

保罗·史密斯：时遇返辙

Paul Smith: Reflections on Reentry

撰文: Zoey Goto

作为英式休闲剪裁和样式的代名词，Paul Smith专卖店正在中国卷土重来。《贵在上海》采访了保罗·史密斯这位出众的设计师，问起他关于新的上海旗舰店、他的设计理念，以及他当时进军中国市场的第一步失败的缘由。
Paul Smith, the fashion label synonymous with casual British tailoring and style, is set to make a comeback in China. VANTAGE spoke to the charismatic designer to ask him about his Shanghai flagship store, his design philosophy and why his initial attempt to crack the Chinese market was unsuccessful.

在过去的四十年里，保罗·史密斯成功地使自己成为英国最受喜爱的设计师之一。也许吸引人的地方在于他的企业家精神：15岁就离开学校，没有毕业证或任何资质，却成功地打造了拥有2.8亿英镑（28亿人民币）资产的国际性时尚帝国。又也许是因为他别出心裁的服装设计，略带英式古怪风格的经典剪裁。史密斯以他身上的西装外套为例向我们介绍：乍看之下它可能看起来像正式的办公装束，但当他打开外套，你会发现它里面是醒目而具有装饰色彩的丝绸内衬。

1970年，史密斯在诺丁汉开设了自己的第一家店，那时他的店只是一间有着他和他的狗狗的微小空间，如今他经营的已是一个全球性的品牌，每年设计出28套时装系列，在72个国家出售。健康永续的商业运转得益于他直觉型的零售技巧。他是第一位俘获日本市场的英国设计师，并且在日本拥有265家专卖店，数目惊人。其他分布在世界各地的零售店铺也都因为与众不同的室内设计而广受赞誉。

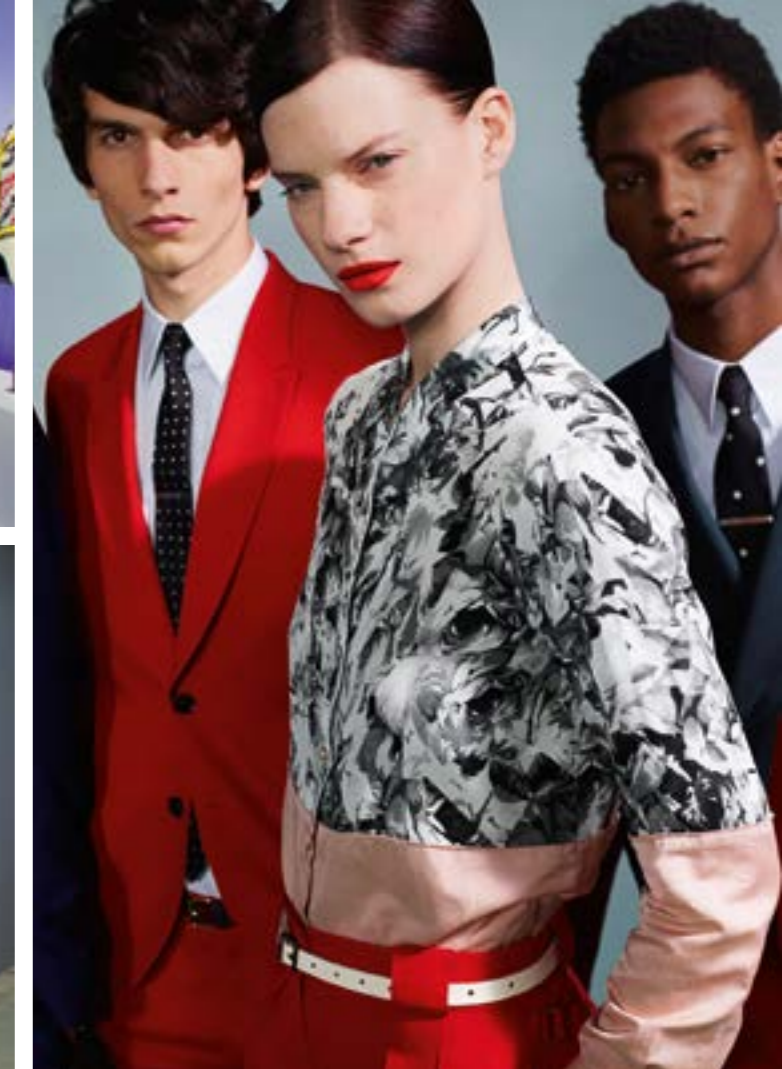
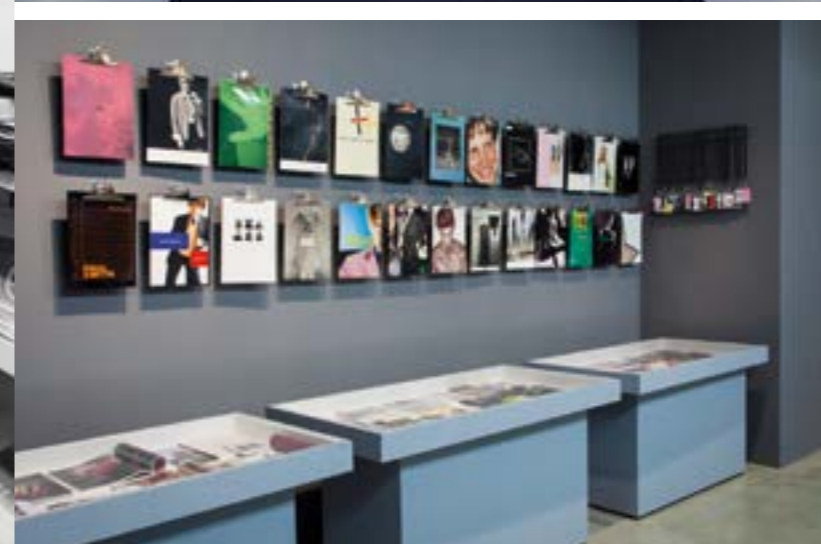
然而，保罗·史密斯也遭遇过挫折。2002年，他试图进军中国奢侈品市场，却无奈于2007年惨淡退出。史密斯回忆说，当年在中国大陆的首次扩张时机尚不成熟，不过他相信中国奢侈品市场的新变化和新的经销商会让这一次的情况不一样。“当时我们在香港和中国的合伙人首先在香港开设了店铺，而且成功了。至今香港专卖店依旧成功，在更换合伙人的情况下我们也保留了它们。那年在大陆开店就是之前的合伙人决定的，而不是我。那时我并不看好，因为我觉得还为时太早。”史密斯回忆说。

