

The Glamour of Bellville Sassoon

20 September 2013 – 11 January 2014

- **A major retrospective of Britain's foremost high-society couture label**
- **Features over 100 designs and 80 dresses commissioned by some of the world's most stylish women**
- **Includes outfits for Diana, Princess of Wales, HRH The Princess Royal, HRH Princess Michael of Kent and HRH Princess Alexandra**
- **Explores the culture, craft and international status of British couture fashion since the 1950s**

From the 1960s onwards, Belinda Bellville and David Sassoon established themselves as the go-to couture house for young, glamorous and exclusive designs. Their fashion-forward approach, combined with luxurious workmanship, offered an exciting alternative to the conservative styles of traditional couturiers.

This autumn, the Fashion and Textile Museum celebrates its 10th anniversary with an exhibition exploring the history of British couture through the work of Bellville Sassoon, from the 1950s to the present day. With a selection of over 150 designs, dresses and rich contextual material, the exhibition explores how the formality of the post-war years gave way to the Swinging Sixties and a new generation of aristocrats and celebrities wanting clothes to get them noticed. The season's most lavish coming-out parties, most influential weddings and high-powered balls all fuelled demand for beautiful, bespoke and fashionable clothes.

Bellville Sassoon dressed royal clients including Princess Margaret, Princess Anne, Princess Alexandra and Princess Michael of Kent. The label was also a favourite of Diana, Princess of Wales.

The company expanded in the 1980s. The label became Bellville Sassoon Lorcan Mullany when the designer joined in 1987, and Mullany further developed the ready-to-wear business and the company's long-standing association with Vogue patterns. He continues to design for the Vogue license today, which has enabled thousands of women to create their own Bellville Sassoon designs at home.

Celia Joicey, Head of Fashion and Textile Museum, says:

'Bellville Sassoon's designs epitomise high-society glamour. Bellville Sassoon reinvented British couture in the second half of the 20th century, and their designs wonderfully evoke a world of debutantes, socialites, weddings and royalty. We are delighted to be collaborating with David Sassoon to create this major exhibition.'

Media information

For immediate use

Supported by Newham College of Further Education, the exhibition events programme includes discussion of the resurgence of bespoke tailoring and dressmaking, plus an opportunity to draw inspiration from the craft and construction techniques of Bellville Sassoon's workrooms.

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Notes to editors

1. The exhibition is organised by the Fashion and Textile Museum. Exhibition dates 20 September 2013 – 11 January 2014
2. The Fashion and Textile Museum is at 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF. Exhibition opening times: Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–6pm; Last admission 5.15pm. Ticket prices: £8 adults, £5.50 students and concessions, free entry for under 12s. Booking line online: ftmlondon.org or by telephone 0844 248 5076
3. 'The Glamour of Bellville Sassoon' by David Sassoon and Sindy Stemp is published by ACC Editions.
4. The Fashion and Textile Museum is the only museum in the UK solely dedicated to showcasing developments in contemporary fashion, as well as providing inspiration, support and training for those working in the industry. Founded by iconic British designer Zandra Rhodes in 2003, the museum is owned by Newham College London – one of Europe's largest further education colleges.
5. The exhibition is curated by Dennis Nothdruff, Curator of the Fashion and Textile Museum, where his exhibitions include 'Catwalk to Cover: A Front Row Seat', 'Foale and Tuffin Made in England' and 'Tommy Nutter: Rebel on the Row' which focused on the history of Savile Row and men's tailoring in the 1960s and 1970s.

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