

GENTLEMEN OF *STYLE*

MEN'S FASHION ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES OF THE 1930's



SVEN RAPHAEL SCHNEIDER

GENTLEMAN'S  GAZETTE

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IN THE UNITED STATES OF THE 1930'S

By Sven Raphael Schneider



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INTRODUCTION



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MEN'S CLOTHING IN AMERICA

Despite the emergence of many modern amenities and ideas, a number of factors affecting dress had yet to change. Men of the upper class still had staff in their homes, such as a butler or a valet to attend their wardrobe. The lack of central heating reinforced the need for dressing gowns and Albert slippers at home. Outside one's own castle, there were still certain dress codes, and so men wore suits when they got the newspaper, shetland tweed knickerbockers when they went for a picnic or golf, and a car coat as they drove. In the evening, the tuxedo was the informal companion for dinners, trumped by the white tie tailcoat ensemble for balls and the opera.

In the beginning of the era, students at Ivy League schools set the new fashions of the season and so haberdashers focused particularly on these young men. By 1935, Princeton was a fashion leader in the field, and haberdashers from across the nation would make a pilgrimage to the opening game and the commencement day football match just to observe the latest trends in men's fashion. It was particularly interesting to see the freshmen changing their outward appearance within one school year from rough to refined. Culturally, fashion was a priority for this set. Later, campuses across the nation would follow suit, and young men became the leaders of male fashion in the US.

Under the Ivy League influence, major trends were emerging. Fur coats and polo coats were must-have items for every dapper chap, especially in the colder states.

To dress well today, it is invaluable to understand the ensembles and clothing from the heyday of classic men's dress. Classic men's clothing as we know it today has roots in the clothes men wore in the 1930's, a style era that retained much of the formality of former eras yet was embracing modern concepts of dress. The 1930s is considered an auspicious decade of men's elegance and style by many.

The goal of this book is to capture the colors, patterns, and combinations of this remarkable era as a source of inspiration for your own modern wardrobe. The best medium for studying fashion of the 1930s is undoubtedly the fashion illustration.

Unfortunately, fashion illustrations have all but disappeared in modern day America. Until the 1960's fashion illustrations were an integral part of the advertising and clothing industry; photographers and videographers supplanted illustrators by the 1970's. Men's fashion and illustrations reached their heyday between 1933 and 1939, bounded by the launch of Esquire and the beginning of World War II, respectively.

Prior to 1933, fashion magazines were scarce and there were few mediums in which clothing was depicted on a larger scale; post-war, illustrations and fashion remained subdued as the life slowly returned to normal. Like many world-changing events, the war decreased emphasis on formality, elegance and style as other priorities took over. Hence, 1933 –39 provided the perfect cultural scenario in which fashion could thrive.

The focus of this book will remain on this 7 year period, which is often described as the Golden Age of men's fashion.

The Drape Cut had arrived from England, and slowly but surely fullness over the blades and chest was accepted by dressy men, including silver screen stars such as Clark Gable, David Niven and Fred Astaire.

However, not only the young would dress the part; older men adapted while still incorporating classic elements. Wearing a hat was still obligatory and lined or unlined gloves were a permanent companion. At times, even walking canes and top hats refined the outfits of many men.

Especially compared to today, the degree of elegance and taste in the 1930's was resplendent.

