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EXKLUSIV INTERVIEW
PHILIPP PLEIN
The Empire of PP



EXKLUSIV INTERVIEW **PHILIPP PLEIN** The Empire of PP

“Luxury is to be independent.”

For almost three decades, Phillip Plein has been one of the most distinctive personalities in the international luxury industry.

While many traditional luxury houses build their identity around heritage, history, and quiet exclusivity, Plein has created something entirely different: a universe that combines fashion, architecture, hotels, gastronomy, entertainment, jewelry, watches, and lifestyle.

Behind the spectacular shows, iconic productions, and unmistakable aesthetic stands an entrepreneur with a very clear philosophy:

Luxury is not only about what you own.

Luxury is about having the freedom to decide.

In this exclusive conversation with LIFE, Phillip Plein speaks openly about success, independence, business, crisis, artificial intelligence, family, and the one thing that cannot be bought: time.

Luxury Means Freedom

LIFE: Philipp, thank you for your time and hospitality. Your fashion show was once again an extraordinary production. Anyone attending your shows enters a world full of energy, luxury, and emotion. What does luxury mean to you personally?

Philipp Plein:

Luxury is something every person defines for themselves.

Many people associate luxury with things that go beyond necessity. With possessions, status symbols, and products they do not truly need.

But for me, luxury goes much deeper.

We live in a society shaped by consumption. Brands create emotional connections and influence what people desire.

You can already see this with children. My son loves Paw Patrol. He does not want just any toy. He wants that specific brand. From toys to clothing and other products, this emotional connection starts very early.

For me personally, luxury has nothing to do with material things.

My greatest luxury is the ability to turn my ideas into reality.

The show you experienced is exactly that: a vision that became reality.

But the greatest luxury in the world is something nobody can buy:

Time.

Most people live as if they have an unlimited amount of it. But time is the most valuable thing we own.

You can spend it with the wrong people, the wrong business partners, or on things that give you nothing back.

You never get that time back.

That is why luxury, for me today, means freedom.

The freedom to decide who I spend my time with and how I use it.

“The greatest luxury in the world is something nobody can buy: time.”

A Brand Built Against Convention

LIFE: You built your company without following the traditional path of the luxury industry. Many entrepreneurs try to appeal to everyone. You have often chosen the opposite approach and embraced being different. Was independence always more important to you than acceptance?

Philipp Plein:

Absolutely.

Acceptance was never my goal.

If I wanted to build a brand that everyone liked, I would have created a completely different company.

We are not Coca-Cola.

We are more like a whiskey cola.

Not everyone likes it, but the people who do love it.

From the beginning, we never wanted to be a brand for everyone.

We wanted to be a brand with personality.

People who create something unique do not only receive support. They receive criticism as well.

Both are part of the journey.

I was never interested in pleasing everyone.

I was interested in building something that works.

A company with a clear identity and strong economic foundation.

Because at the end of the day, success is not decided by headlines.

It is decided by numbers.

After almost 30 years as an entrepreneur, Philipp Plein is particularly proud of one achievement: the financial independence and stability of his company.

Philipp Plein:

I founded my brand when I was 19 years old.

At that time, I was studying law and I could not even afford a lawyer.

So I registered the trademark myself.

When I look back today, there is one thing I am especially proud of:

I have never had a loss-making year.

Not once.

Many people achieve success.

But remaining successful over decades is the real challenge.

Independence As A Principle

LIFE: You built your company almost entirely through your own resources. Why was independence so important to you?

Philipp Plein:

That is probably what I am most proud of.

To this day, we have no bank loans.

Everything we have built was financed by the company itself.

That has always been my principle:

We only spend the money we have already earned.

Of course, growth is slower this way.

But you sleep better.

You remain independent.

You do not have to make decisions because someone else expects you to.

I remember a conversation with a bank. They

offered me financing of 150 million euros.

For many entrepreneurs, that would have been an incredible opportunity.

For me, it was not.

I refused.

I always believed that a company should be able to stand on its own.

Maybe that sounds old-fashioned today.

But I believe in the Old Economy.

The 650 Million Euro Decision

This philosophy became especially clear in 2018.

Philipp Plein was faced with a decision many entrepreneurs dream of: selling his company for hundreds of millions of euros.

LIFE: There were reports of a 650 million euro offer for your brand. Is that true?

Philipp Plein:

Yes.

In 2018, there was an offer on the table.

Around 400 million euros would have been paid immediately, with the remaining amount coming later through an exit structure.

I said no.

At that time, I believed it was the right decision.

And honestly, I still believe it today.

Of course, during the pandemic I asked myself whether I should have made a different choice.

Because shortly afterwards, Covid arrived.

And suddenly, the entire world changed.

PHILIPP PLEIN

THE EMPIRE OF PP

The decision not to sell his company would soon be tested under the most challenging circumstances the luxury industry had ever experienced.

Only days before the pandemic began, Philipp Plein presented one of his most spectacular fashion shows in Milan. A production filled with international performers, extraordinary stage design, and the kind of bold creativity that has



become synonymous with his name.

Nobody could have imagined that shortly afterwards, the entire world would come to a standstill.

Crisis Reveals The Strength Of A Company

Philipp Plein:

Nobody knew what was coming.

Suddenly, fashion weeks were cancelled, stores were forced to close, and international travel almost completely stopped.

Within one year, we lost around 90 million euros in revenue.

Of course, in that moment you ask yourself: How is this going to work?

But that is exactly when you discover whether a company is truly healthy.

Despite this massive decline, we still finished the year profitable.

Even I would not have predicted that before.

A company is not successful because it generates high revenues during good times.

A successful company is one that can survive difficult times.

We had built reserves.

That was always part of my philosophy.

Before Covid, we had around 30 million euros in liquidity.

