

Marc Laurent: Weaving Culture And Creativity

Meet the Little-Known Designer Behind Some of the Most Iconic Looks in Pop Culture

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BEVERLY HILLS, Ca. – In the bustling streets of mid-century Casablanca, a young Raphael Wizman had a dream. Little did he know that his journey would lead him from his home to the City of Angels, where his alias, Marc Laurent, would become synonymous with innovation and style.

Laurent’s fashion career began with a leap into leather manufacturing in a tiny studio in Los Angeles’ warehouse district. It was a risk leaving his then-home in Tel Aviv, Israel, for the shining lights of Hollywood, but it was a risk that would ultimately shape his legacy. His early years were spent honing his craft, drawing inspiration from the bold Middle Eastern styles he had encountered in his youth.



Marc Laurent and his wife, Chantal, just a few days after moving from Tel Aviv into their Los Angeles home.

Laurent describes the turning point in his career that changed everything: he began collaborating with iconic figures in the music industry. From Donna Summers's ethereal disco tunes to Prince's electrifying performances, Laurent found himself at the epicenter of fashion and music, where his visionary designs found perfect harmony.



A collection of replica “Beat It” and “Thriller” jackets Laurent made as part of a merchandise deal with the Jackson Estate in 2011

Perhaps the pinnacle of Laurent’s collaborations came from his partnership with the King of Pop, Michael Jackson. It was here that Laurent’s talent for seamlessly blending classic craftsmanship with edge and trend truly shone. His designs became emblematic of an era, adorning Jackson's legendary jackets in his “Beat It” and “Thriller” music videos.

Still, Laurent’s journey was not without its challenges. Laurent says “One obstacle in [his] career was when [his] studio flooded and washed away years of iconic style.” To the ever-looming threat of obscurity, he faced adversity with unwavering resilience. But through it all, he remained steadfast in his commitment to his art, rebuilding his studio and dreams from the ground up.

Laurent's clientele reads like a who's who of Hollywood royalty, with his designs gracing silver screens and red carpets for decades. From the timeless elegance of Elizabeth Taylor to the rugged charm of Steve McQueen, Laurent's pieces have adorned the most iconic figures in film history.

For Laurent, success was about more than mainstream recognition; it was about pushing the boundaries of creativity. His experience serves as a potent reminder that dreams know no bounds. From Jaffa and Casablanca's bustling markets to Hollywood's glamorous streets, Marc Laurent reminds us that you can do anything with passion, perseverance and a little talent.

As Laurent himself once said, "Success is very huge... it is much easier [to achieve mainstream success] here." Indeed, his story inspires aspiring artists everywhere, proving that dedication and determination can open any door.

From a small, back-street studio where Laurent sold his designs at the door, Laurent created a legacy forever woven into American fashion's fabric.



A more recent photo of Laurent at the wedding of his daughter, Valerie Wizman-Barnett. Featured behind her is his son, Marc Laurent Wizman, who his fashion empire was named after.

Appendix- Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

1. What initially drove your journey from Morocco as Raphael Wizman to establishing yourself as Marc Laurent in Beverly Hills?
2. How did your formative years in the Middle East shape your unique perspective on fashion and design as you transitioned to Los Angeles?
3. Give me an overview of your career in fashion, how it began, and whether there were any notable successes or obstacles.
4. Amidst your challenges, how did you maintain resilience and unwavering dedication to your craft?
5. Can you elaborate on your designs' profound impact on Hollywood's elite and how they shaped the broader landscape of American fashion?

** It's relevant to note that our interviewing process was semi-structured. Though these were the questions we sought to ask and did cover, follow-up questions and further probing of specific details did occur during the interview process.

Appendix- First Draft of Feature Lead and Story

Moroccan-Jewish Fashion Icon Marc Laurent: A Remarkable Journey to Success in the Fashion World

COLLEGE PARK, Md. –Moroccan-Jewish fashion designer Marc Laurent has had a fascinating journey to success. Laurent’s journey began in 1981 when he took a bold leap in the leather manufacturing venture in Los Angeles. Over the years, Laurent's path intertwined with music industry icons, culminating in a fusion of creativity and culture that has left a lasting mark on pop culture. From his diverse background to his innovative designs, Laurent's story serves as a testament to the immigrant experience in the United States, offering inspiration and insight into his journey.

Initially born in Casablanca, Laurent moved to Tel Aviv, Israel, in his late teens. His fashion journey, however, did not begin until he moved to Los Angeles. He was a hairstylist to the stars until 1981 when he decided to try his hand at leather manufacturing. Drawing inspiration from styles popular in the Mediterranean at the time, Laurent infused his designs with a blend of traditional craftsmanship and contemporary flair.

Laurent’s meteoric rise saw him collaborate with various music industry icons, including Prince, Donna Summers, and the King of Pop himself: Michael Jackson. His unique ability to seamlessly merge cultural influences with cutting-edge trends catapulted him into the echelons of pop culture.

His small studio, nestled in Los Angeles’ warehouse district, became a sanctuary for creativity. It wasn’t long before the works produced there became Hollywood legends. From Michael Jackson’s “Beat It” and “Thriller” jackets to outfits worn by Goldie Hawn in her iconic film “Bird on a Wire.”

Laurent’s client roster reads like a who’s who of old Hollywood royalty, with his garments seen on artists like Elizabeth Taylor, Natalie Wood, Paul Newman, and Steve McQueen.

Still, his career held many challenges. Laurent recounted a moment when his studio was flooded, and pieces that very well may have become more iconic moments were lost forever. Yet through adversity, Laurent’s resilience and determination remained unwavering, so he rebuilt and started again.

Despite the obstacles, Laurent’s dedication to his craft propelled him to succeed. His collaborations with celebrities showcased his extraordinary talent and his legacy as a visionary designer whose creations continue to captivate audiences worldwide.

In the tapestry of American fashion, Marc Laurent's journey from Casablanca to the heart of Los Angeles is a testament to the boundless possibilities that await those who dare to dream.

"Success is very huge," Laurent said, "it is much easier [to achieve mainstream success] here."

Indeed, Laurent's story embodies the achievement one can make through unwavering dedication and pursuing one's passion. From a tiny studio in Los Angeles' warehouse district came a legacy that is forever ingrained in the fabric of American pop culture. His immigrant experience serves as a reminder that in pursuing one's dreams, barriers are nothing but stepping stones to greatness.