

On her wedding day, Meghan wore satin Aquazzura heels with her Stella McCartney reception dress.



FASHION

EDGARDO OSORIO

Meet the shoe designer of the Aquazzura label favoured by well-heeled women including the Duchess of Sussex
By Mishal Cazmi



Edgardo Osorio, creative director of Aquazzura, designs shoes that women love. That's been the Colombian-born designer's footprint ever since launching his brand in 2011 at age 25, having honed his skills at fashion houses like Salvatore Ferragamo and Roberto Cavalli.

His A-list clientele is equally smitten – notably the Duchess of Sussex, who has had a soft spot for Aquazzura since her acting days on TV legal drama *Suits*. He was the

shoe designer of choice at the royal wedding: Meghan wore Aquazzura heels underneath her Stella McCartney reception dress. Her mother, Doria Ragland, the bridesmaids and even guest Oprah Winfrey all wore them, too.

In Toronto for Holt Renfrew to showcase his latest collection, Edgardo sat down with *Hello! Canada* to chat about the special alchemy that makes his shoes some of the most coveted in the world.

What informs your design aesthetic? There's always a sensuality to the shoes. They're shoes that make you smile, have a good time. It is in my culture and my genes, but it's also that I'm very much Italian because I've been in and out of Italy for the past 13 years of my life and that's almost half of my life. I've lived all over the world and it's a mix of all these elements – things that I see on my trips and art. It's very eclectic because, at the end of the day, I want somebody to come in and be able to buy their shoes go to work, pick up their kids from school, go to a party, get married and everything in between.

'I work on making shoes that make you feel like a movie star when you try them on. You feel like a princess'

How would you describe the Aquazzura woman? One thing Aquazzura women have in common is that they love to have fun, they like fashion, they like to enjoy life and have a good time.

How does it feel to have Meghan as a fan of your footwear? Meghan has been an Aquazzura girl for a number of years. She's very sophisticated. She likes a clean silhouette in what she wears, but she always has a very sexy strappy shoe. I couldn't ask for a better ambassador for the brand. She's a wonderful role model in every way. Not only does she have wonderful taste and she's a beautiful girl, she's also a wonderful human being with the way she speaks and the example she sets.

In an interview, you said that you'd love the Queen of England to wear your shoes, too! It's because I've been watching *The Crown* too much

lately. I'm completely obsessed with her. If you think of strong women who have set an example to the world, I can't think of a better woman than the Queen of England. Because she had withstood war, she had been there for so much of history and she's weathered through all these men and she's been the only woman. I find her to be a fascinating woman and I think it would be wonderful if she wore my shoes.

You have a lot of celebrity clients. What is it about your designs that they love? I think celebrities know that when I design a shoe, it's meant to make your legs look long, and it's meant to make you feel and look great. A lot of celebrities favour my shoes because they also know they can be on the red carpet and not only look beautiful, but feel comfortable. I work on making shoes that make you feel like a movie star when you try them on. You feel like a princess.

There's been a return to wearing flats, which have traditionally not been considered very sexy. Why is that? We pioneered making a flat statement shoe, a shoe that you don't need to apologize for wearing. That's how it actually started. Women would introduce themselves and, because I was a shoe designer, they would say, "I'm sorry I'm wearing flats," and I would be like, "Why are you apologizing?" There's a moment for everything in a woman's life. There's a moment for heels, there's a moment for flats – it doesn't need to only be a stiletto.

How do you decide who you will collaborate with on some of your designs? It's whatever moves me or is a friendship or feels organic and right. I don't really plan it. For De Gournay, I had their wallpaper in my house. They saw my house featured in a magazine and called me, and I love what they do so I obviously wanted to collaborate with them.



The shoe designer's star-studded fan club: Cate Blanchett (L) wears a pair of matching 'Eclipse' patent leather pumps with her bespoke powder-pink Stella McCartney suit at the Cannes Film Festival; Nicole Kidman steps out in a navy pleated dress and white 'Casablanca' heels; and Karlie Kloss's summery outfit includes silver 'Gem Palace' sandals.

WALK OF FAME

Aquazzura's pre-fall collection, from sexy stilettos to sophisticated flats



Iison PVC Sandal, \$935, holtrenfrew.com

Powder Puff Lurex Pump, \$875

Powder Puff Brocade Flat Mule, \$715

Mule Optic 85MM Pump, \$935

FROM LEFT: STEVE PARSONS/GETTY IMAGES; KARWAI TANG/GETTY IMAGES; CHRIS JACKSON/FP/GETTY IMAGES; BAV/GETTY IMAGES; MIKE MARS/LAND/WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES; TOMMASO BODDI/GETTY IMAGES; THE MEGA AGENCY