

Bijan's Bijoux

A season's worth of clothes from Bijan's boutique on Rodeo Drive can run \$1 million. For the royal family of Brunei, a single design was \$10 million. Style? Taste? Not cheap. **By Holly Peterson**

TALK: How did you make your first million?

BIJAN: I didn't. My father gave it to me.

TALK: How old were you?

BIJAN: Twenty-five years old.

TALK: How long did it take to make your second?

BIJAN: I was not concerned with the second, third, or 10th million. All I wanted was to become one of the five most recognized fashion designers in the world. And this is what I did.

TALK: What's different about your clothes?

BIJAN: The attitude, the material, the color. I am one of those men's designers who have the guts and chutzpah and power to show orange and yellow and violet in all those strong fabrics.

TALK: How many clients do you have?

BIJAN: Twenty-two thousand—and when I say clients, forgive me for mentioning this, I am talking about \$1 million-a-year clients. I am absolutely not shocked if someone comes in, as someone from Northern California did last week, and spends \$250,000. A smart man. If he was not so smart, he wouldn't be so powerful or wealthy.

TALK: Million-dollar clients? How do you spend a million bucks on clothes?

BIJAN: Some people might not understand. But you know what? I don't care, because I know so many people who do understand.

Do you understand why you have to spend \$12 million for a house? Do you understand that it costs \$50,000 to take off from New York and London in a G-V? Do you understand that some people spend thousands of dollars to spend a night in a pretty suite somewhere?

TALK: Okay. Is it *hard* to spend \$1 million on clothes?

BIJAN: Hard? Oh, no. A wardrobe for one season is \$1 million. If you are buying my couture line—which has evolved into many ensembles—you have to pay for that. One visit could be a couple of million dollars alone.

Also, many, many, many of my clients live in different parts of the world and have

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different houses everywhere. In Saint-Tropez you wear one thing, and you wear something else in London. And London is different from Beverly Hills.

TALK: So it's \$100,000 for an alligator coat?

BIJAN: You said it. But I would not offer all men my alligator coat.

TALK: Do you help your clients have more fun with clothes?

BIJAN: Yes. I dictate my taste to them. I let them know that you do not wear a red jacket if you go on a business visit in one of those buildings in New York.

TALK: Do your clients admit they don't have a great sense of style or taste?

BIJAN: Almost every one of them; can you imagine? These guys are so babylike in their own way—it doesn't matter if they are diplomats or senators or kings.

I think that as you get more wealthy and more powerful you get more passive.

TALK: Is it arrogant to say "by appointment only"?

BIJAN: To me—and to 22,000 clients—absolutely not. It's beautiful.

TALK: Do you think wealth affects men and women differently?

BIJAN: Women handle wealth better; they are better spenders.

TALK: What was your first job?

BIJAN: Designing clothes for the shah of Iran.

TALK: What was the best deal you ever completed?

BIJAN: One thought, one design, one idea for \$10 million, for the royal family of Brunei.

TALK: What is your best negotiating tactic?

BIJAN: As a designer I dictate my thoughts. I don't negotiate.

TALK: What would be the hardest luxury item to live without?

BIJAN: My private staff at my home: my butler, my driver, my housekeeper, my gardener, my pool man.

TALK: Do you have advice for someone who suddenly finds himself or herself very wealthy?

BIJAN: For me, personally, I enjoy my wealth a lot more when I am in love, so my advice... When you become wealthy, don't forget to fall in love! ■



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