



PRABAL GURUNG

SHOPPING

# Behind the seams

Designer Prabal Gurung dishes on his inspiration and love of powerful women

*It takes an infinite* amount of strength for a young man born in Singapore and raised in Nepal to head to New York City to launch a design career. But Prabal Gurung was born with strength. “Prabal means ‘the strongest one,’” the 35-year-old designer tells *Hello! Canada* of his name (pronounced like “trouble” with a p).

Not only is it a trait he shares with his mentors – he interned at Donna Karan, calls Anna Wintour his “inspiration” and credits Oprah Winfrey with empowering him to follow his dream – but it’s a characteristic he looks for in his famous clients. These include everyone from the Duchess of Cambridge and Michelle Obama to Jennifer Lawrence and Lady Gaga.

We sat down with the designer at the Room at Hudson’s Bay to talk red-carpet dressing, school uniforms and why women should rule the world.

**How do you choose which stars to dress on the red carpet?** We’re discerning, not snobbish; we’re selective

about whom we dress. We want to look at a body of work. What does she stand for? Is she someone who’s curious? Is she willing to take a risk? Besides looking beautiful, there’s got to be something more. Is she famous for the sake of being famous or does she really have something? I’m always inspired by the passion and the grit that these women have.

**What did it mean to you that the Duchess of Cambridge wore one of your dresses in Singapore?** Knowing that she was just wearing London-based designers and not anyone else at that time, for her to wear my dress was incredible; it was unexpected. I never expect any of these women to wear my designs. I hope for it, but when that happened, it impacted who I was globally. In business, it was a great impact but also, for me personally, it was just a big moment of gratitude.

**How did Oprah inspire you to move to New York?** I’d never been to America. You have to understand that growing up in Nepal, [the U.S.]

was a day and a half on a flight away. New York seemed like the moon. I watched an Oprah episode about living your dream and after watching that, I kept on thinking, let me give it a shot, let me apply to Parsons, let me see if I can make it in New York and if I don’t, at least I tried. If I do, wonderful.

**Why has it been important for you to surround yourself with strong women?** It’s extremely important for every man, whatever his sexual orientation, to have a woman in his life. They bring a different level of compassion, complexity in our lives. When the right women are in power there is a compassion factor; they look at things differently, they’re more pragmatic, and I think the world needs that right now. The world needs a little bit of feeling. – JULIA SEIDL

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CELEBRITY SPOTLIGHT

**THE DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE**

The nipped-in waist and conservative hemline are true to Kate’s signature style, but Prabal’s bold print adds flair.



**KATE HUDSON**

This form-fitting poppy crepe dress, which features a plunging neckline and geometric cut-outs, highlights every curve.



**DIANE KRUGER**

The actress chose a striking tricoloured satin gown from Prabal’s Resort 2014 collection to attend the Metropolitan Opera’s season-opening production of *Eugene Onegin*.



FROM LEFT: MIKE PONT/GETTY IMAGES; VINCENZO GRILLO/IMAXTREE; CHRIS JACKSON/GETTY IMAGES; GREGG DEGUIRE/GETTY IMAGES; GARY GERSHOFF/GETTY IMAGES