

Saverio Palatella, Corporate

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OBITUARY

Ballantyne Chairman Alfredo Canessa

By Luisa Zargani

MILAN — Alfredo Canessa, chairman of Ballantyne and founder of the Malo brand, died Thursday night at 62.

He had been diagnosed with cancer two weeks earlier. Services were held Saturday in Portofino, Italy. Canessa is survived by his wife, Nicoletta, and four children.

The ultimate gentleman, always impeccably dressed and passionate about cashmere, the Genova-born Canessa was an entrepreneur who created long-lasting relationships with retailers.

"I remember how he seduced everyone, with his eyes and his smile," said Massimo Alba, who was creative director of Malo until 1999, when Canessa sold the brand to IT Holding. Alba followed the entrepreneur to Ballantyne, then moved on to design his own line in 2007. "He had an innate sense of elegance, and I would observe him because he would always point to the right path. I feel a huge void."

In 2002, Canessa bought Ballantyne from Dawson International and, in 2004, Italian private equity fund Charme took control of the firm, but the executive remained at the brand's helm. Canessa was instrumental in rejuvenating Ballantyne by expanding its product offer and building its retail network through its own stores in major cities as well as via wholesale.

Canessa founded Malo — at the time called Malo Tricot — in 1972 with his brother Giacomo, and started selling the brand to local stores in Portofino.

Designer Saverio Palatella, who started working on Malo's women's line at the end

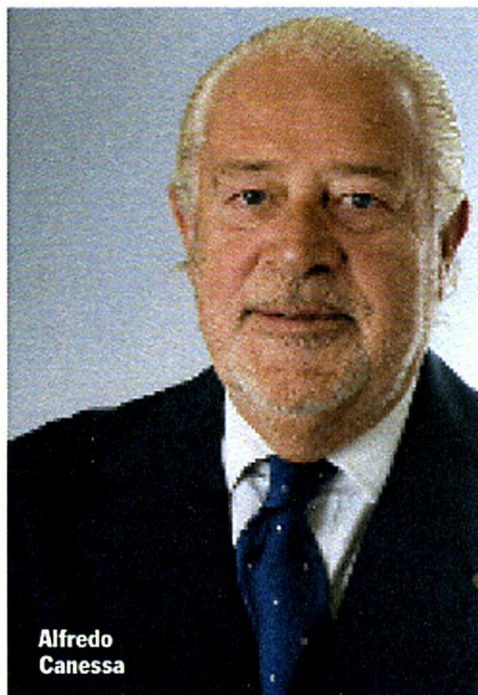
of 1992, said Canessa fully "respected a designer's creativity and image." Canessa later produced the designer's namesake brand and bought the Gentry Portofino brand designed by Palatella, which was also sold to IT Holding. The designer remembered Canessa's "epicurean" streak, his "art de vivre," his generosity and his love for sailing and the sea. "We also played golf together, but very little and very poorly, we used to say, because we had no time to practice," said Palatella.

Since 2001, Canessa was also president of the Center for Italian Fashion in Florence, which promotes fashion events and exhibitions through companies such as Pitti Immagine and Ente Moda Italia, and held responsibilities in a number of different fashion bodies. For example, he was vice president of Italy's fashion association SMI and of the industrial association in Florence, and had been a member of the board of Pitti Immagine.

"I'm quite speechless," said Gaetano Marzotto, president of Pitti Immagine, who described Canessa as a "friend...a skilled entrepreneur, innovative and

intuitive, who has spent his vast experience also at the service of the Italian fashion system, without expecting any tribute, with the same reserve and kindness he had in personal relations."

A "dismayed" Raffaello Napoleone, chief executive officer of Pitti Immagine, said the businessman "was an aesthete, with a vision," and an "innovator and a pioneer, who paved the way for others, creating the first Italian cashmere brand, becoming a reference point for all of us." Also, Napoleone described Canessa as "balanced and discreet."



Alfredo
Canessa