



All the leather used in Dal Dosso's collections is sourced in Italy.
DAL DOSSO

From Formula One to fashion

Italian brand Dal Dosso was established in 1974 by designer Franco Dal Dosso. The brand initially focused on producing gloves for Formula One drivers, but has since diversified into other sports as well as into the fashion market. The company has learnt over the years how to incorporate performance and functionality into a glove that has a particular style requirement and is looking to use this expertise to penetrate new markets in the near future.

Dal Dosso is still very much a family business, run by its founder alongside wife Giovanna, son Simone and daughter Lara. In total, the company employs around 20

staff. The brand's Formula One gloves earned it renown in the early days and, over the years the gloves have been worn by the top names in the sport including Michael Schumacher, Kimi Räikkönen, Fernando Alonso and Lewis Hamilton.

The gloves were not only designed as an accessory to fit each drivers overall look in terms of colour and pattern, they also needed to be extremely functional. Because the cars travel at speeds of over 200mph, a slip of the hand could prove critical. Furthermore, if an accident occurs and the driver is trapped in the car, the gear they wear must be made from fire-proof materials so that he is protected until

any potential flames are put out. "Each glove has its own visible, but also invisible features," the company explains.

Finding the right balance

Dal Dosso spends a lot of time and money on research in order to get these functional features right. If the glove is fireproof but doesn't allow freedom of movement, it cannot be worn for this type of racing, for example. And the positive effects must also be maintained for the whole time the gloves are being worn.

"We are technicians; we study the materials carefully as well as the fit and shape," says company spokesperson Iris

Schulz. The company also responds to feedback in a positive way, particularly when it comes from some of the world's most successful racing drivers. "We also follow up on comments," she says, "we constantly get feedback and this is very important for us in terms of development." By using the highest-quality materials, applying the necessary technologies and finishes, and by testing the product thoroughly, the company believes its gloves are a cut above any others on the market.

Building on its success in the Formula One segment, the Dal Dosso decided to adapt its product to fit other sports. It now offers gloves for a range of activities including motorcycling, skiing, climbing, fencing, cycling and sailing, among others. Because of its ability to make cold weather gloves and fireproof gloves, Dal Dosso is also now producing gloves for the military, including the Italian air force. All of its sports gloves are designed and made in Italy.

Entering new markets

However, the company decided not to stop there. Next on its list was the fashion sector, where it has experienced a similar

level of success. The company started receiving requests for fashion gloves back in the 1990s and seized the opportunity with both hands. "Initially we produced for famous brands such as Armani, but then went on to produce our own brand," Ms Schulz reveals. "It's going very well and is growing. And it's medium to high end so there's something for everyone." Dal Dosso more recently started making gloves under its own label and its own collections have met with high demand, according to the company.

Once again, the materials used are of paramount importance when it comes to producing its fashion gloves. The company sources all of its leather from Italy and aims to produce gloves that not only look stylish, but that are comfortable and wear well. "We use sheep nappa and suede and patent leather with lame in silver and gold for a bold look. We mainly use sheep nappa and suede because they are very soft," Ms Schulz says.

The gloves come in a variety of styles and different finishes are used to create high-gloss looks, ultrasoft textures and burnished effects. Its men's gloves come in more traditional colours, such as black,



The company makes high-fashion gloves for men and women and claims to offer something for everyone.

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The gloves are made from various types of leather including nappa leather and suede.

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brown and taupe, but the styles are distinctive with cut out sections, eye-catching wrist buttons and metal studs. The women's gloves come in bolder colours with more intricate detailing including leather flowers, butterflies and bows as well as ruffled and pleated leather effects. Looking forward to the coming season, Ms Schulz believes the key colours for women will include deep blue and red as well as more traditional grey tones and beige.

However, while its fashion gloves are designed in Italy and feature Italian leather, many are now being made in Asia. "The problem is pricing because [production] costs are very high in Italy," explains Ms Schulz. Its main customer base is in Europe, with Russia proving a particularly important market. "We have sold well so far this year and we expect to grow a lot. We are looking to export to Japan and the US in the future too," she says. ■