

All for a Good Cause

AN ENTHUSIASTIC SPONSOR OF THE PRINCESS GRACE FOUNDATION, FASHION LEGEND TOMMY HILFIGER IS DELIGHTED TO HELP RECOGNIZE AMERICA'S GIFTED ARTISTS IN THEATER, DANCE AND FILM. BY CHRIS M. JUNIOR

It's a sparkling early October afternoon in Manhattan, and Tommy Hilfiger walks into his recently opened global flagship store on Fifth Avenue.

You can bet that the staff knows this dapper man decked out in a suit—complete with a pocket square—isn't just another shopper visiting the bustling store. The employees stationed near the entrance smile at the renowned fashion designer and nod in his direction as he passes by the merchandise on his way to the elevator. His pace is brisk, but he breaks his stride along the way to exchange pleasantries and shake a few welcoming hands.

He's a few feet from the elevator when something catches his eye and prompts him to turn around. The expression on his face says it all: This clothing rack doesn't look right. Hilfiger catches the attention of a male employee and, with hanger in hand, quickly shows him how he wants the garments displayed, then hustles to join his wife, Dee, in the waiting elevator.

As he ascends to the fourth floor, he looks at the bright white walls of the elevator car and says to Dee, "We should decorate this elevator."

That keen eye for detail has helped make

Hilfiger one of the most successful fashion designers of the past 20-plus years. With the star-studded opening of his global flagship store at 681 Fifth Ave. in mid-September, Hilfiger is in a great position to continue that success well into the future.

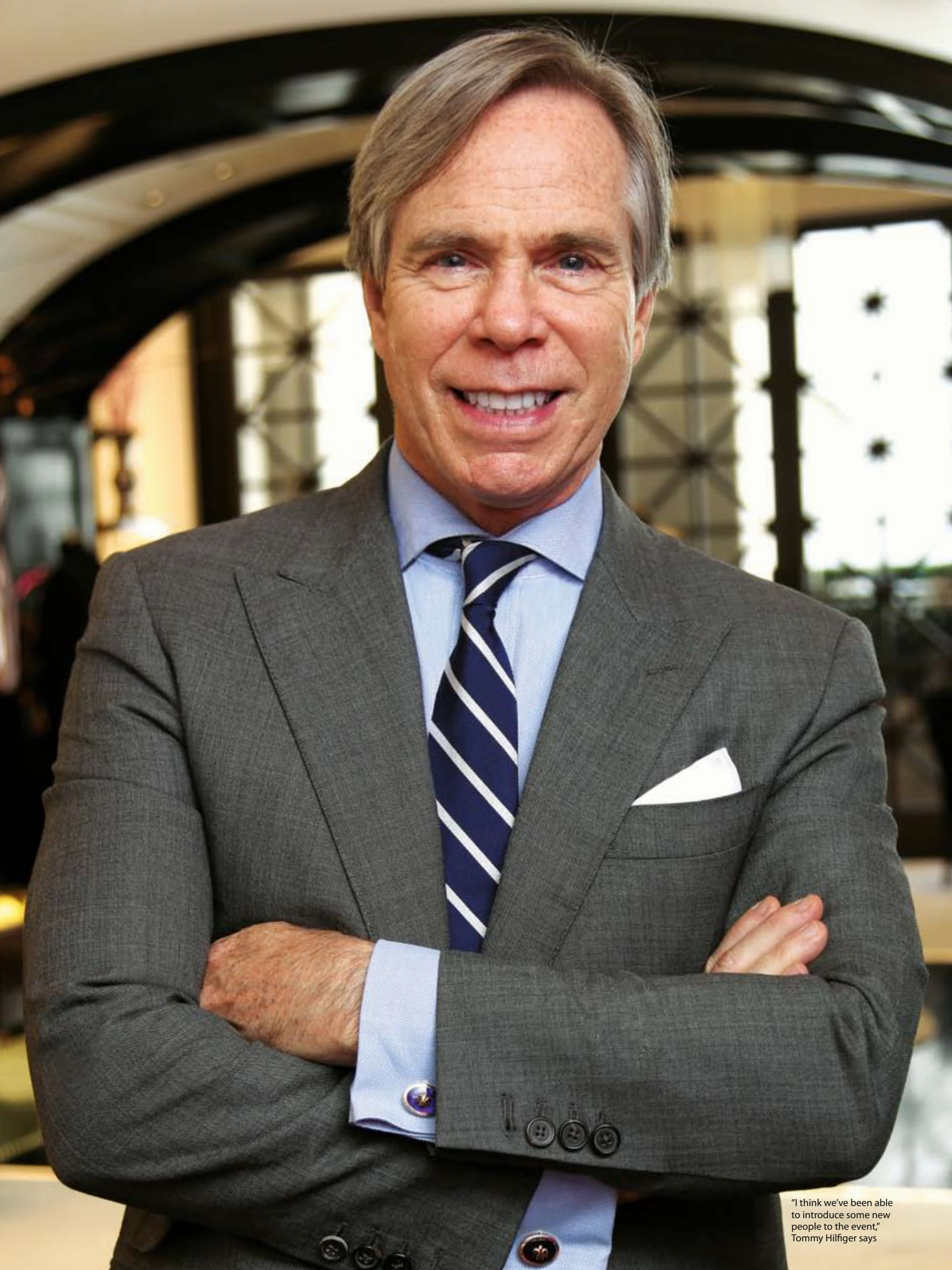
"In the very beginning, we were just focusing on designing clothes for Americans and America," Hilfiger says during lunch a few blocks away at the Harry Cipriani restaurant. "Now it's the world."

