate, they saw the tag inside Mario's [overcoat](#) reading "Burberry – London." They immediately thought Mario Caraceni was the spy, especially since he was a young man amongst elderly and wounded refugees. At the time, England was still considered the best producer of menswear, and being a Caraceni, Mario had many things from London mailed to him. After being interrogated with a gun on his temple, it was decided that he should be killed. Although scared, he asked his sister to bring him his hat since he



did not want to die without the proper attire. When she brought it to him, the officers looked at the tag and it read, "James Lock Co. London." By now they were really convinced he was a spy, but they postponed Mario's execution until the next morning in order to make it more official. Luckily, he was able to escape that night with his sister!

Despite this experience, Mario Caraceni continued to wear a hat, and so it is very easy to identify him on a group photo of the A. Caraceni Team which was taken on the steps of the cathedral in Milan in 1948. Just two years after the launch of the Sartoria, they already had three dozen employees.

In our following articles, we will continue our exploration of the family with the [4th and 5th generations of A. Caraceni](#), talk about [Tommy & Giulio Caraceni](#) and, last but not least, not explain why [Ferdinando Caraceni](#) is not part of the real Caraceni family.