

The Ralph Lauren Family Tree

Thom Browne cut his teeth working at Club Monaco, a mid-range Canadian retailer that was acquired by Ralph Lauren. His own line is critically acclaimed for its attention to detail and influence on modern menswear. Browne's eponymous label is known for cropped, shrunken silhouettes that take after American prep staples like suits, cardigans, oxford shirts, and topcoats.

Thom Browne

His runway shows belie the otherwise conservative nature of the clothes, as he's no stranger to producing fashion shows that are a true spectacle, involving props like animal masks or creating exaggerated silhouettes that aren't necessarily meant for final production. In 2011, he was tapped by storied American sportswear company Brooks Brothers to make Black Fleece, a short-lived collaborative line melding Browne's signature aesthetic with some of Brooks Brothers' most iconic pieces.



The son of Jerry Lauren, Ralph's brother, Greg Lauren launched his eponymous line of menswear in 2011, after a short stint in the acting world. His clothes have a wabi-sabi, patchwork sensibility, and often use vintage garments and materials, like old military tents or well-worn Carhartt jackets. Due to the limited availability of the fabrics, his garments are almost always in small runs, and editioned like pieces of art—with a high price to match.

Greg Lauren

His brand has a wide-ranging appeal, from fashion aficionados to streetwear heads, and his label is stocked in stores like KITH and Barneys New York. He was recently tapped by French outerwear manufacturer Moncler for a capsule collection, where he demonstrated a keen ability to meld his mashed-up design philosophy with purposeful, utilitarian outdoor gear.

Ralph Lauren has been a launchpad for some of menswear's best known designers. Here's a look at some of the most notable people who learned from one of America's foremost fashion brands.

During the early days of Kanye West's career, he became synonymous with pink polo shirts, cardigans, and other clothing items that were a part of the quintessential prep wardrobe. At the same time, one of his oft-used motifs was the "Dropout Bear," a mascot that had a few similarities with Ralph Lauren's eminently stylish "Polo Bear." West loved the label so much that he shouted it out in a few songs, and even proclaimed that the designer was "God" in the 2015 documentary *Fresh Dressed*.

Kanye West

In the mid-aughts, West experimented with his own clothing label via Pastelle, a streetwear-leaning line consisting of varsity jackets and hoodies in bright colors. It was never released, as West realized he could elevate his vision for fashion. The resulting YEEZY fashion line debuted in 2015, taking design cues from vintage workwear more than vintage Ralph Lauren.

But perhaps one of the things that's inspired West the most is how Lauren built a fashion empire after coming into the industry from outside the establishment. After showing his line during New York Fashion Week for a few seasons, West is now trying to subvert the traditional fashion system by creating collections and digital-facing campaigns according to his own timeline.



Menswear designer Frank Muytjens oversaw Ralph Lauren's menswear before taking his talents to J. Crew in the mid-aughts. During his tenure at J. Crew, Muytjens was known for helping the label define an aesthetic that revitalized the brand and made it a staple of menswear blogs and fashion magazines alike. The timing couldn't have been more perfect—as men were beginning to pay more attention to developing their own personal style, and J. Crew happened to have a strong retail presence all over America.

J. Crew

Taking cues from classic workwear items like chambray shirts and fatigue pants, Muytjens created a new vernacular for J. Crew's menswear, turning it into an eclectic-yet-versatile mix of wardrobe essentials that could be worn in a variety of ways. From bold-patterned plaid shirts to slimmer-fitting washed chinos, Muytjens helped shape the new men's uniform that was both work appropriate yet eminently more casual than ever.