A man in a brown tweed suit, blue shirt, and green tie is riding a light blue scooter. He is wearing a watch and a pocket square. The background is a cobblestone street.

**HUGO JACOMET**  
Photographs by Lyle Roblin

**THE  
ITALIAN  
GENTLE  
MAN**

Thames & Hudson



# ALESSANDRO SINISCALCHI

## *The Aesthete*

**E**nter the Siniscalchi *sartoria*, and any stress you may be feeling will evaporate into the atmosphere of this opulent Milanese bespoke shirt shop. The place resonates with calm and beauty, and that impression is only reinforced by the kind, welcoming eyes of its owner, the purist artisan Alessandro Siniscalchi, and his wife, Cinzia, who is in charge of women's bespoke.

Bloggers and iGents might be quick to say that your stress will later skyrocket once more as you receive the bill for your new shirt. Yet those who own Siniscalchi shirts provide glorious reviews, and clearly believe very strongly that such magnificent bespoke creations are worth every last penny. It has even been said that the brand has a cult following.

As a child, Alessandro Siniscalchi felt a strong connection to his father's side of the family, including his grandmother, a famed embroiderer whose talent was so great that many thought of her as a bona fide artist. His father, Vittorio, was an aesthete by nature and a cultured man, and he and Alessandro relished the finer things in life, including stunning woven fabrics for

which they both had a deep appreciation. Vittorio started making shirts for his friends in 1948, and he eventually opened a bespoke shirt workshop in the family home on Milan's famous Via Monte Napoleone. He became known for his stubborn insistence on attention to every detail, and for his desire to work with only the most beautiful fabrics.

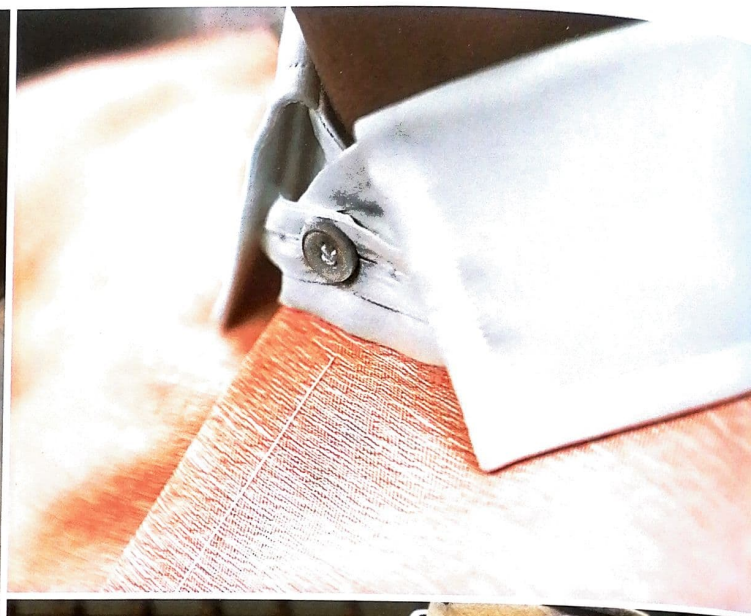
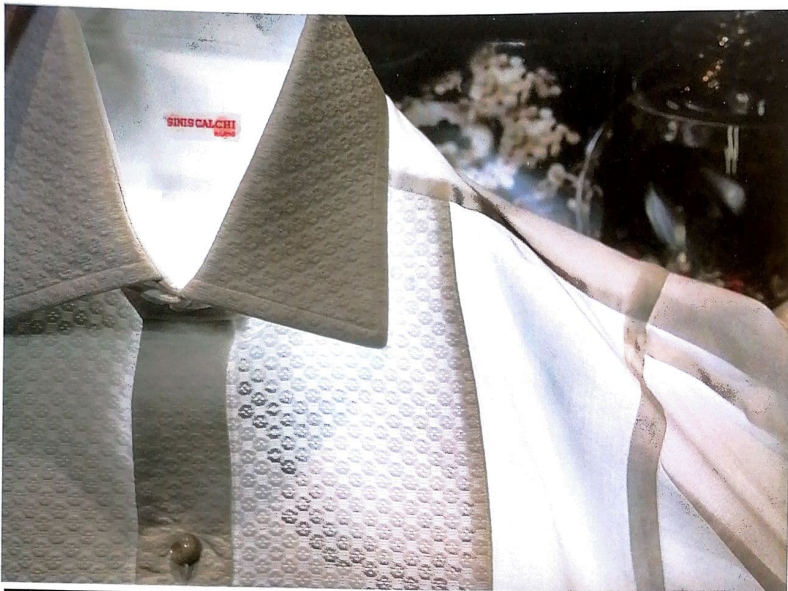
### *Siniscalchi today*

At the age of eighteen, Alessandro Siniscalchi joined his father in the workshop. Now, with thirty years of experience behind him, he crafts Siniscalchi shirts at his shop on Viale Vittorio Veneto with a unique approach: he works with every customer for as long as it takes on each shirt, until the client is totally satisfied – even if it means remaking the entire shirt from scratch. He takes this obsession to the point of insisting that the customers launder their shirts a few times and return to the shop for more checks and adjustments. It is a process not unlike visiting the orthodontist repeatedly until your teeth are perfectly aligned.



ABOVE: Cinzia and Alessandro Siniscalchi.

OPPOSITE: Alessandro Siniscalchi on Viale Vittorio Veneto, Milan, the street in which his atelier is located. Note the traditional tram in the background.



The record is an unbelievable ninety-six fittings, for a customer who apparently enjoys the experience of fine-tuning. After washing and wearing, not to mention body changes, Siniscalchi stays true to his word, offering the most intense customer service in the industry, as far as we are aware.

Selecting fabric is a purely pleasurable activity, and can require a few minutes or a few hours, depending on the customer. Paper patterns are created for each client, and the first fitting is done with mock-up fabric; it is followed by a fitting with the chosen cloth.

The Siniscalchi cut is distinctively Milanese, following the lines of the body, with international

flair that can be adapted to both formal and casual outfits. Siniscalchi describes the Milanese style as 'avoiding excessive refinement, while over-pursuing an individual's unique take on elegance'.

### *Engaging in the future of artisanal shirtmaking*

Since there are few who possess the expertise and virtues of earlier generations, Siniscalchi shares his knowledge with future shirtmakers, fervently teaching his staff as well as, since 2014, his students at the Samsung Maestros Academy. This wonderful initiative, sponsored by the greatest names of Made in Italy, aims to help

launch the next generation of Italian artisans. To those would-be craftsmen, Siniscalchi always says, 'Remember that the terms *su misura* [made to measure] and *fatto a mano* [made by hand] are sacred. It's your duty not to abuse them.'

ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A dress shirt with a spectacular piqué stiff collar and plastron; a tab-collar shirt in a blend of Carlo Riva linen and cotton; a Bengal striped green shirt (a striped shirt is called 'Bengal' when the colour stripe is the same width as the white); a pointed button-down-collar shirt in cotton denim (note the three-buttonhole cuffs).

OPPOSITE A blue-and-white-striped shirt with contrasting club collar and cuffs.



MISCALI