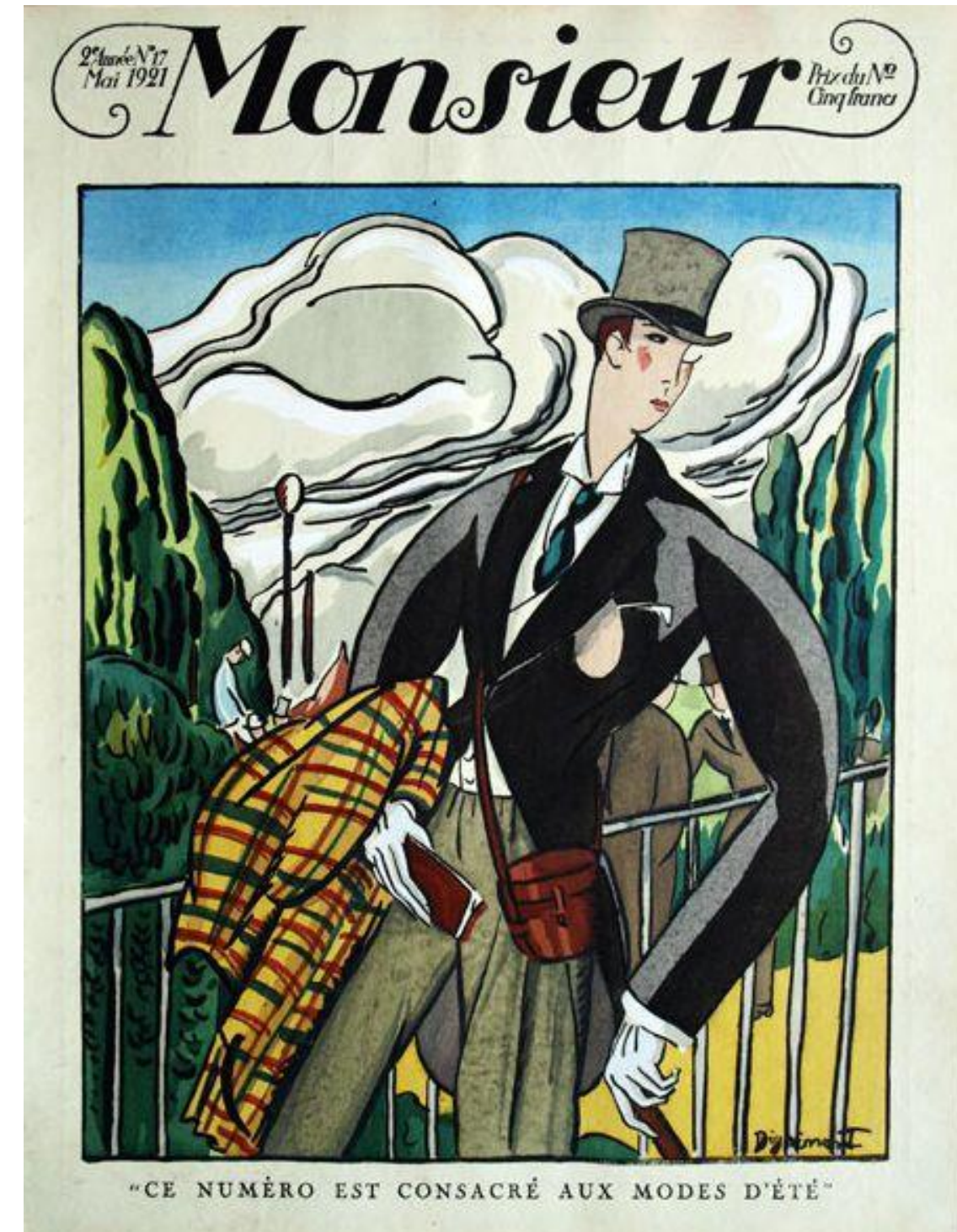
MEN'S FASHION ILLUSTRATIONS IN EUROPE

The earliest fashion illustrations appeared in the *Tailor & Cutter* magazine in England, a tailor trade periodical that was first published in 1869. The illustrations were black and white, and were more technical in nature.

A few decades later, *Der Herr* [eng. The Gentleman], a consumer-oriented publication, was first issued in 1913 in Germany. As such, it was less technical, focusing on the cut of clothes, etiquette and fabrics. It contained many fashion illustrations, some printed in color.

The French *Monsieur* came out for the first time in 1920, and was likewise directed at the gentry. Their fashion illustrations were colorful, heavily influenced by *Art Nouveau* and often slightly abstract. Nevertheless, these illustrations perfectly portrayed, and to a certain extent exaggerated, the glamorous lives of the gentlemen; just look at this image to the right. Just seven years later the *Arbiter* came along in Italy and *Der Modedikator* [eng. *The Fashion Dictator*]- later *Das Herrenjournal* [eng. The Gentleman's Journal]- were launched in Germany.

Both focused on men's clothing, society & etiquette using stunning fashion illustrations and photographs. The gentlemen were often unrealistically tall and elegant, yet they were far more realistic than the early illustrations of *Monsieur* or *Der Herr*.



MEN'S FASHION ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

In the U.S., men's fashion illustrations began appearing in the 1920's in the magazine *Men's Wear*, a publication by Fairchild. The drawings were functional but retained the exaggerated qualities of their European counterparts.

Then, in 1931, *Apparel Arts* was issued for the first time. Issued quarterly at \$1.50 per copy, this menswear trade publication was created to educate the haberdasher and introduce new fashion, forms of advertising and industry trends. It was successful from the onset and soon it was issued eight times a year. The founders of *Apparel Arts* quickly realized they could be even more successful by issuing a clothing magazine for the male consumer, and as a result they launched *Esquire* in 1933. In order to lend the new publication some credibility, writers such as Ernest Hemingway and Alexander Woollcott were commissioned to write articles, and it quickly turned into a massive success. Although it started as a men's fashion magazine, the content was rapidly extended in scope to other areas of men's interest. While *Apparel Arts* was always at least 90% about men's clothing, *Esquire* soon just had about 5 - 10% men's fashion editorial content.

