

A trip to Missoni, the family-run fashion house

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So many threads. So much colour and fabric, and tailor's dummies. But mostly colour and expert hands. We have been to the **Missoni "colour factory"** in Sumirago, a place that is a "factory" only in name: here everything has the **feel of handmade**, from the care of those who work there, to the production time, which reflect its meticulousness.

It is the only brand that **starts with the thread and ends up with the article of clothing**. A fashion house that has history in every thread; it is odd and unique, thanks to its founder **Ottavio Missoni**, the in-house artist, but also resolute and victorious thanks to the other founder, Ottavio's wife, **Rosita Missoni**, the in-house designer.

The occasion that opened the doors of the Sumirago-based fashion house, which is celebrated and known all around the world, was the presentation of the results of the **AUB (AIdAF, Unicredit, Bocconi) lookout on Italian family-run businesses**. And what finer example than Missoni, firmly in the hands of the family shareholders, an example of management always deeply interwoven with, and linked to the other businesses.

The study analysed 746 Italian entrepreneurial businesses, all part of the fashion sector, each with a turnover in excess of €20 million, for a total of €52.6 billion, and a workforce of around 200,000.

What emerged, of interest to Missoni, was that their situation fully reflects some of the typical characteristics observed. Seventy eight percent are family-run. They are relatively small companies, but

they have existed for a long time, they grow less and do not make acquisitions, but make progress and produce better results.

This identikit reflects all of the tradition behind the **excellence of Varese**, which has always been founded on doing business in a way that looks at the product, at the territory, at values and at the quality of life. “You only need consider that our company is here in Sumirago,” said **Angela Missoni**, “because my father wanted to build it where he spent his weekends, in the countryside.”

The factory was built **at the end of the 1960s**, the first complete production came in the winter of 1970. “When we added the weaving factory,” Angela continued, “it was built separately from the original factory, because they didn’t want to spoil the garden.”

These details say a lot about the unusual way this company is run, which, immediately attracted attention from everywhere. “At the beginning of the 1970s, we established a style that the Americans called ‘put together’,” **Rosita Missoni** explained, “and since then, we’ve done everything and tried out everything with fabric.”

On this special day, the whole family came to act as guides. One of the youngest members of **Missoni** board, **Giacomo**, led one of the press groups. He, too, is employed in the family business, having returned to the factory where he grew up with his grandparents, after his father’s premature death.

It was he who led the group among the looms, the large rolls of coloured thread, the swatches, and through the sewing workshop. Through a fascinating machine that has the feel of old-time production, the depth of an important story and the continual innovations that keep it firmly on the market.

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