

"ONCE PEOPLE WERE RECOGNISED BY WHAT THEY WORE. TODAY, ATTENTION IS DIRECTED MORE ON LIFESTYLE, WHAT YOU EAT, WHERE YOU LIVE, HOW YOU LIVE."  
TONINO LAMBORGHINI

Interview and story by Steve Agi

# TONINO LAMBORGHINI: puro talento Italiano

Lamborghini. It is a name known around the world: the fighting bull symbol, synonymous with luxury, passion and integrity. Mr Tonino Lamborghini was kind enough to grant *BeanScene* a world exclusive interview, offering an insight into his vision and motivation, as well as the zeal that is the driving force behind one of the world's finest luxury brands, now available in Australia.

**T**onino Lamborghini was one of the first Italian lifestyle brands to extend its collection from fashion and accessories to coffee and gourmet food. This was back in the 1990s and the company has just recently opened two new flagship stores in the heart of the historic old city centre of Bologna, in Italy, the city that also doubles as its headquarters.

The new point of sale blends the elements which have always represented the brand and which evoke a mechanical world inspired by a passion for speed, held in rein by a refined style. The boutique in Via Calzolerie hosts the accessories collection, including: watches, jewellery, eyewear, leatherwear, fragrances, smoking and writing accessories, and golf equipment, all carrying the famous red shield with the bull and branded 'Tonino Lamborghini'. Meanwhile, the Tonino Lamborghini

concept store in Piazza San Francesco displays the new models from the clothing and footwear collections, and the 'total look' of the younger 'Ferruccio JR' line.

## TELL ME TONINO, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A SURNAME LIKE LAMBORGHINI?

I believe that carrying such a great name is an honour which few people are lucky enough to enjoy. It means that I am infused with a heritage of diligent work, phenomenal passion for the mechanical and design world, and the drive to be entrepreneurial.

## HOW AND WHEN DID THE IDEA FOR TONINO LAMBORGHINI PRODUCTS BEGIN?

My family's history was all about engineering and metal. Fashion and

clothing did not appeal to my father and he did not understand them. It was, however, a passion of mine since I was young, it was part of my DNA. And so at 30 years old, while still working at my father's company, I decided to launch my own brand of fashion accessories.

I wanted to transport my past into the fashion world. For example, to create the 'Assiale' watch, I used as a dial a real ball bearing cushion from a car, a true fusion of fashion and mechanics.

## WAS THERE EVER AN EXPECTATION TO FOLLOW YOUR FATHER INTO LUXURY CARS?

I always knew that I wanted to create my own success independently from that of my father – whilst I cannot deny that my name is an enabling factor for me, I always felt it most important to prove that I could start a company from scratch and build it into an international success



THE VARIOUS DELICATESSEN PRODUCTS I BEGAN TO PRODUCE – FIRST COFFEE THEN WINE, PASTA, SAUCES, SWEET SPIRITS – SOON BECAME THE ‘OFFICINA GASTRONOMICA’.

without purely relying on the foundation he had created. Thus while he built the loudest, fastest, most impressive cars, I built the smallest, quietest and most economic cars, the ‘Town Life’, which were one of the first electric vehicles of their kind.

Living in a small town in the country such as Cento, and being the son of the owner of one of the largest companies in my region, Emilia Romagna, which gave work to so many people, left me feeling the burden of intense pressure, a huge responsibility. The expectation was so high that really there were only two options: either you collapse under that weight, or you react and try to express your own individuality.

**THE COFFEE, TELL US ABOUT HOW THE IDEA FOR THE COFFEE CAME ABOUT.**

My father was a great wine connoisseur and I, too, am an enthusiast, but my true passion perhaps lies more in great Italian coffee, which indubitably has a special aroma and ‘perfume’. It usually reminds me of the mornings at my family house, with my mother

and my father. Thus, many years ago, I decided to test the market.

I sent out a branded hamper of typically Italian espresso coffee and accompanying products to my most appreciated partners around the world. The feedback was so positive that the foreign partners wanted to know where they could purchase it.

I also used to travel a lot during that time and wherever I went I couldn’t find any good, sweet, creamy and well roasted coffee blends, like the Italian ones that I grew up on, the ones that were so intrinsically part of my memories, part of me. So, I decided to start producing and distributing my own blend, branded ‘Tonino Lamborghini’.

