

# Fancy Footwork | Bontoni Bespoke Shoes

MEN'S FASHION | BY ANA FINEL HONIGMAN | SEPTEMBER 2, 2009 10:11 AM



*Courtesy of Bontoni A Bontoni tapered dress shoe takes 13 weeks to make.*

Back when the world was awash with money, fashion became more expensive even as the word “luxury” was cheapened. **Bontoni** men’s shoes are a reassuring reminder that purchasing an investment is still possible. The third-generation Italian company traces its origins to Montegranaro, a medieval hilltop town in the Marche region, where Franco Gazzani’s father, uncle and late grandfather made shoes with hand-stitched leather and hand-painted homemade dyes for family, friends and select customers. In 2004, Gazzani and his second cousin Lewis Cutillo decided that their shoes’ rising reputation warranted an expansion. But he resisted the temptation to inflate his family name into a mass-market luxury brand. Instead, Bontoni’s growth has been measured, and its quality has never been compromised. The shoes are created exactly as they were made a generation ago. Each pair of tapered dress shoes, whose signature attribute is their unique patina, requires 13 weeks to be completed from scratch. The company’s team, having grown from three to six, produces 8 to 10 shoes a day in the basement of Gazzani’s home. In Italy, where the sanctity of craft has evolved into an ideology like Slow Food, Bontoni sells its elegant bespoke shoes at a starting price of \$4,500. Ready-to-wear shoes, priced from \$1,000 to \$3,500, can be purchased at Bergdorf Goodman Men in New York, Wilkes Bashford in San Francisco and equivalent retailers around the world. Bontoni will hold a trunk show at Bergdorf Goodman Men from Sept. 11 to Sept. 13.