



SCISSOR HANDS

"It's all about giving women recognition, putting them in the spotlight and making the connection between who they are and what they do." —*Edward Wilkerson of Lafayette 148*

WRITTEN BY ANNA RACHEL RICH



When it comes to creating versatile luxury for the modern woman, Edward Wilkerson's signature sophistication sets the standard. Lafayette 148 New York's lead designer tailors looks with an easy elegance, delivering distinctive fashion that seamlessly transitions from workplace to weekend. From precisely pleated pants to lambskin lace-back jackets, Wilkerson's collections consistently elevate women's wardrobes with meticulous detailing. In a love language of sorts, Lafayette 148's adoration for women is conveyed as Wilkerson drapes the finest shantung silks, sumptuous cashmeres and Italian wools.



Reflecting on the trajectory of his esteemed design career, Wilkerson attributes his initial affinity for women's fashion to an early introduction to style. "My mother raised four children by herself," recalls Wilkerson in his naturally soft-spoken register, "and I remember her maintaining an impeccable appearance despite her busy life." Accompanying his mother on day trips to the mall, Wilkerson was exposed to everything from the latest puckered seersucker skirts to ombré and appliquéd fabrics early in life. Fond recollections of mixing and matching patterns alongside his mother color his childhood memories. "It meant the world that she valued my opinion as a child," he explains.

The confidence and stylistic acuity instilled within Wilkerson from an early age eventually led him to pursue his design aspirations at the iconic fashion houses of Calvin Klein and Donna Karan. Continuing to attract attention from the industry's biggest names, Wilkerson joined Lafayette 148 after nine years at Donna Karan, elevating the company to new heights with his innovative design aesthetic.

Season after season, Wilkerson creates covetable collections, weaving personal inspiration and world exploration into one-of-a-kind creations. Drawn to the world's most exotic locales, he discovers new destinations whenever possible. Whether wading in the tranquil lapis Balinese waters or perusing past ornately beaded fabrics in a Hong Kong street market, Wilkerson uses his trips as a means to creatively refuel.

"When I travel, I go into it without any expectations and embrace the elements of surprise," says Wilkerson, reminiscing about a past trip to India. "I couldn't get enough of the vibrant colors." Never caught without his camera in hand, Wilkerson snaps while he wanders, capturing everything from shapes and contours of adornments on buildings to picturesque palms peppering the seaside skyline. "Inspiration can come from anything," says Wilkerson, and the challenge at hand becomes translating those vivid images into modern patterns, silhouettes and embellishment ideas.

Visiting diverse cultures, engaging all kinds of women and "getting to know what they want and need from their clothing," Wilkerson says, is what his trips center around. Returning to New York, Wilkerson welcomes the change of pace with city living. America, he describes, has a certain "crisp, elegant straight-forward air about it—always refreshing to come home to after my travels."

Rejuvenated and inspired, Wilkerson shifts focus back to his clients, who he insists, "come first above all else." Lafayette 148's current "We Love Women" campaign celebrates the beauty, diversity and achievements of modern women, empowering them through fashion. "It's all about giving women recognition, putting them in the spotlight and making the connection between who they are and what they do." To Wilkerson, fashion "allows a woman to showcase her personal style, her individuality in everyday life, no matter what her passions are or where her life takes her." **SRQ**



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