

# Turkish Fashion Leaders



IN HIS FIRST INTERNATIONAL INTERVIEW, YASAR AYAYDIN, CEO OF FASHION RETAILER TUDORS, TALKS TO RLI ABOUT THE COMPANY'S RAPID GROWTH IN ITS HOME MARKET OVER JUST A FEW SHORT YEARS, AND ITS PLANS FOR A NEW PHASE OF STRATEGIC INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION.

Entering the Turkish retail market in 1998, Tudors has established itself as an important player in the country's shirt market, having relocated its Istanbul-based merchandising operation to Anatolia. The company's main objective is to become the most reliable and innovative shirt brand, both in Turkey and throughout the world, through constantly renewing itself whilst meeting the demands of the target consumer, in the frames of its modern retail understanding. It currently operates 156 stores in Turkey.

With the aim of becoming one of the most important shirt brands in the world, Tudors has started to establish a strong international presence through franchising and master franchising. Today, the company operates its international business with some 33 stores in ten markets – Dubai and the UAE, Iraq, Germany, Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus and Poland.

New store openings are currently planned for Terazije in Serbia and Warsaw in Poland, whilst Tudors is also in correspondence regarding an impressive ten new countries.



"Our first priority during this next phase of growth over coming months is to strengthen and consolidate the presence that we have in those countries in which we already operate," explains CEO Yasar Ayaydin. "We want to be stronger in each of these. Once this has been achieved, we will seek new expansion into the heart of Europe and the UK."

It has been an incredible 12 months, a year that has seen the brand take huge strides, expanding well beyond the confines of its Turkish home market, whilst also reviewing and renewing store fit-outs and décor, and introducing new and exciting models and fashions.

Tudors' core consumer group tends to comprise almost exclusively those in the 'B', 'C' and 'D' income groups, though the retailer has seen the occasional customer from group 'A' also frequent its stores. "The difference between our brand and others in the sector is that we adopted and embraced the fashion trend right from the very beginning, and we understand the difference between high fashion and affordable high fashion," explains Ayaydin. "Let's face it, you don't need to spend a fortune on a shirt and at Tudors, you won't."

So what are the key drivers underlying the brand's success in such a short timescale?

"Well, the first point is that we attract and express the fashion very clearly; we are constantly innovating – we are a very innovative brand – and we closely follow the world's fashion trends," he explains. "As I said, we continuously provide affordable, high quality products at good price points and in not deviating from this approach, we win the confidence of our consumers – and keep it!"

Despite being a relatively young brand at just eight years old, Tudors has seen huge growth and has evolved accordingly: "In the beginning, our focus remained almost exclusively on the Turkish market, as you might expect. However, over the past twelve months, having begun the process of our international expansion strategy, we began to see the differences that occurred within each market and were able to then adapt the whole basis of the Tudors brand accordingly."

The brand's strength speaks for itself; the name is a reference to the English Tudor monarchy and everything related to the life of that royal dynasty, says Ayaydin, who views the company as something of a 'shirt kingdom'. No matter what the age group or from which class, Tudors believes that a person must find a product that reflects their own identity and personality.

"To maintain this approach, it is hugely important that we strive hard to remain at the cutting edge," he adds. "We all know that for every brand that takes its eye off the ball, there is another waiting to step in and take its place," he says.

The main challenge for the company moving forward is to show the world that Turkey is not just a country renowned for the manufacture of its wonderful fabrics but is also a country with the ability to present exciting new fashions – and Ayaydin believes that his company is perfectly placed to achieve this.

"We want to make a difference and are working hard to do so," he smiles. "Tudors is a very traditional company in the commercial sense and extremely modern in terms of vision."

This is clearly a company to watch.

