



# Infinite Variety: The Life and Legend of the Marchesa Casati (Definitive Edition)

*Scot D. Ryerson, Michael Orlando Yaccarino*

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For the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Marchesa Casati astounded Europe: nude servants gilded in gold leaf attended her; bizarre wax mannequins sat as guests at her dining table; and she was infamous for her evening strolls, naked beneath her furs, parading cheetahs on diamond-studded leashes. Artists painted, sculpted, and photographed her; poets praised her strange beauty. Among them were Gabriele D'Annunzio, Man Ray, Jean Cocteau, Cecil Beaton, and American writers Tennessee Williams, Jack Kerouac, and Ezra Pound. Couturiers Fortuny, Poiret, and Erté dressed her. Some became lovers, others awestruck admirers, but all were influenced by this extraordinary muse. The extravagance ended in 1930 when Casati was more than twenty-five million dollars in debt. Fleeing to London, she spent her final flamboyant years there until her death in 1957. Now nearly a half-century later, Casati's fashion legacy continues to inspire such designers as John Galliano, Karl Lagerfeld, and Tom Ford. Fully authorized and accurate, this is the fantastic story of the Marchesa Luisa Casati. Scot D. Ryersson is an award-winning freelance writer, illustrator, and graphic designer. He lives in New Jersey. Michael Orlando Yaccarino is a freelance writer specializing in international genre film, fashion, music, and unconventional historical figures. He lives in New Jersey.

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