

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Versace dabbles in daily power dressing, drops 'Icons' collection

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American actress Anne Hathaway is tasked with taking Versace's iconic fashion pieces into the everyday in the house's latest campaign. Image credit: Versace

By AMIRAH KEATON

Italian fashion label Versace is leaning into influential motifs, Milanese tailoring and more, highlighting the house's decades-long run of dressing dynamic women as part of a new campaign.

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American actress Anne Hathaway and Chinese singer, songwriter, DJ and actress Li Yuchen, known by her stage name Chris Lee, star alongside one another for the launch of The Versace Icons collection. Corresponding imagery places focus on how the extraordinary figures go about carrying a high caliber of power dressing, for which the house's name has become synonymous, into the everyday.

"The Versace woman is someone who is bold, isn't afraid to speak her mind and is comfortable in her own skin," said Kimmie Smith, cofounder and creative director of *Athleisure Mag*, New York.

"Both women align with the unapologetically feminine aesthetic of Versace," she said. "Versace as a brand embodies and amplifies women and allows them to choose whether they will wear bold prints or will have classic styles that can work regardless of the trends that are taking place."

"Although both women are in the entertainment industry, what they do as well as their own personal styles are different from one another, however both make this collection their own."

Ms. Smith is not affiliated with Versace, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

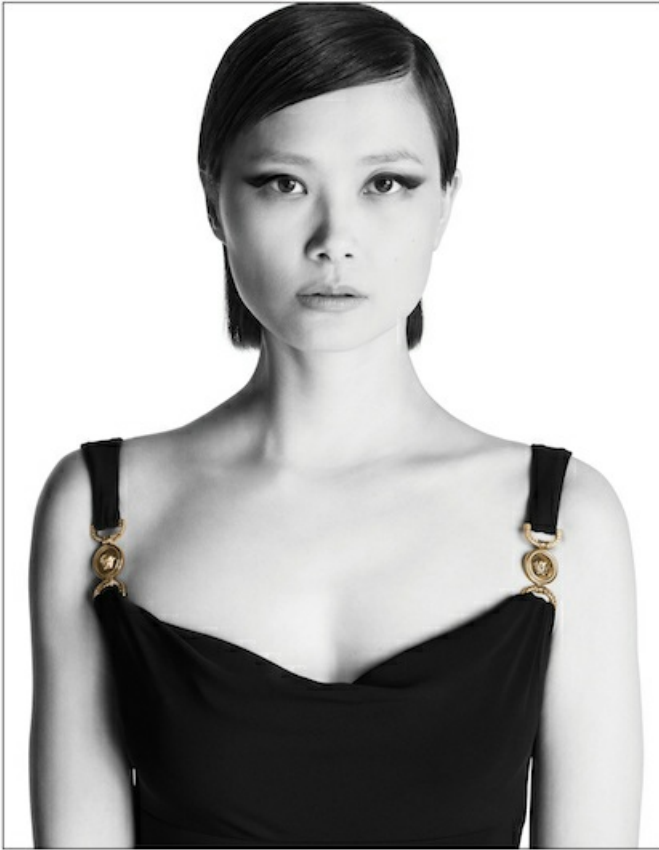
Versace presents...

A boned corset acts as the foundation of the Versace Icons initiative, grounding the exercise in a timeless silhouette, one the house has used to create its signature hourglass shape since the start.

Framing Versace's marketing moment launched on April 3, the collection is now available in-store and at [Versace.com](https://www.versace.com) is a series of portraits captured by fashion photographer duo Mert and Marcus.

The pair conceive a compelling, primarily black-and-white creative treatment that affords the house's gold emblem

and metallic tones an opportunity to shine through shots.



Chris Lee for Versace Icons. Image courtesy of Versace

Featured throughout the collection are key pieces inspired by archival hits the fact that iterations of the references still work today serves as a testament to how deeply embedded into the industry's DNA Versace's designs remain to this day.

While Ms. Hathaway rocks a sculpted bustier corset with jeans, giving definition to the new-age tank top, Ms. Lee is outfitted in a tailored black jersey dress, wherein a soft cowl neck of loosely-draped luxury fabric is accented by the house's badge of honor.

Joining the garment's straps are Medusa medallions, with detailing inspired by the Atelier Versace collection of Spring 1995.

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A post shared by Donatella Versace (@donatella_versace)

"To me, the Versace Icons collection is timeless elegance with an edge," said Ms. Hathway, in a statement.

"I'm so proud of these images which seem to represent Donatella's vision of empowerment. What has left the biggest impression on me from this amazing experience is Donatella's heart, generosity, and kindness," she said. "She and everyone in the Versace Family have been so incredibly welcoming and supportive of me, for which I am very grateful."

"What a thrill to be a Versace woman!"

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Versace (@versace)

In a move ultimately symbolic of the significance of this campaign effort, the house notes one collection standout, a black fitted Grain de Poudre "DV" pantsuit, the go-to uniform of its chief creative director.

"Donatella Versace is known for always having key pieces that are true classics," *Athleisure Mag's* Ms. Smith said.

"Knowing Donatella's history with the house of Versace and how her brother used her as a muse for classic pieces that continue to be worn this day whether they appear in various collections or are worn by going into the archives, he established Donatella as one that you can take fashion cues from," she said. "A key blazer, a tank, a dress and a pantsuit are some of the most versatile pieces that we can gravitate to when looking to head out to brunch, a meeting, last minute gallery event or to have a meeting."

"From a [brand] standpoint, including the hardware of the brand and more importantly, making their tank something that leans toward the Milanese tailoring of the house allows us to see a playful approach to such a key item with its corseted features."

Reclaiming the corset

Directly involved in the item's evolution, female designers and models have, together, over the course of fashion history, cast the garment in a new light.

The creations of late English fashion designer Dame Vivienne Westwood ([see story](#)) may come to mind most readily.



A number of Vivienne Westwood's core styles have experienced a recent resurgence as a result of the rise of vintage wear. Image credit: Fashion Institute of Technology

Others, ranging from the likes of British designer Alexander McQueen ([see story](#)) to Italian lingerie label La Perla, founded by master corset maker Ada Masotti, have also broken down barriers by reclaiming the technique through their work.

Modern-day streaming sensations continue to keep the fixture alive. Experts at Stylight Insights report Netflix's "Bridgerton" spiked corset searches in January 2022 ([see story](#)).

What was once tapped as a tool of dominance, constructed in a manner that purposely restricted its wearer the garment offers just one example of how fashion can indeed work to enforce gender roles or, when employed strategically, can liberate society from them has, with some introspection and experimentation, since been reworked.

Elevating a once-imposing garment into a symbol of empowerment is no small feat, yet Versace's role in the process was paramount, as proven by archival collections and 1990s-era runway presentations that have permeated turn-of-the-century fashion photography.



Donatella Versace walks with Versace models. Image credit: AP/Luca Bruno

Ms. Donatella herself played an outsized and, arguably, often under-acknowledged role in pushing house notions of power dressing to the fore of fashion.

With Versace Icons, the visionary continues to do so.

"I will wear every piece in this collection and have worn similar for decades," said Ms. Versace, in a statement.

"These luxurious wardrobe essentials fit perfectly and showcase the beautiful and powerful simplicity of our silhouette," she said. "The multi-faceted and inspirational women we dress, talk about how Versace makes them feel: considered, confident and stunning."

"Just as an Icon should feel."

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