

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

# Robb Report

31st ANNUAL

## Best of the Best

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# The Answers with... **FRANCO LORO PIANA**

*Franco Loro Piana was groomed to enter his family's global luxury business—but it didn't quite pan out that way. After almost a decade working at Loro Piana, he watched as his father and uncle suddenly sold the company to LVMH for 2 billion euros in 2013. Three years later, after a prolonged bout of soul searching, the now 37-year-old combined his lifelong love of sports with his background in high-end textiles to create Sease, a lifestyle brand that produces stylish men's garments in performance materials. The new venture is testament as much to the younger Loro Piana's own style—athletic, sophisticated and technically obsessed—as to his appetite for adventure. From his shop in Milan's Brera district, he shares his many passions, from dangerous slopes and big waves to fast cars and strong gin. (sease.it)*

BY JILL NEWMAN PHOTOGRAPHY BY VALENTINA SOMMARIVA

<sup>2</sup> In 1998, Martin Miller and two friends set out to produce what they deemed the finest gin, and the gregarious entrepreneur served as its ambassador until he passed away in 2013.

<sup>4</sup> In 1924, Austrian musician Sam Ash pawned his wife Rose's engagement ring to open his first music shop. Rose eventually bought the ring back using the store's profits.

## What have you done recently for the first time?

Backcountry skiing. It's a huge physical effort: You have to hike two to three hours up the mountain and you need to know how to navigate. It's dangerous—there are avalanches—and it's my new addiction.

## What apps do you use the most?

Spotify, Magicseaweed<sup>1</sup> for surf reports and PowderQuest to check snow conditions.

## Do you have a uniform?

Yes. It is basically a pair of sneakers, a nice T-shirt and a cool cashmere blazer. Sometimes I still really enjoy wearing a traditional tailor-made suit from my personal tailor here in Milan.

## What conversations do you tune out?

Negative thinking and hopeless fears. I'm not a big fan of too much conservative thinking or bigotry, either.

## How do you find calm?

In big spaces, right in the middle of nowhere, be it a long walk in the snow or a sailing regatta. When I am in the city, it's running or good live music.

## Your favorite cocktail?

A good gin and tonic, honest and dry. I like to taste different gins and right now there are a number of interesting ones from niche to award-winning labels. At the moment, I really like Martin Miller's Gin<sup>2</sup> selection.

## The most recent thing you regret not buying?

A Lancia Delta Evo II.<sup>3</sup> But it's a rally car—not for everyday driving.

## How do you get to sleep?

Satisfied and tired, hopefully.

## What does success look like to you?

Continuous learning and honest leadership with a team who shares the same values. And being able to generate value in an ethical way.

## What are your three favorite stores?

Sam Ash music store<sup>4</sup> in New York, because it's the temple of music, analog and just iconic; Deus ex Machina is a cool concept shop in Bali with great surfboards; and Mollusk Surf Shop in Venice Beach is great for gear, books and surfboards.

## What's your favorite hotel?

I prefer boutique hotels with a soul and that includes Hotel Cap Rocat in Palma de Mallorca and Soho House in Berlin.

## Best advice you were given?

Listen to your instincts and be proactive. If you don't decide, someone will do it for you.

## What do you most crave at the end of the day?

To own my time, have authentic experiences and be surrounded by true friends.

## When was the last time you unplugged?

While sailing from Parma to Majorca. We didn't have Wi-Fi.

## If you could be anywhere right now, where would you be?

Waiting for the next wave in Central America.

## Bowie or Dylan?

Dylan. His music blends elegance and consistency.

Read the full interview online at [robbreport.com/loropiana](http://robbreport.com/loropiana). **81**

<sup>1</sup> Magicseaweed tells surf size, swell height, duration and direction; wind strength and direction; and temperature at any location in the world.

<sup>3</sup> The Lancia Delta is a small, Italian-made family car that dominated the World Rally Championships in the late '80s and early '90s.