



CHIC REPORT

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Style's Master Builder: Meet Anthony Faglione

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Anthony Faglione
Patrick McMullan

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*Ever reveled in the minimalist perfection of a Calvin Klein outpost or stormed the racks at one of Reiss' stateside locations? Then you have boutique master builder **Anthony Faglione** to thank for aligning all the nuts and bolts, literally and figuratively, that amount to an impeccable retail experience. Faglione has been working with chic fashion clients for nearly two decades; recently, he worked on the CFDA's brand new downtown digs on Bleecker Street. Read on Faglione's behind-the-scenes intel on what it's like to be a part of the nitty-gritty logistics that lead to shopping perfection.*

What's your backstory?

I'm a native New Yorker, born in Brooklyn. I started out working with my hands as a construction worker, and then decided I wanted to be self employed, which I've been since 1988. This particular business has been around since 1994. I realized there was a gap in the type of service provided for retailers and international fashion people. We're modern-day master builders providing turnkey service. I am the boutique for the boutique!

So what do these clients get from working with you?

These clients know exactly what they want, but they need help with people that will help them get their vision to a reality. A fashion designer usually knows what they want their store to look like; they have a concept in mind, an idea about the type of lighting, and how they want to display their product. But they get jammed up because they hire an architect, engineer, and contractor, and everyone ends up working separately. That's where delays happen! They need someone to guide them through the entire process.

Why have you clicked with foreign clients?

Growing up in a first-generation European home, I understand their philosophies and thinking. I also have dual citizenship [in Italy and the U.S.] So I'm able to use my culture and background to understand how these non-American brands think.

Where do you come into the equation?

We'll take a concept from the client, and we have the responsibility of hiring the architect, engineer, even the display fixture manufacturing, through the construction. Then we get their store built! When people have a clear vision of what they want, they're confident about what they're doing, and they're reasonable? That's the recipe for a perfect project.

Who was your first fashion client?

There was a snowstorm in January 1995 in New York. Calvin Klein was having their fashion show across the street from Bryant Park; I got a call from the client working with Calvin Klein, on the day of the snowstorm. I called my crew and said, "hey guys, we're going to be spending the entire weekend on a job site and in a truck, so bring a change of clothes." The snowstorm came, we got them through their process, and Calvin was able to have his fashion show on time!

Which other fashion folks do you work with?

I've done all of the Reiss stores in the U.S., the suit company Canali, and French brand called Caudelie; they're small, boutique-y type stores that are packed with details, for example.

Who's a dream client of yours to reunite with or work with for the first time?

If there's one brand I'd like to work with again, it's John Varvatos. I think his stores are really cool, I love the brand, and I'm a walking billboard of his clothing.

You recently worked on the CFDA's new downtown digs.

Yes! We hired the engineering and handled the co-consulting, the permitting, the furniture, and the build-out. The good news is that because we were working with a foundation/not-for-profit agency, the people working with us on the project were very sensitive to the fact that the CFDA had a limited budget, and limited time.

Any surprises behind the scenes?

Minimalism is actually not minimal in its way of thinking: the less detail there is, the more it stands out, and the more attention to quality you need to have. Calvin is the epitome of that! He's all about 'less is more.' Getting the details to work, align, and look simple takes quite a bit of challenging the means and methods of getting the details to look as simplistic as it can.

What kind of details?

If you look at a floating shelf that just comes out of a wall, you might think they just cut a slot in the wall and put a piece of glass into it. But it's not that simple! The glass needs to support itself, and to stay plum and level with the wall.