



Vivienne Westwood

B I O G R A P H Y

Vivienne Westwood was born Vivienne Isabel Swire in Glossop, Derbyshire on 8th April 1941. At the age of 17 Vivienne and her family moved to London.

She began designing in 1971, along with her partner Malcolm McLaren, when London was at the forefront of cultural trends. The showcase for their ideas and designs was the shop at 430 Kings Road, London. With her changing ideas of fashion came the change of not only the name of the shop, but the entire decor as well. In 1971, 430 King's Road was known as "Let It Rock". 1950's Rock'n'Roll records and clothing were sold at a time when 'hippies' were the fashion and Rock'n'Roll music was rarely heard on British Radio. In 1972, the name was changed to "Too Fast To Live, Too Young To Die". The shop had clothing with zips and chains, T-shirts with slogans, and Zoot suits. "Sex" was the shop's new name in 1974; it sold rubberwear for the office, leather bondage, T-shirts with zips, holes, situationist slogans, and pornographic images. With 1976 came punk and "Seditionaries" followed by "World's End" which remains its name to this day.

By the end of the seventies Vivienne Westwood was already considered a symbol of the British avant-garde and in Autumn/Winter 1981 she showed her first catwalk presentation at Olympia in London. In October 1982, Vivienne Westwood began to show in Paris, the first British designer to do so since Mary Quant. She opened a second shop in London called "Nostalgia of Mud", which closed at the end of 1984, and co-incided with the end of her collaboration with Malcolm McLaren.

In autumn 1984, Vivienne Westwood was invited to show her collection in Tokyo with Hanae Mori, Calvin Klein, Claude Montana, and Gianfranco Ferre at "the best of five". 1984 was also a very important year for Vivienne as it marked a radical change of direction. Street style and youth culture ceased to play a major part of her world. She now finds inspiration in traditional Savile Row tailoring techniques, British fabrics and 17th and 18th century art. The orb logo that was first used around this time perfectly symbolized "taking tradition in to the future".

In 1989 Mr. John Fairchild, president of Fairchild publications and editor of the fashion bible *Women's Wear Daily*, in his book "chic savages", listed Vivienne as one of the six most influential designers in the world. Vivienne has always included menswear within her womenswear collections, but in July 1990 Vivienne showed her first complete menswear collection in conjunction with Pitti Uomo in Florence. In that year Vivienne Westwood was awarded the prestigious title of British designer of the year. In January 1991, Vivienne Westwood was chosen to show in Tokyo once again, this time alongside Christian Lacroix, Isaac Mizrahi, and Francesco Moschino at the Fashion Summit. Vivienne was again awarded British Designer of the year in 1992.

1993 brought the division of her womenswear label in to two different lines: "*Gold Label*", selling couture, and "*Red Label*" the pret-à-porter line. "*Man*" her independent menswear line was first shown, to International acclaim, in 1996 during *Collezioni Uomo* in Milan. In 1998 Vivienne launched a new line "*Anglomania*" for men and women in order to complete the Westwood universe and meet a younger and more casual demand. In the same year Vivienne Westwood launched her first fragrance "*Boudoir*" to be accompanied in 1999 by the bodyline "*Les Coquetteries*". Vivienne began designing a complete range of eyewear, both sunglasses

and optical, for world wide distribution. “*Libertine*” Vivienne’s second fragrance was launched in 2001.

From 2002 to present day, Vivienne Westwood has opened more stores in Italy, Russia, Japan, Korea and China. A third fragrance *Anglomaniya* was launched in 2004 and the same year saw the V&A host a Vivienne Westwood retrospective exhibition to celebrate 34 years in fashion – the largest exhibition ever hosted by a living British fashion designer, which is now touring the world. Vivienne Westwood is now both recognized as a global brand and Vivienne herself one of the most influential fashion designers in the world. In 2006, her contribution towards British Fashion was officially recognized when she was appointed a Dame.

In 2007 VW Ltd. launches two new fragrances, *Boudoir Sin Garden* and *Let it rock*. The same year *Anglomaniya* is shown at the Mercedes Benz Fashion week in Berlin and the Vivienne Westwood Retrospective exhibition opens in San Francisco in March and in Milan in September.

Vivienne Westwood in 2007 is also rewarded with the Outstanding Achievement in Fashion at the British Fashion Awards in London.

C H R O N O L O G Y

- 1941** Vivienne Isabel Swire born on 8th April in Glossop, Derbyshire
- 1957** Moves with her family to London
- 1962** Marries Derek Westwood aged 21
- 1963** Her first son, Benjamin Arthur Westwood is born
- 1965** Marriage to Westwood ends. Meets 18 year old Malcolm Edwards (aka McLaren)
- 1967** With McLaren a second son is born, Joseph Ferdinand Corre
- 1971** Opens first shop with McLaren at 430 Kings Road called ‘Let it Rock’
- 1972** The shop is redesigned and renamed ‘Too Fast To Live, Too Young To Die’
- 1974** Shop name is changed to ‘Sex’
- 1976** Shop name is changed to ‘Seditionaries’
- 1979** Shop name is changed to ‘World’s End’ (its current name)
- 1984** With McLaren opens second shop ‘Nostalgia of Mud’
- Collaboration and relationship with McLaren ends
- Shows collection in Tokyo alongside ‘Best of five’
- 1986** Carlo D’Amario is appointed as Managing Director of Vivienne Westwood
- 1989** named one of the six most influential designers in John Fairchild’s book ‘Chic Savages’
- 1990** The Vivienne Westwood shop at 6 Davies Street, in London’s Mayfair, is opened in December, where the *Gold Label* collection is sold.
- Awarded Designer of the Year at The British fashion council awards
- March, ITV’s flagship arts program, The South Bank Show, air a One hour profile of Vivienne Westwood. She is the first fashion designer to be featured on the program.

