

The HERMÈS SCARF

This trademark, handcrafted silk swatch has remained a coveted accessory for more than 70 years. **by Kate Daley | photographs by Tracy Shumate**



Queen Elizabeth II demonstrates one of the many ways to wear the classic scarf.

It all began in France with a simple square of white silk measuring 90 centimetres on each side. Made famous by beauties such as Grace Kelly (who once used it as a sling when she broke her arm), Jackie O., Lauren Bacall and Catherine Deneuve, the Hermès *carré* has lent itself to thousands of interpretations in both pattern and wear.

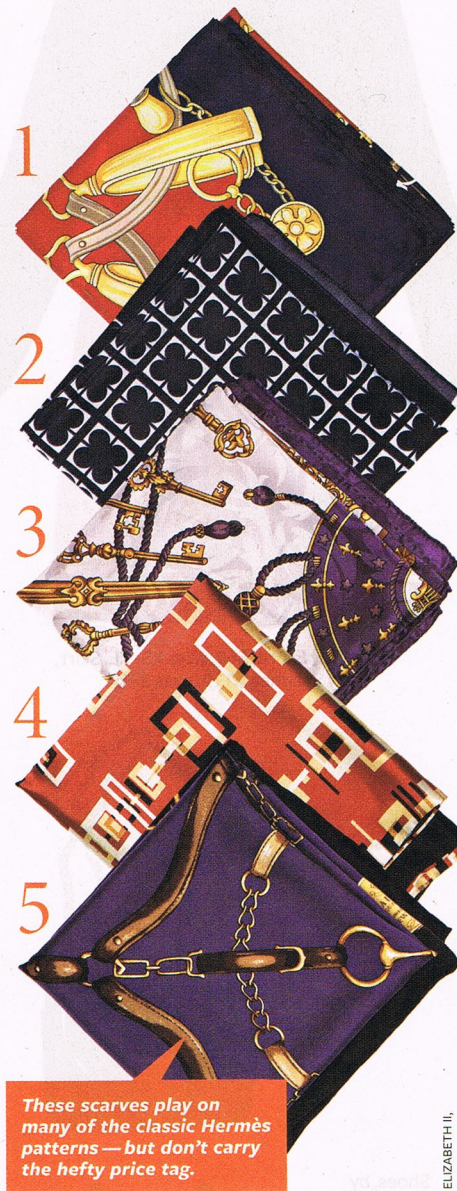
This “Mon Petit Cheval Mexicain” *carré* (\$420) displays Hermès’s characteristic orange.



In 1937, chairman Robert Dumas produced the very first edition, which featured an illustration of a line of Parisian horse-drawn carriages. Since then, Hermès has collaborated with more than a hundred artists who have created over 1,500 designs, some of which have graced the walls of galleries around the world.

Each scarf is made with painstaking attention to detail. The silk, which takes almost three months to prepare, is woven at a mill in Brazil. The material arrives at the Hermès workshops in Lyon, France, where engravers can spend up to 2,000 hours preparing the designs for printing. Colourists then choose from some 75,000 hues before the squares are silkscreened. Lastly the *roulotté*, a unique rolled hem, is sewn by hand before the article is subjected to a final inspection.

Though at upwards of \$400 it’s definitely still a luxury, the Hermès scarf is now part of many women’s everyday wardrobes. “I’ve seen them everywhere: from decorating the bags of girls in their twenties to around the neck of my 88-year-old mother,” says Jennifer Carter, president of Hermès Canada. “For others, they’re appreciated and collected much like a piece of art.” ■



These scarves play on many of the classic Hermès patterns — but don’t carry the hefty price tag.

- 1 | Polyester scarf, by Scarves and Allied Arts, \$30.
- 2 | Polyester scarf, by Liz Claiborne, \$29.
- 3 | Silk scarf, by Careta, at the Bay, \$85.
- 4 | Polyester scarf, by Tabi, \$28.
- 5 | Silk scarf, by Ralph Lauren, at the Bay, \$95.