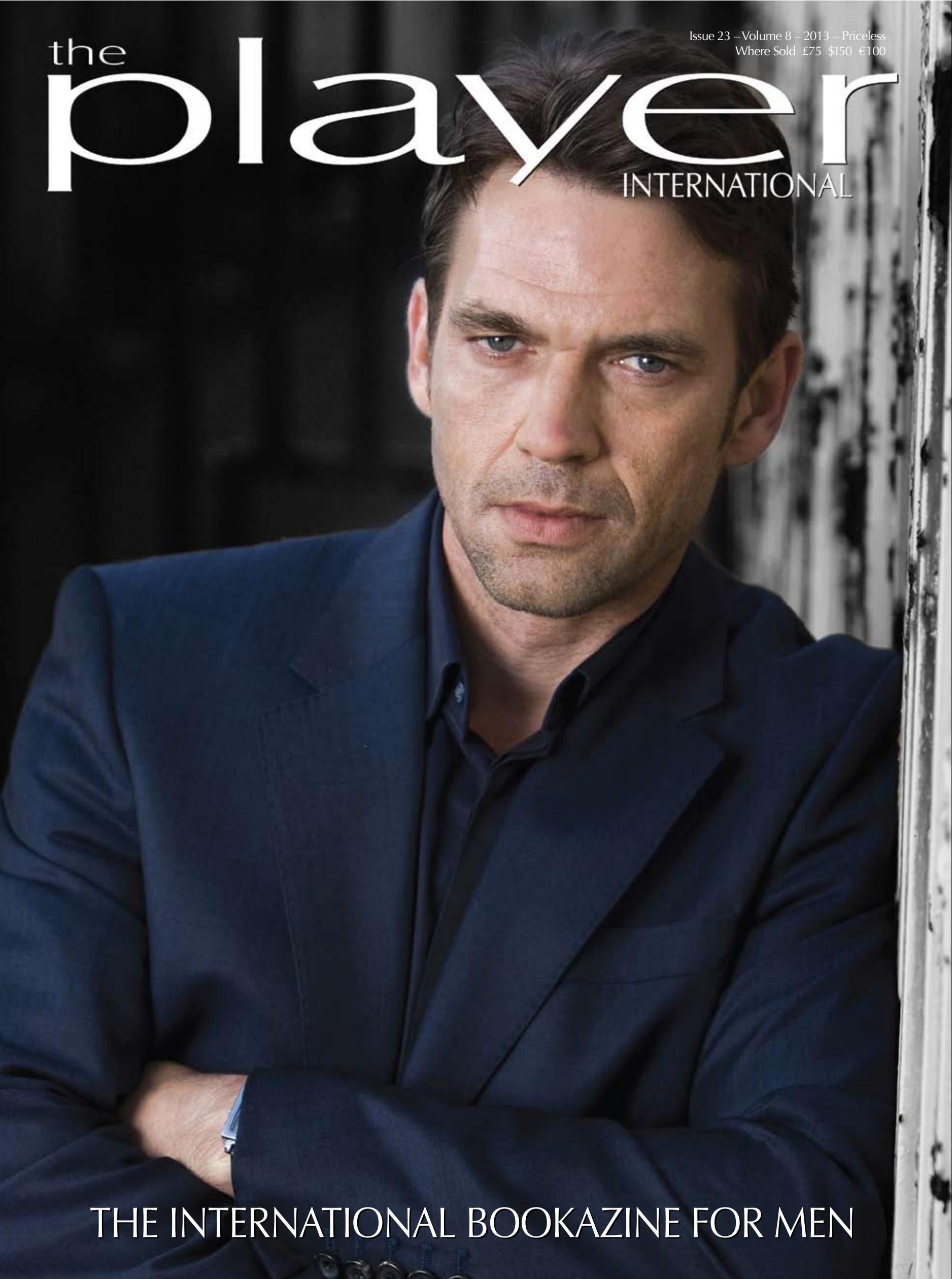


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THE INTERNATIONAL BOOKAZINE FOR MEN

### Cue the Action

Launched in May 2012 OTTO was launched as a luxury menswear lifestyle retreat offering the style-conscious gentleman a little corner of peace and refinement on the busy streets of London.

