

Zara Mourns Death of Spain's Richest Woman

Co-founder Rosalia Mera [died](#) at the age of 69. Spanish news media have reported that she had a brain hemorrhage while on vacation in Menora.

Mera opened the first with her then-husband, Amancio Ortega in 1975 in La Coruna, Spain. The original name was "Zorba" after the movie "Zorba the Greek." Jesus Echevarria, communications director for Inditex SA, which owns the Zara brand, [explained](#) what happened next to the New York Times Magazine last November:

“I don’t think they were thinking of making history, just that it was a nice name,” Echevarria said. “But apparently there was a bar that was called the same, Zorba, like two blocks away, and the owner of the bar came and said, ‘This is going to confuse things to have two Zorbas.’ They had already made the molds for the letters in the sign, so they just rearranged them to see what they could find. They found Zara.” And what a good find it was. Short, sweet, rolls off the tongue. Just like Sara, but less common, more pizazzzzz. And nothing like some British royalty to up the ante. The birth in 1981 of Zara Phillips, a granddaughter of Queen Elizabeth II, probably wasn't bad for sales. Nor is Kate Middleton's [flair](#) for weaing the fashionable yet affordable brand.



Mera and Ortega separated in 1986, the year after they founded Inditex, which now includes eight brands including Massimo Dutti and Bershka. Mera subsequently concentrated on her family and on charity efforts. Still, by 1988, Zara **had expanded** beyond pain; by 2012, Inditex had stores in 86 markets. Ortega is the fourth-richest man in the world, with a net worth of \$56.9 billion. Mera came in with \$5.5 billion, crowning her Spain's richest woman. Forbes ranks her the world's richest self-made woman. Self-made she was. At the age of 11, Mera started to work as a sales assistant in a clothing shop.