

Charming Neckties

Neckties have always been a symbol of sophistication. The most important personalities wore suits with ties as a sign of social status. Despite the fact that men are becoming increasingly casual in their manner of dress, we can be sure of something: the tie is an emblem that will never die.

USES

The cravat is the most personal piece of clothing in a male wardrobe. *“A man chooses the tie he is going to wear because of his morning mood,”* **Stefano Bigi**, co-owner of Bigi Cravatte tells us. It is an accessory characteristic of a man who values classic tradition while paying careful attention to the latest developments in fashion trends. But what criteria might be used by a manager when it's time to choose the necktie? **Gianni Cerutti**, co-owner of Passaggio Cravatte claims that *“there are no rules for a tie choice, or, better, there is only one rule: instinct. I always say that necktie choice is a true gesture of instinct. I like it or I don't. The truth is, when you are opposite the mirror, and you don't know what necktie you should wear, there are several factors you consider: humor, scale of vanity, weather, the importance of the day's events.”* The necktie is a piece of clothing you can always wear, whether you have a job meeting or you are going out with friends. As **Giorgio Ricciardi**, owner of Giorgio Napoli, says, *“Necktie choice must be absolutely rigorous in form, color, design. But it's obvious you can feel free to choose a holiday of colors or design when you are wearing it in your free time.”*

PRODUCTION

There is not a standard length of time for making neckties. The average is around forty-five to sixty minutes, but every brand has its own manufacturing times. Stefano and **Paola Bigi**, co-owner of Bigi Cravatte, calculate an average time of thirty-five to forty minutes for each tie. *“The entire process is about thirty-five to forty minutes, but it could change depending on the number of labels we want on the tie, or if hand-rolled edges are required. The cleverness—experience—of the needlewomen is also very important,”* they tell us. Different phases are required in necktie manufacturing, as **Maria D'Ambrosio**, owner of Nodi d'autore, explains. *“Ours is a handmade product. The first stage is the cut of the weave, and the second is the cut of the lining. Then the inside is cut (soul) with a machine known in Italian as “rasofilo.” Then follows the ironing with the insertion of the soul (lining). When the necktie is finished, it has to be bended and manually sewed with a single thread. In the last stage, the keeper loop and the label will be put in place.”* Costs of production include three areas: fabric, design, and labor. *“Production costs depend on composition and com-*



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OUR TOP 6

- 01 MAURIZIO MARINELLA
- 02 GIORGIO NAPOLI
- 03 LESTER
- 04 PINEIDER
- 05 NODI D'AUTORE
- 06 AMADEO LOCATELLI

Our choice Work Style Selection

We researched producers and designers of ties until we had approximately 90 brands. Then our jury, including fashion experts, fashion bloggers, and fashion PR experts voted on the ties. **The jury was composed of** • **Marta Scetta**, Editor at the Work Style Magazine • **Cristina Milani**, Chairwoman, Gentletude Onlus • **Maria Silvana Pavan**, Independent Music Professional • **Paolo Aicardi (Chairman)**, Commercial Director at Fondiaria-Sai and

sports commentator at Telelombardia • **Rosario Imperiali**, founder Studio Legale Imperiali + Alliance Deloitte-Imperiali • **Peter Conrad**, Managing Director Head UHNW Segment Wealth Management • **Emmanuel Maindron**, independent journalist and freelance consultant • **Palle Ellemann**, Senior Consultant at GES • **Sandro Lombardi**, director of AITI for twenty-four years (1988-2009) • **Jerzy Potocki**, President of AIMS International Poland.



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plexity. Jacquard woven silks are the most luxurious and expensive types of silks to use. This type of silk is considered heavy so as to provide a reliable body. The complexity of the design is another factor, as each color represents an individual yarn fed into the loom,” **David Pireh**, PR and CRM at Edwin Pireh tells us. In the majority of cases, fabric costs exceed labor costs. As **Amedeo Quaranta**, owner of Amedeo Quaranta Locatelli says, “In the making of a tie, various costs are involved, especially raw material costs (silk, wool, and cotton). These elements account for seventy percent of the total expense, and you have to add the labor costs (thirty percent).”

NUMBERS

Making a handmade necktie is a process that needs the participation of different professionals, beginning with the choice of fabric made by a designer, followed by the production, and ending with the finishing touches. This slow process will not result in a large number of final products. At Drake’s, for example, “we pro-

duce around 2,000 ties a week,” **Jamie Ferguson** tells us.

CHOOSING THE WEAVES

Often the company owners make the style choices. At Bigi Cravatte, for example, Paola and Stefano choose their own collections. “We count on our own experience; we research with just the help of our archives.” The situation is quite different for Passaggio Cravatte, where **Marta Passaggio**, co-owner and Gianni Cerruti choose only vintage silks. “We are always on the lookout for silks. We don’t have a collection because vintage silks are endangered. We show what we find to our customers. Touching a silk from seventy years ago makes us feel so excited. To be used at Passaggio Cravatte, a silk has to thrill us,” Cerruti tells us. A different approach is used at Cravattificio Diana, as **Silvana Bressan**, E-sales Manager, explains. “The style is followed by our style office who provide inputs to our designers. When designs are ready, they are sent to production, where they are colored, and where “blankets” are made; immediate-



Thanks

We, at Work Style, want to thank all the brands that have taken part in the article:

