

FASHION

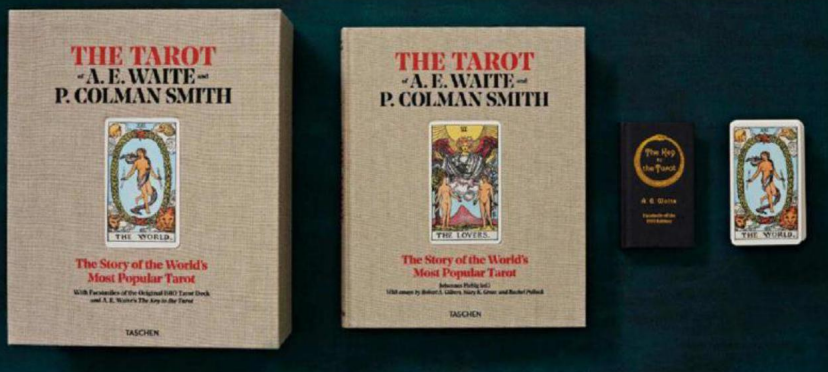
Meet Dante Sabatino, Fashion's Most Trusted Psychic



Here and below: "The Tarot of A. E. Waite and P. Colman Smith," published by Taschen



Tarot card reader Dante Sabatino in New York City.



- He has read tarot for designer Gabriela Hearst, actor Shailene Woodley and executives at Chanel and JPMorgan Chase & Co.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

LONDON — Symbolism is the language of fashion designers and executives. It's these so-called signs that inform their decision making.

The Magician, The High Priestess, The Hermit or The Sun — all Major Arcana cards in a tarot deck could easily be nicknames for those working in the fashion system that are not so dissimilar to the monikers given out by WWD's legendary editorial director and publisher John B. Fairchild. After all, he dubbed Truman Capote as The Tiny Terror; Aristotle Onassis as Daddy O, and Gloria Guinness was Her Ultimate Elegance among the numerous nicknames he bestowed on people ranging from designers to celebrities to socials.

Over the last two decades, psychic Dante Sabatino, otherwise known as Tarot by Dante, has been considered by designers and celebrities as The Go To.

Gabriela Hearst, mystic-cum-designer, is one of them and she seeks his knowledge annually along with those in her circle.

"He is spot-on and he makes you write notes," says the Uruguayan-born designer, alluding to the fact that Sabatino doesn't allow for his sessions to be voice recorded.

"It's the way I was trained and I would be too self-conscious. I want to curse and bang the table, I want to say what I want," says the New York-based psychic in an interview from Paris.

He's currently growing his Parisian clientele — in true French fashion, he describes the French as the hardest to crack, but it's a growing operation.

Sabatino offers in-person and Zoom readings. He often travels to the markets where he has a strong clientele including Rome, New York, Los Angeles, Nantucket and London, where he will be this month.

"The WWD article [he was profiled in 2008] brought me a lot more fashion people. I read tons of people at Saks Fifth Avenue and L'Oréal. I started to read famous fashion people and at one point I read the head of Chanel," he says, speaking with his hands. He wears a Sagittarius ring on his pinky finger — his sun and moon are in Sagittarius and his rising is in Virgo.

"The Virgo rising makes me a little grounded," he adds.

He grew up between the suburbs and inner city of Pennsylvania, calling himself a "city mouse," and was educated at a private high school, then had a short stint studying fashion design in college before dropping out to enter the world of retail in Philadelphia. It was around this time that he started doing a lot of tarot readings.

Sabatino's first fashion gig was in retail working at Laura Ashley and Laura Ashley Home.

from Philadelphia moved to New York, she encouraged him to charge for his readings and hosted a tarot party for him. He would go up to the city to read every once in a while.

He moved to Laura Ashley's Madison Avenue store in 1995, moving in with his best friend.

"I decided to supplement my income with tarot. I started to work publicly at The Big Cup café in the Chelsea neighborhood. I worked Tuesday and Wednesday nights for a number of years then I started making house calls. I still read clients to this day from my time at the café," says Sabatino.

He learned how to read cards from his mother, a classical pianist, piano instructor and tarot reader. He would sit on her lap and watch her read cards — she gave him his first set of tarot cards at the age of 15. As an older teenager, Sabatino would often hang out with older women readers and did readings with them as a means of exploring his craft.

He found a mentor in Georgia who he studied with for more than five years to work on his technique and style.

Sabatino is currently on his fifth tarot deck. He sleeps with it to connect with its energy and to turn the cards into his "pet rock," he says.

Most tarot readers follow the Celtic spread when reading, but Sabatino has developed his own template.

"I worked on a really fun street in retail. I would go to the [local] bar and read cards. I got to be known as the reader person in the neighborhood," he says.

When his best friend

"I read in piles of cards and each pile has a connection to a different part of the psyche or someone's life. I describe them [the cards] as psychic mirrors. They look into the psyche and they reflect to me and I read the reflections the way a doctor would read an MRI scan," he says.

Sabatino uses the tarot deck that was created by A. E. Waite and P. Colman Smith in 1909. The publisher Taschen turned the famous decks into a collector's box and book last year titled "The Tarot of A. E. Waite and P. Colman Smith." Waite and Smith were members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a secret occult society that was prominent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Despite reading for more than four decades, he rarely does self readings, nor does he visit other readers.

"It's sort of like giving yourself your own massage or haircut. My mom still reads and she's in her 80s, sometimes I consult with her, but for myself, I'm very interested in astrology," says Sabatino.

