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BRUNELLO

IL VISIONARIO GARBATO

CEO Talks

Nicolas Houzé, CEO of Galeries Lafayette, discusses the retailer's global ambitions – and why “boring retail is dead.”

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Chalhoub At 70

A look at how the company has thrived over seven decades to become the Middle East's premier luxury group.

Pages 10 to 13

Remembering Frank Gehry

The famed architect, who died Friday at age 96, had close links to the worlds of retail and luxury, especially to LVMH and Bernard Arnault.

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Cinema Cucinelli

Brunello Cucinelli brought family, friends, industry and government executives and celebrities including Chris Pine, Jeff Goldblum and Jessica Chastain, seen here wearing the designer, to Rome's iconic Cinecittà studios for the premiere of the film about him, “Brunello, il visionario garbato [The Gracious Visionary],” which will now be rolled out globally. “The film helps bring my brand to the world, people can understand how we work,” he said. *For more, see pages 20 to 21*

PHOTOGRAPH BY MIRKO PIZZICHINI

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Brunello Cucinelli Premieres Film on His Life

Jessica Chastain, Jeff Goldblum, Chris Pine, Édgar Ramírez, Kyle MacLachlan and Jonathan Bailey were among those at Cinecittà in Rome who watched the film directed by Academy Award winner Giuseppe Tornatore.

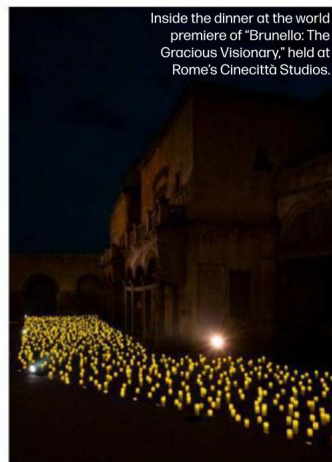
BY LUISA ZARGANI WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MARTINO CARRERA PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIRKO PIZZICHINI

Brunello Cucinelli,
Giuseppe Tornatore
and Saul Nanni.

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Inside the dinner at the world
premiere of "Brunello: The
Gracious Visionary," held at
Rome's Cinecittà Studios.



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Chris Pine

ROME — Cinecittà is an evocative location if ever there was one, with its gigantic sets, colonnades and temples of long-ago Hollywood productions, memories of Federico Fellini and countless films that have made history.

Brunello Cucinelli added another frame to this imagery with the premiere of the film "Brunello, il visionario garbato [The Gracious Visionary]" on Thursday night, inaugurating the T22 studio, Cinecittà's biggest ever.

The list of guests was impressive, including institutional figures ranging from Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni to former Prime Minister Mario Draghi, who invited Cucinelli to speak at the G20 in 2021, and Francesco Milleri, chief executive officer of EssilorLuxottica, which produces the brand's eyewear. Italian actors and several A-listers flew in for the occasion, from Jessica Chastain, Jeff Goldblum and Chris Pine to Édgar Ramírez, Kyle MacLachlan and Jonathan Bailey. ▶



Jeff Goldblum at the world premiere of "Brunello: The Gracious Visionary," held at Rome's Cinecittà Studios.



Bianca Balti



Park Jin-young

"His entire life's work is an act of devotion, devotion to his family, to his community, to craftsmanship, and he built a global luxury brand without abandoning the values that he grew up with. That's very inspiring to me," said Chastain on the red carpet. "If you don't remember your roots, where you come from, your moral compass, I mean, it's easy to get lost in this world, especially in a time like today. It's incredibly important. And also his commitment to nature, to sustainability, it's a beautiful thing to see."

American filmmaker and screenwriter Ava DuVernay said her own work "is so much about justice, about empathy, about solidarity, and so I really feel connected to the work that he's doing with his art, with his clothes, with his olive oil, with his homes, with just the aesthetic of being connected to a feeling, to the goodness of humanity."

To be sure, these have always been key issues for Cucinelli and were clearly reflected in the film, directed by Academy Award winner Giuseppe Tornatore, with a soundtrack composed by Nicola Piovani, also an Academy Award winner.