Bringing together the finest Italian artisans from across the menswear sector for the benefit of sophisticated and discerning clients, OTTO is an immersive fashion and lifestyle experience unlike any other we have come across.

But that's kind of what you'd expect from a man who grew up in Italy and from the age of 10 was making his own trousers and going to church on a Sunday to show them off to the girls!

Back to the current day and the boutique, when we put to Tony that this is more like a home, he smiles and replies: "Well that was the idea, that people would get away from the hustle and bustle of say Bond Street and come and experience a

home; you come in and you can have the attention of all the staff and we look after your every need.

"We have a gym here and a trainer, so you can work out if you want. The guys who come in from overseas we get them set up because they don't want to train in a hotel gym, or go to a spa, we have a steam room and a massage room and then perhaps they might even buy some clothes," he says laughing.

"It's something that's never been done, in normal stores they don't necessarily have the help and they don't have the exclusivity and you get to a certain level in life that you don't want the nonsense that goes on when you are trying to shop."

### Cloth Speed

Situated within the calm enclaves of Grosvenor Street, in the heart of Mayfair, London, the two-story, 4000 sq ft boutique features a menswear showroom, steam room, massage tables, refreshment area,

kitchen, and a VIP area complete with a flat-screen television a garden terrace for enjoying an espresso or a cigar from the house humidor.

The showroom, which is the centrepiece of the boutique, offers only the most desirable and exquisite hand-picked pieces from Italy's finest artisans.

All client consultation services are provided in the private 'at home' environment that pervades the boutique's design. "Once a customer, forever a client" defines the OTTO ethos, capturing both the brand's loyalty to its customers as well as their addiction to the quality of the brand.

But where did all this obsessive attention to high-end brands and perfect service come from? Well Tony Giallonardo, or Tony G as he is affectionately known, explains.

'I was a fashion junkie; I had a Gianni Versace boutique in the 90s and a Dolce & Gabbana boutique in Toronto, in Canada. I got fed up of wearing clothes that anyone



else could wear and find. I didn't want clothes that were on sale and I didn't want the scenario where everyone could afford the same things.

So I started a boutique called Five Hazelton. I wanted to do some things that weren't like everyone else. I acquired exclusivity in Canada of the best hand-made and exclusive brands in the world and I remember that I lost about 75% of my customers initially. But those that stayed would hang out with me at the store. I had a small store with a little bar downstairs and I realised that I had probably the 50 richest people in Toronto hanging out in my little bar doing business deals. A friend of mine said Tony you could take this further and expand and the rest, as they say, is history'.

### Cinch Position

With this in mind, Tony, being ever the ambitious thinker, decided to look outside of Canada's shores.

'The next step was I wanted to do the same thing under my own name in a city in

Europe. So we came to do a trunk show in London and I was really impressed, it reminded me a little bit of Toronto but on a much bigger scale and I've fallen in love with the place, so now it's my home, although I'm going back and forth as I have family in Canada.

'I decided to create a brand of the best possible products available in Italy and I went off to find the artisans who were making the most beautiful things, but they didn't have the style nor the vision, so I go in and tell them how I want things made according to my style and my taste. Now we have these 30-40 different suppliers from accessories to clothing and we put out a look.

In the past I have been blessed that whatever I like, I sold, so instead of breaking my head and trying to find out what's going on, let's look at myself and my style. I wear a lot of jeans and hand-made shoes and sport jackets and by imitating my own style, it's become very successful'.

But we're still a little confused that, as this is Tony's place, it's called OTTO, so we get him to clear that up:

