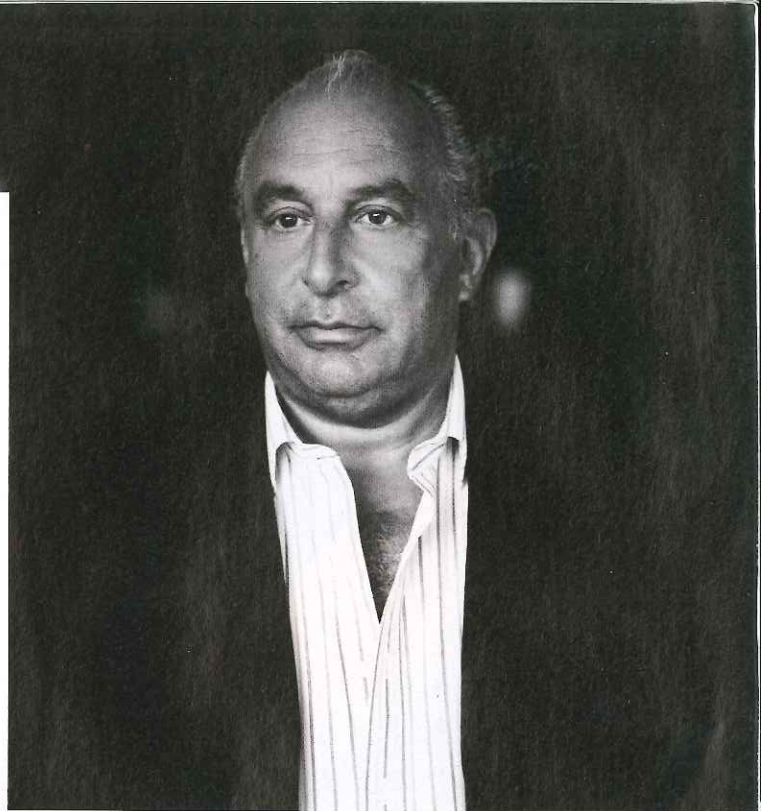


SIR PHILIP GREEN

Retailer and owner of Topshop



Sir Philip Green is the rock star of the retail world. The billionaire Topshop tycoon jets between his Monte Carlo home and London office on his Gulfstream, hosts Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell aboard *Lionheart*, his 206-foot yacht, and throws lavish parties in the Côte D'Azur. But beyond the conspicuous spoils is a self-made man who started work when he was just 16 importing shoes from the Far East, and made his first millions in the '70s flipping London retail chains. In 1999, Green bought the ailing British Home Stores chain, which he renamed Bhs and made profitable in less than two years. In 2002, he acquired Topshop's parent, Arcadia Group Limited. With his bold business tactics, the head of the U.K.'s largest privately owned retail group has transformed the British high street. Now, he's setting his sights on Canada with an exclusive partnership with the Bay to begin rolling out Topshop and Topman stores starting in Toronto later this month.

Why do you think Topshop is one of the few British retailers to take off in North America? "I've got a great team of people. They've got it in their blood. I think that everybody has got the same vision of what we're trying to do, which is great product, great quality, have an edge, be ahead of the market. The same team has been with me since I bought the company—this is my 10th year. Everybody wants this to work. This is their life."

What do you credit your success to? "Good timing, spotting the opportunity early enough and then knowing what to do with it. If you go back over the last 10-year period when I started buying big retailers, venture capitalists didn't like retail so I was there earlier. What are the chances of someone privately being able to buy 2,000 stores? Pretty unique."

Why do you think people go so crazy for Topshop? "It's original. We're not copying anybody; we're creating it ourselves. There will always be an odd few items that are, of course, influenced, but fundamentally this is homegrown, home generated. It's fresh, it's new, it's very frequent. I think it's also showing people how things can be worn as a whole lifestyle range."

What's your biggest indulgence? "I wouldn't say I have any. Well, I have toys. I have a plane but I don't charge it to the company. I don't have a company credit card. I buy clothes in the store and I pay retail at the counter."

Why is philanthropy so important to you? "Both money and time are equally important. If you're fortunate, you can and should help. I believe if you do good things, it comes back around."

THIS HASN'T ALWAYS BEEN EASY. I'VE DONE THIS THE HARD WAY FROM ONE STORE

What would you like to change about your business? "I actually think it's fine how it is. I'd like to manufacture a lot more goods near home if I could, as opposed to running around the globe. There are parts of it that could be easier, but I think the cocktail works."

What or who inspires you? "Myself. I like what I do. I wake up in the morning and get myself going."

What's your most treasured possession? "A family that I'm close with. I tell my kids that good isn't any good and very good is marginal, so they're going to have to step up because nothing is taken for granted."

What's been your greatest achievement? "This hasn't always been easy. I've done this the hard way from one store. There were a couple of earlier bumps along the way. I did it myself in a tough jungle where it's a very competitive game." —*Aya McMillan*

CANADA'S FASHION MAGAZINE

ONLY
\$2.99

ELLE

365

FALL
HITS

MAJOR
FASHION &
BEAUTY ISSUE

IS FACEBOOK
MAKING YOU
CRAZY?
THE FEAR OF
MISSING OUT

PLUS!
Canada's
top 10
newsmakers

BEAUTY
MUST
HAVES

Cool nails,
hot lips &
new hues

STYLE
FOR
LESS

Fall's best
buys to love
forever

60% FEEL
BEAUTIFUL

Your views
on beauty