Tornatore admitted he was not familiar with Cucinelli's history and that, after shying away from this project, he decided to accept once he found himself "intrigued and engaged by the stories" the entrepreneur narrated. "This is not a documentary, it's not a film nor an advertisement but a fusion of genres. It can be defined an experimental

film," said Tornatore on Friday morning at Rome's Teatro dell'Opera.

Indeed, it blends Cucinelli's own reminiscences, archival footage, interviews with his daughters, friends, relatives and spiritual advisers – as well as with Oprah Winfrey and a few investors in the brand – and actual shooting with characters that brought to life Cucinelli's parents, relatives and key figures that helped shape his personality and profession.

Most actors are not professionals except for Saul Nanni, who plays a young Cucinelli, and who lived in Solomeo for a few months for the film.

"I have seen many docu-films, often on people who are dead and I wonder if they would approve," said Cucinelli, who was clearly in his element, quoting his beloved philosophers and admitting his emotions ran high. "I wanted to do this while I was still alive, injecting my own voice."

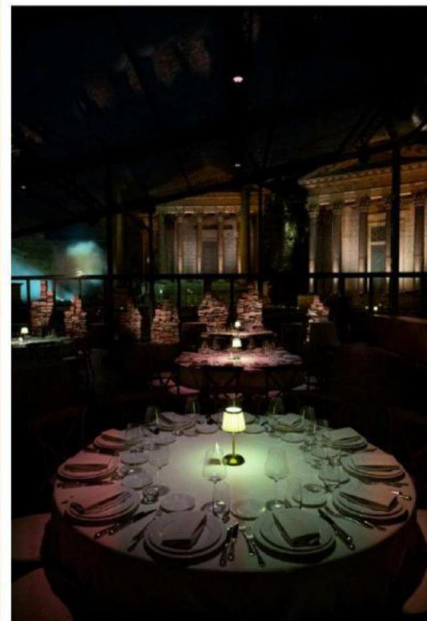
He selected Tornatore because of his admiration for his 1988 "Nuovo Cinema

Paradiso" film. "I offered him the opportunity to do it without a deadline, because you can't put one on creativity," explained Cucinelli.

Tornatore developed it across three years, including one for editing and post-production and he enthused about the freedom he was given. "It's as if Cucinelli were dead," he joked. "He never interfered and saw it once it was finished."

Also, he praised Cucinelli for allowing him to add ironic and irreverent footage, such as images from a costume party where he was dressed as a woman, or from a town festival during which Cucinelli played Jesus – scenes that included a crucifixion and that Tornatore scouted for months and found on his own, filmed by a villager on VHS. "I could have re-created it but it would not have been the same thing," said Tornatore.

With a smile, he admitted he also investigated Cucinelli's stories for accuracy, ranging from how as a child he



Ava DuVernay

would tear up old umbrellas to make kites, flown in a field of poppies, the Umbrian hills in the background, which resulted in one of the film's several poetic images. These included the wheat harvest, the opening scene with Cucinelli walking through the vineyards in Solomeo at night, lit up by strategically placed fires that keep the grapes from freezing, and his trip to Inner Mongolia for the shearing of cashmere goats.

The film was produced by the Brunello Cucinelli company, which is publicly listed, with MasiFilm and in collaboration with Rai Cinema. Asked about the reaction of investors, Cucinelli said it was "positive. The film helps bring my brand to the world, people can understand how we work," he said.

Several images were shot at the headquarters, with his team and staff, the huge windows overlooking the gardens – a must for Cucinelli. He did not pinpoint the investment, but he said it was "part of the communication expenses" earmarked by the company.

Welcoming 1,000 people to the screening, Cucinelli afterward held a dinner in Cinecittà – with his favorite paccheri concocted by Michelin-starred Da Vittorio – and decorating the space with 100,000 books, echoing the film's billboard. Cucinelli has been working on establishing a Universal Library in Solomeo, a project unveiled in 2021, which he said should be completed in two years.

"Books indicate the path," he is fond of saying. ■

Here and above: Inside the dinner at the world premiere of "Brunello: The Gracious Visionary," held at Rome's Cinecittà Studios.