

# FIRST THINGS

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## DOLCE & GABBANA: “THE ONLY FAMILY IS THE TRADITIONAL ONE”

by Matthew Schmitz

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In an interview with Panorama magazine, Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana, the two men whose business partnership—and one-time romantic partnership—lies behind one of the world’s great fashion powerhouses, have declared that “The only family is the traditional one.”

“The family is not a fad,” Gabbana told the interviewer. “In it there is a supernatural sense of belonging.”

Procreation “must be an act of love.” Children born through artificial insemination or egg donors are “children of chemistry, synthetic children. Uteruses for rent, semen chosen from a catalog,” Dolce said.

“The only family is the traditional one. No chemical offsprings and rented uterus: life has a natural flow; there are things that should not be changed.”

Domenico and Stefano were for years perhaps the globe’s most prominent gay power couple. In the tightly knit, family-based, quasi-aristocratic world of Italian fashion, these two men came from nowhere to make a name for themselves that the whole world would recognize. In a 2005 *New Yorker* article, John Seabrook marveled at their success:

Unlike the Guccis, Pradas, Puccis, Zegnas, Ferragamos, and Fendis, Dolce and Gabbana do not come from families with long pedigrees in the production and sale of luxury goods. . . . They began as outsiders, with their noses pressed to the windows of the fashion world. Their business and their distinctive style are based not so much on family history and artisanal traditions as on their relationship with each other. And the only reason that Dolce and Gabbana are creative and business partners at all is that they were romantic partners first.

The two men have long approached political orthodoxies with the same brashness and iconoclasm that guide their fashion sensibility. In 2006, Gabbana told the *Daily Mail*, “I am opposed to the idea of a child growing up with two gay parents.” Such statements have yet to affect Dolce & Gabbana’s business, but as gay rights make gains there is likely to be less freedom to speak for those who oppose them—even if those speaking are gay men.

Already the new interview has prompted opposition, with the website [LGBT News Italia](#) calling for a boycott like the one launched against Barilla pasta after its chairman made similar comments. I tend to loathe the sub-democratic habit of expressing political preferences through consumer choices, but it would be hard to object to the victory won for elegance if conservatives were to start wearing D&G in solidarity with these two brilliant, independent-minded Italians.

*Matthew Schmitz is deputy editor of First Things.*

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