这次他选择与俊思集团合作，使其成为自己的经销商，连卡佛正是俊思旗下的品牌。“现在我们之所以进入大陆市场，是因为我们觉得是时候了，市场也成熟了，中国人更了解保罗”史密斯这个品牌了。”他计划在未来五年内在大陆开设25家门店，特别是在天津，

Over the past four decades, Paul Smith has established himself as one of Britain's most loved designers. This is perhaps due to his entrepreneurial spirit; having left school at 15 with no qualifications he managed to create an international fashion empire worth a reputed £280m (2.8billion RMB). Or perhaps it is due to his distinctive clothing, which offers classical tailoring with a healthy dose of English eccentricity. Smith uses the suit jacket he is wearing to illustrate this; at first glance it may look like formal office attire, but as he flashes the jacket open, we find that it is lined with an eye-catching, decorative silk.

Having opened his first shop in Nottingham in 1970, a minuscule space that Smith and his dog supervised, he is now a global brand, designing 28 collections per year that are being sold in 72 countries. Smith's commercial longevity is perhaps a result of his intuitive retail skills. He was one of the first British designers to court the Japanese market and he now has a staggering 265 stores in Japan. Internationally, his retail spaces have also gained design kudos as he refuses to roll out generic interiors.

However, Paul Smith received a set back when he unsuccessfully attempted to enter the Chinese luxury market in 2002, resulting in the company withdrawing from China in 2007. Smith reflects that the initial expansion in Mainland China was premature, but hopes that changes in the Chinese luxury market and a new distributor will lead to a more positive reception this time. "Initially our original partners in Hong Kong and China just opened shops in Hong Kong, which were successful. The Hong Kong stores continued to be successful because we kept them on when we changed partners. It was their choice to open shops in Mainland China, not my choice. It was not something I was comfortable with, as I thought it was too early" Smith recalls.