Nevertheless, there was a strong connection between the two magazines: new fashion illustrations would first appear in *Apparel Arts*, so haberdasher could stock the items. Six months later, the same illustrations would be printed in *Esquire*, so the fashion conscious men could buy these novelty garments right away. This relationship endured successfully throughout the 1930's, and the pair of publications became the most influential organ in the menswear industry.

During its first two years, *Apparel Arts* fashion illustrations similar to the drawing style from the 1920's, but in 1933 *Laurence Fellows* joined *Apparel Arts*. He is considered by many to be one of the best fashion illustrators of his generation. Under Fellows influence, stylish fashion illustrations emerged that were realistic, full of detail and always depicted in a particular social setting or environment, such as the three gentleman below outside the polo pitch.

Later, the likes of *Leslie Saalburg* and *Robert Goodman* would join Fellows at *Apparel Arts*, which only added to magazine's substance and acclaim.

In the following pages, you will find thirty fashion illustrations separated into chapters about suits, sport coats and overcoats. Each piece of art is discussed with the goal to help you improve your own outfits and introduce a bit of the glory of this decade to your style.



SUITS



GENTLEMAN'S
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THE LOUNGE SUIT

Today, everybody knows what a suit is, but back in the thirties, the *lounge suit* was still something of a novelty. In the mid 19th century, the frock coat was the garment of choice for the gentleman, later to be supplanted by the morning coat. Before the turn of the century, the suit as we know it today entered the field. At the time, it was considered the least formal garment and deemed only appropriate for lounging, hence the name *lounge suit*. Many sources claim that the lounge suit did become popular until the beginning of the 20th century. However, a remarkable little survey at the close of the 19th century observed the rising prominence of the garment. A writer for *The Tailor & Cutter* was stationed at London's Charing Cross, where he observed the men on the street and their dress. After a few hours, he had counted 530 gentlemen in lounge suits, 320 in morning coats and just 150 gentlemen in frock coats. Clearly, the lounge suit was mainstream. England at the time was the leader in men's fashion, and the British trends were adopted almost religiously in the U.S.. Here we see two American gentlemen in lounge suits. On the left, we can see a classic navy blue single breasted lounge suit with jetted pockets. Worn with a light blue shirt, a red solid tie, a bowler hat, black shoes and chamois gloves, this gentleman wears one of the most classic lounge suit combinations. He would certainly be impeccably dressed today. On the right, we see the same cut, but the fabric and accessories make it look very different at first glance.

The yellow-brown glen plaid has angled flap pockets and in combination with brown shoes, a knit vest, a striped tie and a tweed hat, it looks like a country outfit. These two examples prove that the same cut of a suit can be highly versatile, depending on the fabrics and finishing.

For the modern man, this means that a flattering suit cut can be employed for many different social settings and outfits. If the goal is to maximize your existing wardrobe, combining various accessories will help to achieve a different look.



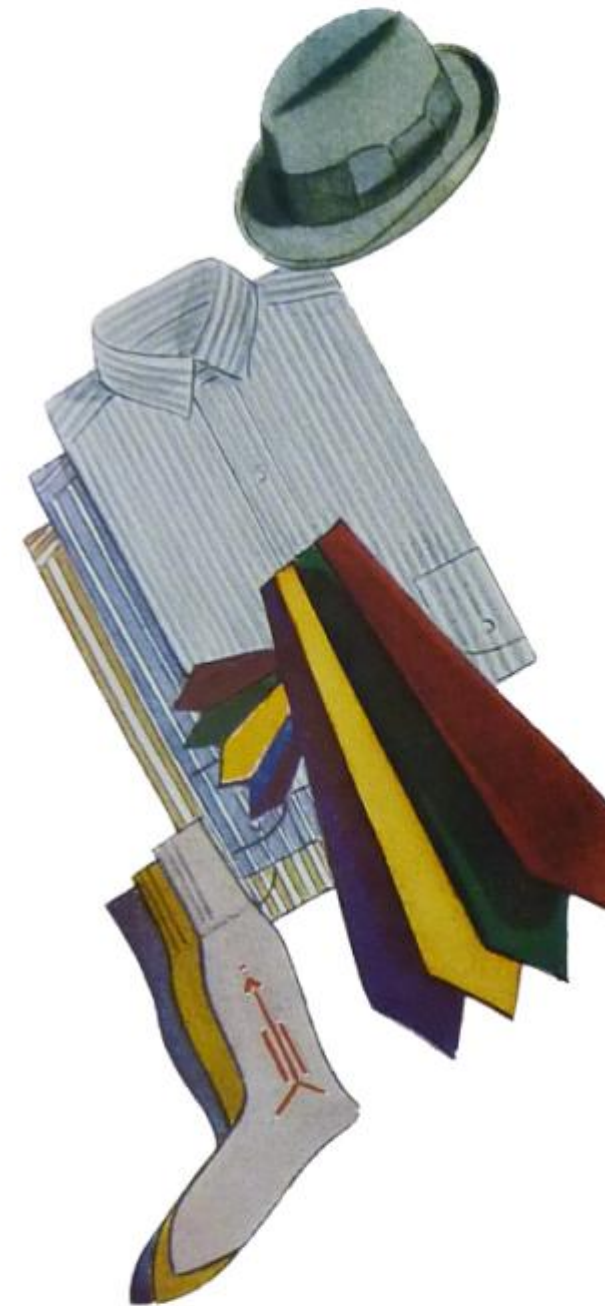
TRIPLE WINDOWPANE SUIT IN OLIVE GREEN—SPRING 1933

