



Fabrice Tardieu

Miami, Florida



Fabrice Tardieu

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Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Fabrice Tardieu:

Born in Haiti, Fabrice Tardieu, owner and founder of an eponymous brand of meticulously handcrafted sneakers, moved to the United States at the age of 12. With encouragement from his family to experience life in a different country, he moved to Paris to attend college. It was here, in the City of Lights, where Tardieu's love for fashion and design, and his unwavering commitment to follow his passion, set the stage for a journey that defines what it means to be an entrepreneur.

"I remember feeling pretty lost that day," Tardieu said, referring to his graduation from IFAM Business school. "I always loved fashion, hanging out with models and trying new things, but I wasn't sure what my next move would be. However, those feelings quickly changed after a conversation with four friends. They each explained their future plans

and when it was my turn, after responding 'I have no idea', they all said 'fashion' at the same time."

After that pivotal exchange, Tardieu knew his path. He landed an internship with Giorgio Armani and never looked back. Within three months, he was offered a full-time position and quickly became the Head of Sales and Distribution for France and the French Caribbean. In 2004, Tardieu's love for fashion and his growing desire to create his own brand reached a tipping point.

"While still in Paris, I launched my own shirt label called Bogosse," Tardieu said. "I spent about five more months with Giorgio Armani before moving to Miami to focus exclusively on building my new brand. With a bag full of shirts, I moved to Doral and lived in a townhouse owned by a family member. My other brother, Patrick, had a freight forwarding business so between that and the fact that it was Miami, it made sense to move here. I started selling door-to-door and the brand took off."

Over time, the Bogosse label was carried in several high-end department stores including Sak's Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus. By 2013, Tardieu saw a shift in the marketplace he couldn't ignore.

"Based on everything I saw, it looked like the shirt business would go through a tough time," he said. "Also, department stores were becoming a dying breed. I needed something that was manageable online."

Tardieu continued, "At the same time, I saw something happening in the sneaker world. People were becoming more accustomed to buying shoes online. I sold my shares in Bogosse to my original partner, took

that money and Traveled to Italy. I spent four months learning everything I could about the shoe business. While there, I secured a manufacturing facility and, when I got back to Miami, I got started building my new brand.”

Tardieu’s vision was, and still is, to produce a high-end internet-oriented brand that speaks for itself. Key to his business model is a brand with minimal distribution and a marketing strategy that revolves around word-of-mouth and prominent customers becoming the leaders and influencers of the brand. As Tardieu shared, Dwayne Wade, a 13-time NBA All-Star and former shooting guard with the Miami Heat, was the first celebrity to take notice.

“Dwayne, like most celebrities and high-profile athletes, has the best stylist in the industry. She picks and decides his style and purchases clothing and shoes for him,” Tardieu said. “His stylist, Calyann Barnett, saw my sneakers on Instagram and reached out. When Dwayne started wearing my shoes, he fell in love with them. Before long, other celebrities and athletes found out about Fabrice Tardieu. I tell people all the time, when you work hard, people will always support you. I’m a small brand with a big heart. I don’t pay for marketing. Everything happens organically. When you put your heart into doing something and you’re not motivated by money, that’s where real success comes from – that’s how you move mountains.”

Tardieu’s sneakers are designed in Miami and manufactured in Italy. He has a small and nimble team in Miami, along with two employees that manage an office, a warehouse and the company’s online operations from Italy. Over time, the Fabrice Tardieu brand has evolved to include

several different lines of sneakers and a clientele base that includes fashion-conscious consumers, world famous soccer players, a king, and well-known celebrities such as Will Smith, Common, Canelo Alvarez, P. Diddy, Cassie and Gabrielle Union to name a few.

“Gabrielle Union is the reason I started the women’s shoe line,” Tardieu shared. “I was at a party for Dwayne and she thanked me for making her husband look so fresh, but also said, ‘What about us’. She wanted a pair of sneakers and swore other basketball wives would also buy them. She was right. She posted her sneakers and then all the wives wanted a pair.”

For Tardieu, whose shoes are also available in high-end stores in Miami, London, Qatar and other places throughout the world, making a product that gives his customers confidence and swag is what he enjoys most. “My customers understand the pain, sweat and energy that go into my products. It’s the way we cut the laces, position the logo and pay attention to the littlest details. They appreciate that. When they share their love and appreciation, it makes me feel great.”

Looking ahead, Tardieu has started conversations with “big groups” to possibly acquire a portion of the brand. Citing an uptick in demand for apparel, he’ll also look at strategies on expansion, as well as extending current product lines and developing new ones. Whatever the future holds, Fabrice Tardieu will continue to deliver meticulously handcrafted sneakers and apparel fueled by love, passion and deep connection to purpose.

What advice does Tardieu have for aspiring entrepreneurs? “Always follow your heart,” he said. “No matter the obstacles, follow your heart.”

Along the way, you'll certainly experience your share of challenges. When this happens, you manage it 'One battle at a time' and 'One day at a time'. Remember, we're all fighting something internally. If you keep going, you will see the light."

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