

T Time- Tory Burch Interview Unedited

Written by Written by Claire Perkins / Photography by Meg Kondrich
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You may know her name and you definitely know her logo, but there are a lot of things you don't know about all-American fashion designer **Tory Burch**. Seen on celebrities, your mom and your very own ballet flats, there's nobody those golden T's can't reach. **AFM** chatted with Burch at her Spring fashion event at Neiman Marcus, and learned all about her inspirations (gardens and fabulous interiors), challenges (keeping her clothing accessibly-priced) and how she made her remarkable start in the fashion industry after raising her three kids, only five years ago.

Arizona Foothills Magazine: *Your designs work for so many different styles and generations. What type of woman do you have in mind when you design?*

Tory Burch: It's funny that you say that- I always think of what I would want to wear, and thing that I have an eclectic sense of style.

AFM: *You began your fashion career after you started raising your three children. What advice would you have for women who are in that stage and scared to take the plunge into a new industry?*

T.B.: I think that's a big dilemma for women. Many women give up their careers to have children and find it scary to jump back in, and it's definitely a risk.

AFM: *Are you able to still make family time?*

T.B.: Yes, it's my first priority. If I wasn't a good mother, then I wouldn't be good at this [career]. It comes first and work comes after, but it's definitely not something that is effortless. There's a lot of planning, time management and work. But if you're willing to do that it is really rewarding.

AFM: *Which other designers inspire your designs?*

T.B.: I get inspiration everywhere- I think YSL, I mean I look back to the 60's and 70's. It can be anything to a garden to a painting to music- inspiration comes from all over.

AFM: *What inspirations helped you arrive at your spring collection, and what are your staples for spring?*

T.B.: It wasn't about any one inspiration, it was really about interiors and exteriors. Gardens around the world. Whenever I do design boards I always include an interior shot because of how it inspires my pieces and focal points. So it helps that I've traveled a lot and visited a lot of beautiful gardens. The Huarache shoes [my PR rep] is wearing are a variation of a pair I wore in high school- I added a chunky heel. Printed cardigans, different sweaters in lightweight knit. There's also a necklace with symbols from different world religions. So, interiors, exteriors- not necessarily traveling, but traveling in my mind.

AFM: *Your fall looks seem to be edgier than you normally design- what made you decide to take it in that direction?*

T.B.: I don't think it's that different from what we've been doing- I think our collections in general are more diverse than what many people perceive. When I design I do how I would personally dress- We are pushing it a little bit because I want them to see that [diversity] as well. It's really more about the combinations- we have downtown people who would wear something that could also be worn by somebody more classic- younger women could wear something, then an older person could put it on and look much more elegant rather than sexy.

AFM: *I loved the fur you had in your fall collection-*

T.B.: We used incredible hand-knit that looked like fur, and stretch leather leggings that I've been looking for.

AFM: *You've won several awards for your amazing accessories- which of these do you get the most wear out of, and what accessories are you most proud of?*

T.B.: You know, I'm not necessarily a logo person, for me- I don't wear things head-to-toe with our logo on them. I'm proud of our company and proud of our logo, but that's not necessarily what it's all about. It's funny how things take off like our Reva flat. We have some handbags for fall that I'm really proud of, a lot of deconstructed leather, very soft, elegant in shape. It's always a challenge at our price point to find in-credibly beautiful fabric and designs and keep it where I want to keep it, which is very accessibly-priced. It can be hard to keep it at that priceline.

AFM: *I work with a lot of women from all over the Valley, and everywhere I look I see your clothes.*

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T.B.: It's not easy at our price point to make beautiful clothes. It's a challenge because I'd love to use fabrics that are \$20 a yard even, but we want to keep it accessible, especially now [with the economy].

AFM: *Where do you want to go in the future with your brand?*

T.B.: From day one, it was my dream to build an American lifestyle brand. And the reason I say that is it's interesting, I love business and I've been really loving is making mistakes along the way but learning and growing the brand in a really thought-out way. I'd love to do home, to do fragrance. I just signed a deal with exotica for eyewear. They'll be in stores in October, which I'm excited about. We have an opening price point of \$140 which is very accessible. I just want to keep going, but in a smart way.

Quickfire Questions

AFM: *If you could die and come back as an article of clothing, what would you be?*

T.B.: Sunglasses

AFM: *What color do you paint your toenails?*

T.B.: Clear

AFM: *What is your favorite vacation destination?*

T.B.: Bali

AFM: *What's your drink of choice at a party?*

T.B.: I don't drink often, but Vodka Martini

AFM: *What's your guilty pleasure?*

T.B.: French fries

AFM: *What do you overbuy?*

T.B.: Makeup, more like different beauty products

AFM: *What is one item you are in search of?*

T.B.: Pants

AFM: *What TV show can't you miss?*

T.B.: Big Love

AFM: *What was your first big designer splurge?*

T.B.: In high school, my YSL Prom Dress

AFM: *What's your favorite purse?*

T.B.: My Balenciaga handbag

AFM: *Who (besides yourself) is your favorite designer?*

T.B.: Dries Van Noten

[Click Here for photos of the Tory event at Neiman Marcus!](#)