Those reserves carried us through the crisis.

We did not request government support.

We managed to guide the company through this period with our own resources.

That makes me extremely proud.

Creating A New Place At The Table

While many luxury brands rely on decades of heritage and tradition, Philipp Plein has always approached competition differently.

He never wanted to simply become part of an existing system.

He wanted to create his own universe.

LIFE: In the luxury industry, there is often talk about established brands trying to protect their market position from new competitors. Your name is mentioned frequently in this context. How do you deal with that?

Philipp Plein:

That is simply business.

In every industry, everyone wants to protect their market share.

Imagine we are sitting at a table. In front of us is a pizza. Everyone already has their slice.

Then someone new arrives and wants a piece too.

Nobody voluntarily gives away their share.

The market is that pizza.

Everyone fights to protect their position.

We were never invited to the big pizza party of the luxury industry.

So we built our own table.

And honestly...

I am very happy with the crumbs.

(laughs)

This combination of confidence and self-irony has always been part of Philipp Plein’s personality.

Philipp Plein:

We do not have to be the biggest fish.

In the shark tank, maybe we are Nemo.

But Nemo knows exactly where the calm water is.

I do not need to become Gucci.

I do not need to become Chanel.

I am very happy with what we have created.

The Future Of Luxury

LIFE: Does luxury still have the same emotional meaning today as it did in the past?

Philipp Plein:

I actually believe luxury has become less emotional than it used to be.

When Gianni Versace was alive or when Giorgio

Armani personally shaped his brand, luxury was connected to personalities.

People were not only buying clothes.

They were buying a vision.

Today, many major luxury brands are managed by international corporations. Decisions are often driven by numbers. Creative directors can change quickly if expectations are not met.

I do not judge that.

It is simply the way the industry has evolved.

I have no problem explaining how this business really works.

Many people think fashion is only inspiration and glamour.

But behind it is a massive economic system.

I do not need to pretend to be someone else.

I am who I am.

Creativity In The Age Of Artificial Intelligence

One of the most surprising moments of the conversation comes when Philipp Plein discusses artificial intelligence.

While many designers are still approaching the technology carefully, Plein already considers it a powerful creative tool.

LIFE: What role does artificial intelligence play in your creative process today?

Philipp Plein:

The collection you saw was created largely with the support of artificial intelligence.

In the past, large teams would spend weeks developing ideas.

Today I work differently.

I develop concepts with AI and can visualize and refine ideas within a very short time.

Many people are afraid of artificial intelligence.

I see it as a tool.

It does not replace creativity.

But it makes creative processes incredibly efficient.

In the past, I had much larger design teams.

Today, I work with fewer people, but the possibilities are much greater.

The Empire Beyond Fashion

What began as a fashion brand has developed into a global lifestyle universe.

Philipp Plein no longer thinks only in terms of individual products.

He thinks in terms of experiences.

Philipp Plein:

Today, fashion is only one part of our world.

We have hotels, restaurants, clubs, furniture, jewelry, watches, sunglasses, and many other lifestyle products.

We now have fourteen international licenses and continue to expand our brand universe.

Our goal was never simply to create a fashion label.

We wanted to build a complete world where people can connect with the brand through different experiences — from fashion and travel to gastronomy and entertainment.

We continue to grow because new opportunities continue to appear.

The Man Behind The Brand

After almost three decades in the spotlight, the atmosphere changes when the conversation turns personal.

The entrepreneur who was previously speaking about markets, growth, and strategy now reveals a much more private side.

LIFE: Was there a moment in your life that changed your understanding of success?

Philipp Plein:

Yes.

My children.

They changed everything.

Before, I was only an entrepreneur.

I operated like a machine.

Working.

Making decisions.

Travelling.

Creating new projects.

Always moving forward.

I lived inside my own world.

Sometimes I would not leave my house for weeks.

I had everything there:

My office.

My cinema.

My gym.

My pools.

There was almost no time left for normal life.

My children taught me how to be human again.

Today, I consciously spend time with my family.

We eat together.

We laugh together.

We do normal things.

And that normality means so much to me.

When I look back, I was successful.

But I also realize that I stopped noticing many simple things in life.

Today, I understand what truly matters.

What Remains In The End?

LIFE: Your brand carries your name. What should remain one day — the brand or the philosophy behind it?

Philipp Plein:

If one day I am no longer here, then I am no longer here.

Life continues.

My children will be here.

And they are my greatest legacy.

I have four sons, and my biggest wish is that they become great human beings, that they stay connected, and that they always support each other.



I never wanted to build a monument for my ego.

I want to give my family security and pass values on to my children.

Because in the end, everything in life is only a moment.

Love is a moment.

Success is a moment.

Nothing belongs to us forever.

Even success must be earned every single day.

The Next Chapter

Despite these personal reflections, Philipp Plein continues to look toward the future.

His company is evolving far beyond fashion.

Philipp Plein:

We are working on many exciting projects.

We are launching Plein Sport in China.

We are expanding our marketplace in America.

We are looking for new locations, including Vienna, Miami, and Mexico.

We are developing additional international licenses.

There are also exciting real estate projects in India and the Middle East.

The industry is cautious right now.

Many companies are waiting.

But exactly in those moments, the biggest opportunities often appear.

The Final Impression

A conversation with Philipp Plein does not end with a traditional success story.

It leaves behind the image of an entrepreneur who defines luxury differently from many others.

Not as a collection of possessions.

But as freedom.

The freedom to make your own decisions.

The freedom to transform a vision into reality.

And the freedom to spend your most valuable resource — time — with the people who truly matter.

Perhaps that is the real secret behind the Empire of PP.

Not the ambition to please everyone.

But the courage to remain authentic.

PHILIPP PLEIN

THE EMPIRE OF PP

“Luxury is to be independent.”

