

THE MAGAZINE FOR DENIM AND FASHION TRENDS

SPORTSWEAR[®] INTERNATIONAL #255

NOVEMBER 2013
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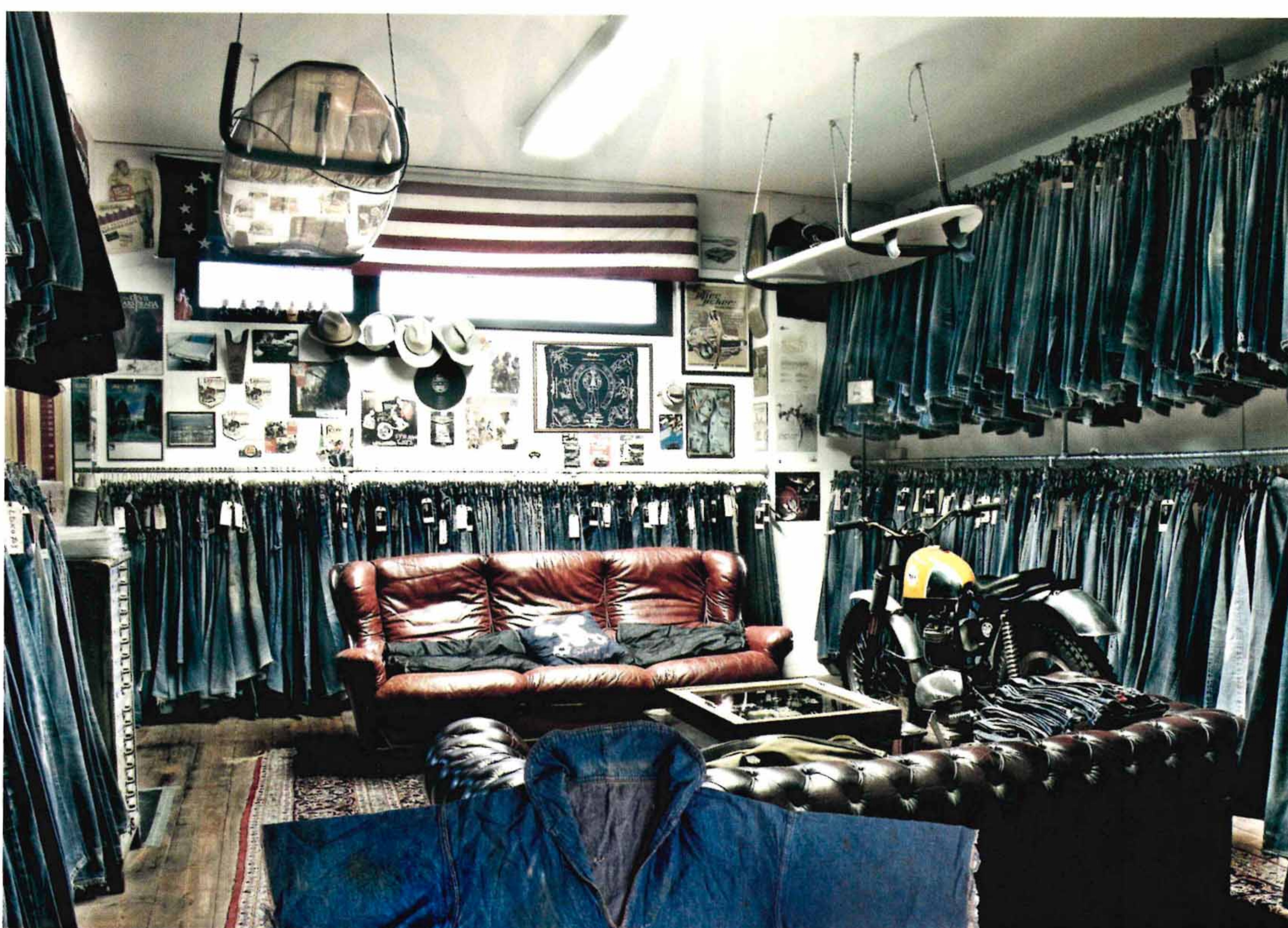
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FROM LEFT: ANTONIO DI BATTISTA, HIS ARCHIVE, ARCHIVE PIECE FROM THE US NAVY 1940, HIS BOOK TITLED MY ARCHIVE

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MY VINTAGE LIFE

DESIGNER ANTONIO DI BATTISTA HAS WORKED FOR 25 YEARS IN THE JEANS MARKET AND OWNS A 3,500-PIECE VINTAGE DENIM GARMENT ARCHIVE. HERE, THIS EXPERT TALKS ABOUT THE MARKET'S EVOLUTION, NEXT TRENDS AND HOW HE FINDS INSPIRATION. INTERVIEW BY MARIA CRISTINA PAVARINI

Antonio Di Battista's archive is based in Pescara, in Central Italy and houses 3,500 vintage jeanswear items. A selection of the 70 most special jeans is described and shown in his new book *My Archive – The History of Denim from 1900-1950*, published by *Crackers Magazine*. "I started buying and collecting them 25 years ago for the pure pleasure of possessing them," he says while admitting that he is one of the 30 most keen and feverish vintage denim collectors worldwide.

Why did you choose these 70 items for your book?

I wanted to present the evolution of jeans in terms of silhouettes, fits and materials even if my archive also hosts older and more precious items. Some of them actually belong to the 1890s and are done with the old French Tissue de Nime, even if not so precious according to normal collectors' criteria.

You don't collect deadstock pieces, but only aged and used garments. Why?

I prefer to collect items with a history. I like to guess what its owner was doing when wearing them.

How do you start designing a collection?

Is your archive still your first inspiration source after all these years?

My archive is my starting point. Though I also employ material and information I collect from seasonal trips to California and Japan. From my archive I define ideas and details and then add other elements more related to trends and contemporary styles. I always start from materials, then come fit and finishing. Though it is the finishing that provides the most evident and impressive character.

How do you select fabrics?

It all depends. If I have to pay attention to costs I choose materials according to the treatment I want to apply. When there are less restrictions I choose nobler fabrics such as handcrafted selvedge natural indigo fabrics. Treatments can be more contrasting and realistic and one can get to the desired final effect without much effort.

What will the future be for the denim and jeans market?

There will be always more two distinct areas in both—very cheap ones and very sophisticated

ones. Fit and finishing will be always more important: a mediocre fabric enhanced with the right fit and an appropriate wash can give life to a good product altogether.

Premium denim is suffering because of widespread low-cost jeans and denim offered by vertical chains. Do you agree?

It is true. Though in a few years we'll see the whole situation turning upside down. Only a few brands are investing on quality right now and I think this will truly happen in the next three seasons. Brands such as RRL that always focused on quality and attention for details will develop further more in this direction. Others such as J. Crew making top quality products at relatively affordable prices will get along well.

What trends will characterize s/s 2015 most?

There will be two main trends—a marked fashion direction for women's jeanswear betting even more on prints and applications, though interpreted more soberly, while for men's we will see more sophisticated developments focused on the vintage world characterized by irregular handmade treatments which will almost make them similar to single pieces.