I was so proud of it and always fascinated by the Italian cucina that I came to the decision of creating a complete line of Italian products, with the aim of spreading ‘the Pure Italian flavour to the world’: the various delicatessen products I began to produce – first coffee then wine, pasta, sauces, sweet spirits – soon became the ‘Officina Gastronomica’ (i.e. gastronomy workshop, just to maintain the inspiration of the automotive world).

**THAT’S ALL SO AMAZING, TONINO. TELL ME, THOUGH, WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE?**

The Tonino Lamborghini brand has had massive success in the Asian markets and is now growing rapidly in the UAE. For now, my focus is remaining in the Emirates where the brand appeal is very strong. We are rolling out a large number of Café Boutiques in Dubai and I have recently inaugurated my first residential building, Elettra Residence, in Dubai Sports City.

**HOW DO YOU FIND THE AUSTRALIAN MARKET, WHAT SORT OF EXPOSURE DO YOU HAVE HERE?**

I find that the Australian market is one of the most sophisticated globally, when it comes to coffee. The palate of the average Australian is clearly refined enough to distinguish between coffees, thus being able to tell the difference between good and bad.

Thanks to the collaboration of our great business partners, Antony and

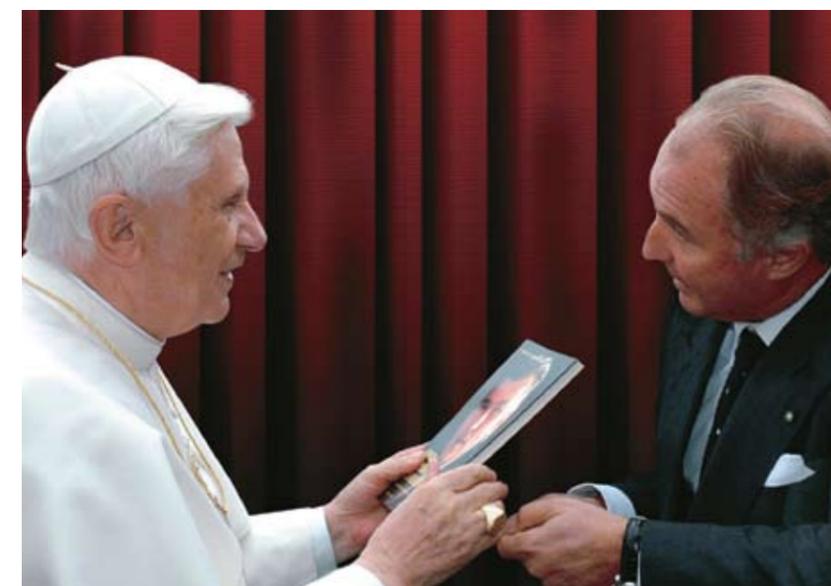
Geraldine de Fina, who are actually the children of an old business associate of my father’s, we have already established a presence in Melbourne and are constantly increasing market penetration, whilst we are soon to launch in Sydney and all other capital cities.

In Australia, I find that there is a high level of skill amongst baristi. We are also extremely strict when it comes to choosing partners. Tonino Lamborghini coffee will be found only in the very best places, guaranteeing our customers top quality product and service. I particularly recommend that you taste Tonino Lamborghini coffee in some of Melbourne’s finest areas, including Federation Square, South Yarra, Albert Park, Carlton and Sandringham. Soon, my coffee will also be available both in shops and cafés in Sydney and Brisbane.

I look forward to you trying my coffee and seeing just how much passion goes into every cup!

The Tonino Lamborghini Group serves a universe of distributors with a global presence in over 60 countries, with over 15,500 POS served worldwide.

Among the recent international openings it has inaugurated two new



flagship stores, one in Jakarta and one in Macao within the renowned luxury hotel and casino, The Venetian. These add to the 100 existing Asian locations of Tonino Lamborghini flagship stores and shops in the most prestigious department stores in the world, while in the field of fashion the brand has a major following worldwide.

Therefore, the focus now is on cafés, restaurants, hotels, buildings, all branded Tonino Lamborghini. Two recent projects

which have received global attention are the Elettra Residence (a 20-floor residential building with spa, swimming pool and gym) in the Dubai Sports City new quarter and the new Tonino Lamborghini Hotel in the Palm Resort of Aleppo, Syria, which will be ready in the middle of 2010.

*Family photos with thanks to the team at Tonino Lamborghini. [www.lamborghinicaffe.com.au](http://www.lamborghinicaffe.com.au)*