

## Memories of a True Vintage Love Story

Martina Marrosu (March 20, 2014)



Amarcord is a place to remember, the first vintage shop in New York built with the heart and soul of two Italians whose goal is to share a tradition of great things, high quality, and elegance

Here I am, sitting on a chair, surrounded by a stunning mid- winter collection. I can almost taste the colors; the textures catch my eye; the jewelry and accessories glimmer with charm...It's like a dream, but really it's SoHo's vintage boutique Amarcord. And with me are the creators of this dream—[Patti Bordoni](#) [2] and [Marco Liotta](#) [2].

### The Club Days

In Italy in the 1980s, if you wanted to find the coolest parties you had to go to the clubs in Rimini, where Patti Bordoni was playing host. While organizing theme parties, Bordoni realized she had a big crush on vintage clothing. "Dress up, be eccentric and look different," Patti says, with a humble, classy discretion that makes her so alluring. Her husband and co-founder of Amarcord describes Patti as a very young and talented woman who was already managing A-list clubs in Northern Italy in the early '80s. But in 1991, Patti left behind a brilliant career and moved to New York, turning down a major management position in the process, which she passed on to someone reliable. "Money isn't

everything,” says Patti.

## **New York, New York**

Moved by her passion for vintage clothing, she began collaborating with her friend Angelo, who was already in the business. Patti became Angelo’s American buyer. “I had three jobs at the time,” says Patti, “and was debating whether my future was in music or vintage clothing. But then I met Marco and everything became clear.” Marco was then working as a visual merchandiser for a major fashion company, opening stores around the world. The couple met by chance through mutual friends. It was a lucky fate; they were about to make history.

Everything started when they met a dealer who had a 1960s [Max Mara](#) [3] collection in storage, along with “other things to die for.” “He wanted to sell and we wanted to buy,” says Patti.

The man was from a small town in Italy. Patti and Marco rode out there by motorcycle, carrying all their savings with them, stopping every 5 minutes to reconsider. But Patti was adamant: The collection was a goldmine. They had to invest. They shipped everything to the US, where they finally had their first show. It was a hit. They made enough money to open their first store in the East Village.

## **A revolutionary approach**

Amarcord means “I remember” in the dialect of Marco and Patti’s home region, Romagna—which is also where the famous Italian art director Federico Fellini, the author of the world-acclaimed movie *Amarcord*, came from.

What better name for a vintage store? Back in the ‘90s, the vintage market was a whole different story. “Thrift shops would have boxes of junk, racks and racks of pants or just skirts,” explains Marco. “You eventually got bored of searching for the nice piece.” Which is why Marco and Patti chose to offer their public fewer items. By doing so, Amarcord started a revolution. They created a brand new concept: a space that was a real boutique, not a second-hand shop. Marco was an expert visual merchandiser, and Patti was a talented buyer with a vast knowledge of all things vintage.

“I chose every piece, collection by collection. Marco would present the merchandise in order and color coordinated; we had outfits in all different colors. It was a sensation.”

Immediately, magazines took to calling them the #1 vintage store, which supplied NYC closets with the most phenomenal small-brand Italian labels, such as Callaghan, Gian Marco Venturi, Gherardini. “Nobody ever heard of them, but they were amazing,” says Patti. “A major designer came to the store to thank me,” remembers Marco. “‘You just made my life easier’ [he said]. ‘Now I’ll just buy the outfit to make my winter collection.’”

No surprise there. Vintage has always been important to designers.

## **From Vogue to social networks**

Back in the day, the fashion bible was *Vogue*. Now, thanks to social media, things have changed. “Inspiration is all over the internet,” explains Patti. “Whether it’s Instagram, Twitter or Facebook... Now there is a ‘90s revival along with the ‘60s and a little bit of the ‘80s. It’s a huge mix. As a vintage store, you have to keep up, pinpoint the right detail, because sometimes a whole collection is based around a single detail.”

Today, Marco and Patti run two stores, one in SoHo and one in Williamsburg, and they own an archive of 50,000 select pieces. They call it their “retirement plan.” Patti, the company’s “eye,” is constantly updating the archive. “The great pieces that were around in the ‘90s are never coming back,” says Patti. “That’s why the best pieces go into the archive. Though it’s possible to rent them for photo shoots, films, or simply for inspiration and research.”



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