The 22,000-square-foot, stand-alone store is eye-catching for its restored limestone façade and centralized staircase. You'll find men's sportswear on the first floor; men's tailored and runway garments on the second; women's sportswear on the third, and the women's runway collection on the fourth. There also is a lower level devoted to denim. A wide mix of music—think familiar tunes by such stars as Prince, Curtis Mayfield and Phil Collins—plays at a comfortable level.

The location opened in grand fashion on Sept. 17, with such notables as *Vogue* editor Anna Wintour, musician Alicia Keys, actress Naomi Watts and entrepreneur Russell Simmons among those making the scene.

Hilfiger smiles when he talks about the store having the only balcony on Fifth Avenue. More





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Tommy and Dee
support the aims of the
Princess Grace Awards



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importantly, having his global flagship on what he calls an "iconic thoroughfare" makes it an ideal place to house all of the Hilfiger brand collections.

"It's really a showcase to the world," Hilfiger says. "It's positioned to service an international consumer." He credits his creative team for developing a lot of the fixtures and furniture via antique finds or their own designs.

"It's a real eclectic mix," says Hilfiger, who describes the décor as "American architecture with a modern twist."

For his Spring 2010 collection, Hilfiger blended a modern touch with how California's collective state of mind used to be back in the day.

"California living in the '60s and '70s was all about a casual, easy, laid-back, relaxed lifestyle," he explains. "We wanted to incorporate that into [this collection], especially at a time like this. We think it's important to engage the consumer into feeling relaxed and cool."

Hilfiger's Spring 2010 collection was presented during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York on the same night his Fifth Avenue store opened. The clothing was met with praise, with *Style.com* describing it as "an energetic and fresh-scrubbed collection," while The Associated Press called it "a surprisingly cohesive mix of crisp nautical looks and disco-era slinky styles."

Speaking of style, Hilfiger has always admired the fashion and poise of Grace Kelly, both as an

actress and in her subsequent career as Monaco's Princess. In his flattering foreword to the book *Grace Kelly: A Life in Pictures*, Hilfiger wrote: "Her looks were simple, clean and classic. ... Grace Kelly didn't follow fashion trends, but made her own. ... She became an icon without trying."

Given Hilfiger's admiration for the late royal, it's only fitting that he is associated with the Princess Grace Awards gala.

One of the major annual events of the Princess Grace Foundation-USA, the Princess Grace Awards works in conjunction with nominating schools and nonprofit companies to recognize the talent of individual artists in theater, dance and film, according to the organization's official website, www.pgfusa.org.

This process, the website explains, "fills vast voids in the artistic community: scholarships, apprenticeships and fellowships give emerging artists the financial assistance and moral encouragement to focus on artistic excellence; monetary support for the nominating organizations eases fundraising challenges, directing resources toward the creative process."

