

TOMMY & GIULIO CARACENI

Keeping the Legacy Alive

Caraceni is a legendary name in Italian bespoke tailoring. As we have already discovered (see pages 56 and 60–65), the great Domenico Caraceni, one of the founding fathers of contemporary Italian tailoring, had two brothers, Augusto and Galliano. Domenico died in 1940, and after the war his bespoke ateliers in Milan and Rome (as well as the brand he had created) were passed on to his son Augustarello, who was not in the tailoring business and was not fully prepared to handle this great heritage.

Augusto therefore decided to open his own bespoke atelier, A. Caraceni, in Milan. Galliano continued to take care of Domenico's atelier in Rome until 1963, when, with his sons Tommaso (Tommy) and Giulio, he opened his own *sartoria* on Via Campania, where the bespoke workshop has remained to this day.

Travelling to learn

As well as learning the craft in the family atelier, in the early 1950s Tommy and Giulio started to travel in order to acquire tailoring experience

at prestigious ateliers in France. They also spent time in London, at Davis & Sons and then, in 1954, at Kilgour, French and Stanbury (now Kilgour) on Savile Row.

Two generations later Tommy's grandson, the young Andrea Caraceni, who today works in the family *sartoria*, would do the same. He travelled to London to train with Maurice Sedwell on Savile Row, then worked with various made-to-measure companies in Italy in order to study the different methods of crafting men's garments, before returning eventually to Via Campania.

Loyal to the Caraceni style

Any visitor to the Caraceni atelier on Via Campania will meet Maestro Giancarlo Tonini, the house's long-serving head cutter. This artisan has been working with the Caraceni family for more than fifty years. He started as a tailor in Domenico Caraceni's atelier in 1959 (on Via Boncompagni), before moving with Tommy and Giulio to the new company in 1963 and becoming a cutter there in the 1970s. Today he is training Andrea to perform the



ABOVE The façade of the Tommy & Giulio Caraceni shop on Via Campania, Rome.

OPPOSITE Master cutter Giancarlo Tonini started working with the Caraceni family in 1959.





demanding Caraceni cut, and transmitting the well-kept secrets and idiosyncrasies of the Caraceni style.

The style and lines of garments made by Tommy & Giulio Caraceni have remained almost unchanged since the company's foundation, except for some proportions, which have gradually adapted to modern taste and requirements. The jacket is moderately structured, with clean lines and slightly padded *con rollino* shoulders (with a narrow and slightly puckered sleevehead). The canvas, which is created by hand for each garment, is made from a slightly heavier

material than average, with the exception of canvas for summer and very light garments. The lapels are 9 centimetres ($3\frac{1}{2}$ inches) wide for a single-breasted jacket, but may widen to 10.5/11 centimetres (about 4 inches) for a double-breasted jacket.

Tommy & Giulio Caraceni in Rome and A. Caraceni in Milan are thus both completely loyal to the roots of the family style. And, considering the enormous influence of their ancestor Domenico on modern tailoring, the fact that the legacy is preserved and alive deserves great appreciation and respect.

ABOVE Andrea Caraceni, Tommy's grandson, with Tonini.

OPPOSITE, TOP Tonini works at his cutting table.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM A double-breasted jacket in progress; it is ready for its second fitting.