September, BBC Radio 4 broadcasts a 'special' that allows Vivienne to interview eminent figures in the museum world to highlight the fact that the stagnation of museums and galleries is a direct influence of Government policy.

Appointed Professor of Fashion at Vienna Academy of Applied Arts

First complete menswear collection shown in Pitti Uomo in Florence

1991 Awarded Designer of the Year for second time at The British fashion council awards

1992 Vivienne Westwood is made an Honorary Senior Fellow of the Royal College of Art.

Shop opens at 43 Conduit Street, London

Creates a watch design called 'Putti' for Swatch.

Chargers at CAPC Musee d'art, Bordeaux, France, sponsor a retrospective show of her life's work in November.

Following a listing in the Birthday Honours issued by Buckingham Palace, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, presents Vivienne Westwood with an O.B.E. in December.

Vivienne introduces Wedding gowns to her spring/summer collection "The Salon". Gowns are made-to-order. Unlike most designers, Vivienne does not restrict herself to white and ivory.

Vivienne Westwood marries Andreas Kronthaler who she met whilst teaching in Vienna.

1993 Vivienne creates her own tartan for the *Anglomania* line (Autumn/Winter 1993/94) and invents her own clan "MacAndreas". The Lochcarron of Scotland officially recognizes the clan. This process of recognition normally takes 200 years.

Appointed Professor of Fashion at the Berliner Hochschule der Künste.

Designs second watch for Swatch called 'Orb'

1994 Westwood wins the first Institute of Contemporary Art Award for outstanding Contribution to Contemporary culture.

Designs 'Ancien Regime' costumes in carpet to celebrate the founding in 1783 of the carpet company Brintons

1996 January, The 'Man' label, the menswear line is launched in Milan

Three-part channel 4 series, 'Painted Ladies' is broadcast in Spring

1998 Vivienne Westwood Ltd is awarded the Queen's Award for Export in recognition of the company's growing export market.

Vivienne Westwood launches her debut fragrance, *Boudoir*, developed in conjunction with world-famous 'nose', Martin Gras of Dragoco. "My perfume is called *Boudoir*. A boudoir is a dressing room – and a place to get undressed. It signifies a woman's space, a place where she is on intimate terms with herself, where she sees her faults and her potential".

Vivienne Westwood is the first designer to be honoured at the Moët & Chandon Fashion Tribute. This highly prestigious annual event, held in

conjunction with the Victoria & Albert Museum, honors a leading light from the world of fashion whose creativity and vision of the way we dress has had a profound influence on our lifestyle.

- 1999** The Red Label is launched in New York in February coinciding with the opening of a first US store on Greene Street New York
- Accessories lines are introduced including the eyewear collection and the Coquetteries body and bath line
- 2000** The museum of London holds the exhibition 'Vivienne Westwood: the collection of Romilly McAlpine' from 7th April to 25th June
- The second fragrance, 'Libertine' is launched in Europe.
- 2001** Launch of official web-site www.viviennewestwood.com
- Vivienne Westwood launch new flagship stores in Moscow (March)
- April 8th Vivienne Westwood celebrates her 60th Birthday – many UK and International press salute her and celebrate her amazing career.
- 'Libertine' is launched in the USA Far East and Australia.
- 2002** Launch of Vivienne Westwood flagship store in Hong Kong
- Launch of 2 boutiques in Korea
- 2003** Collaboration with Wedgwood. The partnership between two major English brands to develop a Vivienne Westwood home collection.
- September, opening of Vivienne Westwood palazzo and store in Milan
- October, Liverpool store opens
- Awarded the UK Fashion Export award for design
- 2004** Vivienne Westwood awarded Lifetime Achievement award at the Elle style awards
- April, The V&A hosts a Vivienne Westwood retrospective exhibition to celebrate 34 years in fashion – the largest exhibition ever hosted by a living British fashion designer
- Vivienne Westwood is awarded the Womens World Fashion Award by Former President Gorbachev in Hamburg
- A third fragrance 'Anglomania' is launched
- 2005** 'Hardcore Diamonds' are launched during the Gold Label A/W 05 show in Paris
- The Vivienne Westwood Retrospective exhibition opens at the Mori Arts museum in Tokyo
- 2006** Vivienne Westwood is made a Dame in the New Years Honours list
- The Vivienne Westwood Retrospective exhibition opens in Dusseldorf and Bangkok
- 2007** Fragrances Boudoir Sin Garden' and 'Let it Rock' launched
- Anglomania is shown at the Mercedes Benz Fashion week in Berlin

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TODAY

Vivienne Westwood Ltd is proud to be an entirely independent company and Vivienne Westwood is acknowledged to be one of the most influential fashion designers in the world.

For further enquiries on Vivienne Westwood Gold Label, please contact the press office on 0207 287 3188 pressoffice@viviennewestwood.co.uk.