

In Fashion



with Women's Editor Diane Crabtree

There's a definite whiff of success to Calderdale clothes designer Franco Francesca these days and it's only a matter of time before we'll all be smelling just as sweet

Sweet smell of success

HE'S got his own clothes label, now talented Italian designer Franco Francesca is to bring out his own fragrance.

It's his reward for stealing the show at one of the world's most prestigious fashion events, Milan Fashion Week.

Franco, who left his native country seven years ago to settle in Hebden Bridge, has just returned from Milan where he won a competition organised by Italian perfume manufacturer and retailer, Limoni Perfumaria.

First prize was £3,000 and an opportunity for Franco to design his own perfume, which will carry his name and be produced by Limoni and sold in more than 300 shops in Italy over the next five years. He will receive royalties from sales of the perfume, which will also be sold in shops in Britain and other parts of Europe.

The competition, in collaboration with Milan Fashion Week and the *Italian Fashion* magazine, was judged by a number of prestigious personalities from the Italian fashion industry, including Mario Boselli, president of

Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana - Italy's equivalent to the British Fashion Council.

The judges were impressed by Franco's latest female collection for next spring and summer, which takes inspiration from animal shapes such as starfish, lug-worms and insects. He was one of seven finalists and says winning such a fantastic prize will help get his name known both here and on the Continent.

"Bringing out my own fragrance is a dream come true and I can't wait to get started. I can appreciate how women like to smell as well as look," says Franco, who has exhibited his collection at Milan Fashion Week for the past three years.

Franco, who has a BA (Hons) in fashion/clothing from Leeds University, has won numerous competitions and appeared on TV and in newspapers and magazines both here and in Italy over the past five years. His collections are shown at most of the big London and Manchester shows, and his clothes are sold in boutiques in Manchester and Milan and at the boutique he owns with his sister, Emma, in Benevento, near Naples.

Nearer home exciting things are happening too. Next month Franco opens his own showroom in Hebden Bridge, above the Circle of Friends hairdressers in Hope Street.

"I will sell mainly womenswear but there will be some menswear. I will concentrate on couture made-to-measure clothes with the help of my staff, including Malik Taylor, from Halifax."

"I will also introduce a selection of famous Italian labels which I will bring from Milan," says Franco, who was the guest designer at last year's *Evening*

Courier fashion show and whose latest collections can be viewed on his website www.francofrancesca.com



On the catwalk: fashion designer Franco Francesca in Milan



Beautiful: some of the designs by Franco Francesca