北京, 上海和成都这四座城市。

尽管普拉达和博柏利等欧洲奢侈品牌已成功获得了忠实的中国客户群, 却还有很多其他品牌仍然在中国遇冷。史密斯说, 2013年12月在上海静安嘉里中心开业的旗舰店面积为464平方米, 将着力于为中国消费者阐述公司的愿景与品牌的历史。“这是一个非常有利的位置店, 相邻的品牌都很高端, 而且外观十分显眼。”他说。目前, 保罗·史密斯公司已通过社交媒体网站提高公司在上海及中国的影响力, 史密斯本人也计划在四月份前往上海, 亲自与中国受众和媒体见面。

史密斯来过上海很多次, 他被这座城市深深吸引。他指出: “上海极为国际化。这里有很多阅历丰富的人, 他们都知道我的产品, 并且还有很多来自世界各地的时装设计师。除了活跃的金融业, 上海和北京的创意行业也很发达, 包括平面设计、软件工程、电影、动画和艺术。”

作为董事长兼设计师, 保罗·史密斯要负

责公司各方面的运转。“我的设计理念并没有太多改变, 但肯定已经扩大了, 因为如今有好几个系列设计。”每一季他都会推出四款男装系列、三款女装系列, 再加上鞋子和配饰, 比如手表、太阳眼镜及眼镜。“最主要的特质并无改变: 独特、经典, 穿着后给人带来意想不到的惊喜, 惊喜来自于一个不寻常的衬里或是彩色扣眼。”史密斯会以特殊的方式在每一季的巴黎和伦敦时装周中发布新品, 比如在迷你车上涂满鲜明的保罗·史密斯条纹, 现代主义系列茶壶产品和一个小说《查泰莱夫人的情人》的刺绣封面。

经营着如此庞大的时装王国, 史密斯却仍然具有悠闲的生活态度。他会在清晨五点十五分游个泳, 然后早早来到办公室。在他犹如阿拉丁神洞的工作室中, 史密斯在各色样本、手稿、色卡和各类有趣的纪念品间埋头工作。“你问我会到感到压力过大吗? 其实不会。我生活的关键是平衡。”史密斯向我们坦言, 并感激他的妻子对他的巨大支持。✔

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从左至右
From Left to right
保罗·史密斯 Paul Smith;
保罗·史密斯在自己的第一家店中
Paul Smith in his first shop;
时装系列 Collections;
工作室 Design Studio;
SS 2013中性时装系列
Unisex SS 2013 collection

He is now working with the ImagineX Group, a distributor whose affiliate company is Lane Crawford. "Now we're entering the Mainland and we feel that the timing is more correct, the market is more mature, as well as Paul Smith being better known in China". Paul Smith's new strategy will see him opening 25 stores throughout China in the next five years, focusing on Tianjin, Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu.

While European luxury brands such as Prada and Burberry have managed to gain a loyal Chinese customer base, others have had difficulty in fluently communicating their brand story. Smith says that the 5000 foot Shanghai flagship store, which opened in December 2013 in the Jing An Kerry Centre, will play a part in articulating the company's vision and history to the Chinese consumer. "It is a well-positioned store surrounded by high-end neighbours, with a distinctively colourful exterior" he says. Paul Smith has also been using social media sites to

raise the profile of the company and the designer is planning a trip in April to meet and greet his Chinese audience and media.

Having visited Shanghai many times, he says he was drawn to the city as he finds it "extremely international. There's a very large amount of the population who are well travelled, are aware of Paul Smith and many other fashion designers from around the world. I think there's a very active financial sector but also there's a lot of creativity both in Shanghai and Beijing from graphic design, IT, film, moving image and art" Smith observes.

As the chairman and designer, Paul Smith is involved with all aspects of his expanding company. "The design philosophy hasn't really changed too much but has definitely expanded because now there are several collections". Each season he now produces four collections for men, three for women, plus shoes and accessories such as watches,

sunglasses, spectacles." The main point is still the same: distinctive, classical, easy to wear clothes with an unexpected surprise, such as an unusual lining or colourful button holes". The designer now also stages catwalk shows in both Paris and London each season and his previous collaborations have included a mini car painted in the distinctive Paul Smith stripes, a Modernist teapot collection and an embroidered book cover for the novel Lady Chatterley's Lover.

Smith's laidback demeanor is all the more conspicuous considering the scale of his business. He arrives for his working day early, having started the day with a swim at 5.15am. In his Aladdin's Cave of a studio, Smith works surrounded by swatches, sketches, colour and kitsch memorabilia. "Do I get stressed out? Not really. The key to my life is balance." Smith confides, crediting his wife as being a grounding influence. ✔