

Isabella Rossellini: Made in Italy

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By Samantha Critchell, Associated Press

NEW YORK — Italy has put a face to its famous good life: Isabella Rossellini.

She stars in a new ad campaign called Made in Italy, an outreach to Americans to teach them about the quality and craftsmanship of Italian fashion beyond the big names of Prada, Armani and Dolce & Gabbana.

Rossellini says Americans are more practical creatures than Italians, but they also appreciate "the pleasure of living well," making them ideal consumers for Italian fashion.

"Italian fashion is about luxury, comfort and clean lines," says the model/actress. "It's what America was longing for. French fashion is fanciful but not comfortable."

Rossellini, the 55-year-old daughter of Italian film director Roberto Rossellini and Swedish-born actress Ingrid Bergman, is a bit of an expert on all the cultures. She grew up in Rome and Paris and now spends much of her time in Long Island, N.Y. She first came to the USA in the 1970s as part of a wave of Italian success stories. It was just about the time Giorgio Armani was making a splash here with his menswear in *American Gigolo*.

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Until then, Rossellini says, Americans knew mostly of Italian-Americans, people who were looking for a better life in a new land. It was in the last quarter of the 20th century — and now through the early 21st — that successful Italians are coming here.

"I consider it an honor to be representing Italy," adds Rossellini, wearing a dark pinstripe tunic, slim black pants and pearls around her neck — all Italian made, of course.

"She really represents to a very large extent the symbol of impeccable Italian style," says Ambassador Umberto Vattani, president of the Italian Trade Commission.

The Made in Italy campaign is sponsored by the trade group and focuses on a different industry and targets a different country each year. Last year's effort was in Russia, promoting Italian cars.

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