Dee Hilfiger says she's been attending Princess Grace Foundation events for about 13 years, going back to her days living in Monte Carlo. When she moved to New York, she took Tommy to a Princess Grace Awards gala, and soon thereafter they became involved with the nonprofit charitable



Dee and Tommy Hilfiger welcomed a son in August

Tommy and Dee Hilfiger were among the bronze sponsors of the 2009 Princess Grace Awards.



Dance Fellowship Winner,
Corey Scott-Gilbert

organization, which was founded by Princess Grace's widower, Prince Rainier III of Monaco, and is headquartered in New York City.

In the past 25 years, the Princess Grace Foundation-USA has bestowed more than 650 awards totaling more than \$7 million in grants.

Tommy and Dee Hilfiger -- who celebrated the birth of their son, Sebastian Thomas, in early August—were among the bronze sponsors of the 2009 Princess Grace Awards. The Hilfigers served as the gala chairs for this year's black-tie event, which was held last month at Cipriani Dolci.

"We agreed to do it because we do have a large network of associations and friends," Tommy Hilfiger says, "so I think they feel with something like this, the more the merrier. I think we've been able to introduce some new people to the event."

It's the type of special event, like so many others, where Hilfiger knows in advance what he's going to wear.

"It's easy for me because my choices are black, black or black," Hilfiger says with a smile, "with either a white shirt, a white shirt or a white shirt and either black shoes, black shoes or black shoes. I wear a uniform.

"I think my biggest challenge is whether I wear a bow tie or a straight tie."

And that's just another example of when Tommy Hilfiger's eye for detail comes into play. ▣

AND THE WINNERS ARE ...

Here are the winners of the 2009 Princess Grace Awards, which were presented Oct. 21 in New York.

THEATER AND PLAYWRITING

Ann Bartek: Theater Fellowship, Pierre Cardin Theater Award; The Milk Can Theatre Company

Craig Bazan: Theater Apprenticeship; The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

Colin K. Bills: Theater Fellowship, Fabergé Theater Award; Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

James Darrah: Theater Scholarship, Robert and Gloria Hausman Theater Award; University of California, Los Angeles, Department of Theater

Nicolette Robinson: Theater Scholarship, Gant Gaither Theater Award; University of California, Los Angeles, Department of Theater

Lily Whitsitt: Theater Scholarship, Grace Levine Theater Award; California Institute of the Arts.

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins: Playwriting Fellowship; New Dramatists Inc

DANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY

Isabella Boylston: Dance Fellowship; American Ballet Theatre

Jeffrey Cirio: Dance Fellowship; Boston Ballet.

Jae Man Joo: Choreography Fellowship; Complexions Contemporary Ballet

Andrea Miller: Choreography Fellowship; Ballet Hispanico of New York

Sarah Murphy: Dance Scholarship; The Juilliard School-Dance Division

Katie Scherman: Dance Scholarship; Dominican University/LINES Ballet

Corey Scott-Gilbert: Dance Fellowship, Chris Hellman Dance Award; Alonzo King's LINES Ballet

Joseph Walsh: Dance Fellowship; Houston Ballet

Kate Weare: Choreography Fellowship; PARADIGM

FILM

Lindsay Berkebile: Film Undergraduate Scholarship; Rochester Institute of Technology

Chinonye Chukwu: Film Graduate Scholarship; Temple University

Glen Fogel: Film Graduate Scholarship; Bard College

Rashaad Ernesto Green: Film Graduate Scholarship, Cary Grant Film Award; New York University

Ian Soroka: Film Undergraduate Scholarship, John H. Johnson Film Award; University of Colorado

John Thompson: Film Graduate Scholarship; University of Southern California

HONORARIA

Denise Quiñones: Theater Honorarium; Repertorio Espanol

Meghan Raham: Theater Honorarium; Kansas City Repertory Theatre

Tony Speciale: Theater Honorarium; Classic Stage Company

Chitra Kalyandurg: Dance Honorarium; Kuchipudi Kalanidhi

Carlos A. Menchaca: Dance Honorarium; National Institute of Flamenco

Kalim Armstrong: Film Honorarium; Hunter College, CUNY

Charlie Corriea: Film Honorarium; San Francisco State University

Gazelle Samizay: Film Honorarium; University of Arizona

Terrie Samundra: Film Honorarium; San Francisco State University

Anthony Weeks: Film Honorarium; Stanford University