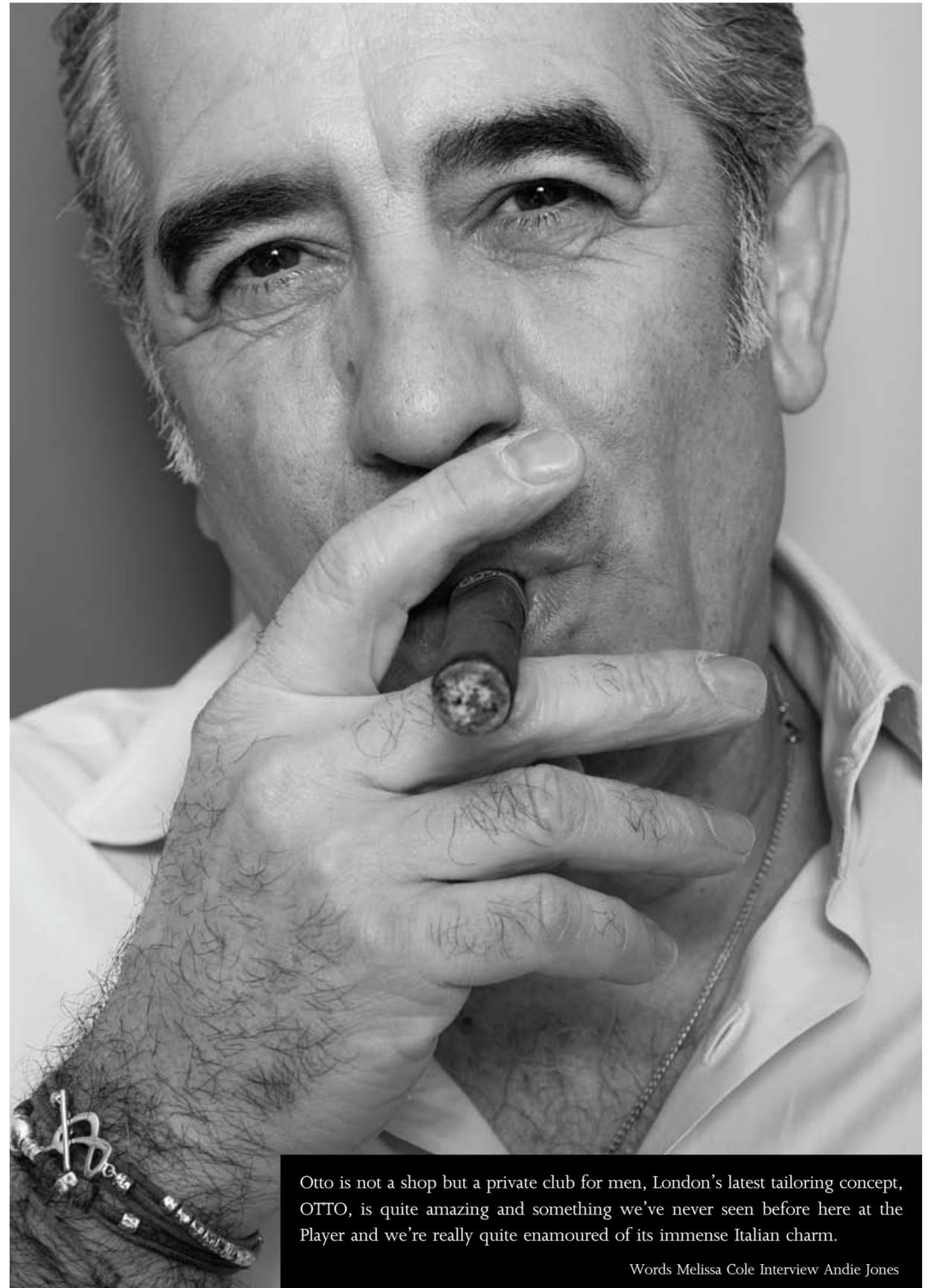
'Otto became because I liked the word and it means a lot of different things. First of all it's a number and the number eight has a lot of meanings, you look at numerology and you look at chess it's eight by eight, there's eight planets in the solar system, we also want to go to the Far East next and it has a lot of meaning there too.'

But what does Tony do to chill-out? Well he's a golfer of course, as every fine gentleman does:

'I think golf is a reflection of what you do in life, fortunately for me most of the people I meet love the same things I like and I like the finer things so it kinda works.'

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# OTTO



Otto is not a shop but a private club for men, London's latest tailoring concept, OTTO, is quite amazing and something we've never seen before here at the Player and we're really quite enamoured of its immense Italian charm.

Words Melissa Cole Interview Andie Jones