- **Quaranta Locatelli**. Amedeo Quaranta. Italy. (Europe)
- **Bigi Cravatte**. Stefano e Paola Bigi. Italy. (Europe)
- **Canali**. Claudia Catalano. Italy. (Europe)
- **Cravattificio Alba**. Rocco Cazzato. Italy. (Europe)
- **Cravattificio Diana**. Silvana Bressan. Italy. (Europe)
- **Drakes**. Jamie Ferguson. United Kingdom. (Europe)
- **Edwin Pireh**. David Pireh. New South Wales. (Australia)
- **E. Marinella**. Maurizio Marinella. Italy. (Europe)
- **Giorgio Napoli**. Giogio Ricciardi. Italy. (Europe)
- **Lester**. Carlos Satrustegui. Spain. (Europe)
- **Mark Roscoe Design**. Mark Roscoe. Indiana. (USA)
- **Nodi d’autore**. Maria D’ambrosio. Italy. (Europe)
- **Passaggio Cravatte**. Gianni Cerutti e Marta Passaggio. Italy. (Europe)
- **Pineider**. Linda Zamboni. Italy. (Europe)
- **Salvatore Ferragamo**. Laura Vere-Hodge. Italy. (Europe)
- **Soloio**. Davide Lonoce. Spain. (Europe)
- **Tiesolution**. Antonio Gea Sánchez. Germany. (Europe)
- **Toptie**. Giuseppe Consolo. Italy. (Europe)



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Super-Luxury Artisan

Maurizio Marinella (photo): the Neapolitan king of handmade neckties

Marinella represents the pinnacle of necktie art. Since 1914, he has "continued doing ties in the old-fashioned way, where the materials are designed and patterned in England with a limited edition of the weaves." This is an old-fashioned method at a time when everything is fast and technological. Manufacturing time is also very slow. Each necktie requires an average of forty five minutes for cutting, stitching, and finishing touches. The designer of the company is also the owner. The laboratory is located two buildings beyond the shop in Naples. This is not high-tech manufacturing or an industrial laboratory. "Maximum production is about 120 pieces per day," though the marketplace "requires double that. But we make only the amount we can." The esthetic quality of the production is the best, and the prices are unique. Those are parameters that "need specialized staff who look after every single detail." It's useless to look for the e-shop—it doesn't exist, since designs change continually. On Marinella's website, it is easy to find the addresses for his shops located in certain world capitals. The choice of the tie is "always made by first impression and persists over time." As Marinella says, "a customer may have hundreds of neckties, but he always wears the same four or five."



ly afterward, the company picks the most suitable colors for the brand, which are sent to the final stage of production where samples and traces are made. These samples are shown in the boutique, and we then produce what we sell to customers."

RELATIONS WITH CUSTOMERS

Since a cravat selection is very personal, there is a close relationship between customer and tie seller. "I personally know most of my clients, since each tie is custom-made," **Mark Roscoe**, owner of Mark Roscoe Designs, emphasizes. The seller should know about customers in order to show them the weaves that will be most appreciated by them. At Edwin Pireh, for example, "a purchase is not just a purchase, it's personal. Every item we make is handmade, which means every item we have is one of a kind. Therefore, we like to keep in constant contact with our clients to ensure they love their item as much as we do. With Edwin Pireh bespoke, Edwin actually visits the client (anywhere in the world) and over a period of time will work with them from concept to completion stage," David Pireh concludes. ●

History

Derived from the word "Croat," the first "cravats" were worn by Croatian mercenaries during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). French King Louis XIV took up the fashion of neckerchiefs after seeing them on victorious Croatian legionnaires. From that moment, the necktie has become an important sign of elegance in business life. But not all businessmen trust it.

They wear neckties ...

- **Bernard Arnault** has been the chairman and CEO of LVMH Moët Hennessy • Louis Vuitton S.A. since 1989.
- **Bill H. Gates** is chairman of Microsoft Corporation, the worldwide leader in software, services, and solutions.
- **Carlos Slim** is the chairman and chief executive of telecommunications companies Telmex and América Móvil.
- **Henry Ford** created the Ford Model T car in 1908 and went on to develop the assembly line model of production.
- **Li Ka-shing** is the Chairman of the Board of Hutchison Whampoa Limited (HWL) and Cheung Kong Holdings as of 2008.
- **Volkmar Denner** is Chairman of the Board of Management of Robert Bosch.

They don't wear neckties ...

- **Amancio Ortega** has been founding partner of Inditex (whose main company is Zara) since 1963.
- **Phil Knight** is Chairman of the Board of Nike and has been a director since 1968.
- **Ingvar Feodor Kamprad** is the founder of IKEA.
- **Jeffrey Preston "Jeff" Bezos** is the founder and CEO of Amazon.com.
- **Sergio Marchionne** is the CEO of Fiat S.p.A., Chairman and CEO of Chrysler Group LLC, and Chairman of Fiat Industrial S.p.A.



The production phases of a handmade necktie: **1** The paper pattern with measurements requested by the client is laid on the vintage silk **2** The silk is cut **3** Checking the perfection of the design and the cut **4** The three silk pieces that make the tie are put together **5** Silk is wrapped around the core of the tie **6** The silk is fully wrapped around the core of the tie and is secured with pins.

Annie Hall (in which Annie wears a tie) is a 1977 Woody Allen movie.

A woman wearing a tie is very chic

Paolo Aicardi has an extensive management background at the Italian company Fondiaria-Sai and is a well-known sports commentator at Telem Lombardia. He is a staunch defender of ties. *"For me the tie is an essential piece of clothing in a man's wardrobe. I couldn't imagine there being no neckties."* Aicardi has more than six hundred of them. *"I always wear a necktie, except when I am on the beach--although I don't dismiss the possibility that someday I will wear it there too!"* His favorite shops are Marinella in Naples and Finollo in Genoa, and he has his own criteria for tie choice. *"When I need to buy a necktie, I consider the occasion for which I'll wear it and whether it will complement my suit and serve my personal style,"* he says.