This illustration is from Spring 1933, and it depicts a gentleman with a moustache in a clean cut, single breasted triple windowpane suit. This jacket features peaked lapels, implying a higher degree of formality, which is underscored by the four cuff buttons and an elegant Homburg hat. Back then, consistency in dress was much more important. Formal garments were combined with formal accessories and informal country suits with informal furnishings. Today, you can basically combine whatever you like, however knowing what was historically correct will often make you look more refined.

The cut of this suit is slimmer than most suits from the thirties. The shoulders are slim and natural, there is no drape in the chest, and the trousers show only a bit of fullness over the thigh and taper to the cuffs. Obviously, this suit was still influenced a bit by the 1920's fashion, which was very lean and tapered.

Olive green is a rather unusual suit color nowadays, although it is extremely versatile. Once the basics such as navy, charcoal and brown suits are covered, green is an excellent next choice, because it ought to be a greener world.

Just as rare as the green suit is the triple windowpane suit. Sometimes, you may see a subtle windowpane suit in worsted cloth or a slightly bolder windowpane in flannel, but this kind of triple windowpane is extremely rare, and hence something that is either produced in very small lengths or woven upon request. In case you prefer either an unusual color or an uncommon pattern, consider a charcoal triple windowpane on a grey flannel background.



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BROWN DOUBLE BREASTED CHALK STRIPE SUIT—SPRING 1933

Apart from the fact that this is a double breasted suit, the cut is very different from the previous suit and shows a much better example of a typical 1930's suit. The shoulders are padded heavily and rather large in comparison to the head. The lapels are cut widely with a low gorge. The chest is full of drape, the horizontal button stance is generous and the trousers have a full cut from the waistband down all the way to the ankle. Combined with a grey snap brim hat, a collar pin, a tartan tie and bright yellow gloves, the outfit is elegant but a bit less formal. The pocket square is loosely tucked in to the angled breast pocket, which creates a certain nonchalance in combination with the tipped hat.

Instead of the matching suede brown shoes, cognac colored shoes would have been a good choice. Instead of the pale yellow shirt, a pale blue, grey or green would have worked just as well. Pastel colored shirts were generally quite popular during this decade and although mostly forgotten nowadays, they are an excellent way to add some color with to an outfit without looking like a peacock. If you already have a few blue and white shirts in your closet, opt for a pale yellow or salmon colored shirt , because it will combine beautifully with brown suits or jackets.

The neckwear of the thirties was, for the most part, rather bold. Combining such strong patterns with other colors and striped suits requires some skill, because it is easy to overload. Ties were much shorter because trousers were worn at the natural waist or slightly below it; ties should never extend beyond the waistband.



TWO-TONE STRIPE CITY SUIT WITH BOWLER HAT—FALL 1933

This scene shows a gentleman strolling in the city. In the 30s, this meant one's clothing needed to display a higher degree of formality. In terms of detail, a gentleman would choose a suit with peaked lapels, jetted pockets, black captoe blucher shoes, a black bowler hat, off-white daywear gloves and a tightly rolled city umbrella.

Once again, the cut of the suit is very in line with 1930's fashion - just look at the trousers and compare them to the very first illustration - what a difference! Although formal, the standout element of this outfit is the striped cloth. Most striped suits today are either pin stripe or chalk stripe in various widths, with narrower spacing between the stripes. Only rarely will you find bolder stripes, and widely spaced stripes in two different tones are even rarer. Certainly, it can make for an elegant city suit, yet it is a special fabric and not many weavers offer it anymore. So, if you have already covered the basics, this could be a great addition to your bespoke wardrobe. The striped shirt only works here because the shirt stripes are spaced more narrowly. Nevertheless, one of the micro checked shirts to the left would have been a better choice.

Note, the tie knots were much slimmer due to thinner interlinings used during the era. For some reason, they look more elegant than their chubby, double windsor counterparts. Certain elegant men, such as Prince Charles, swear by them.

The printed pocket squares in paisley patterns are always a good companion, especially if it reflects another color in the outfit without matching it. Here, it is the blue color in the tie and suit stripes.



MID GREY WINDOWPANE SUIT WITH PATCH POCKETS—FALL 1933

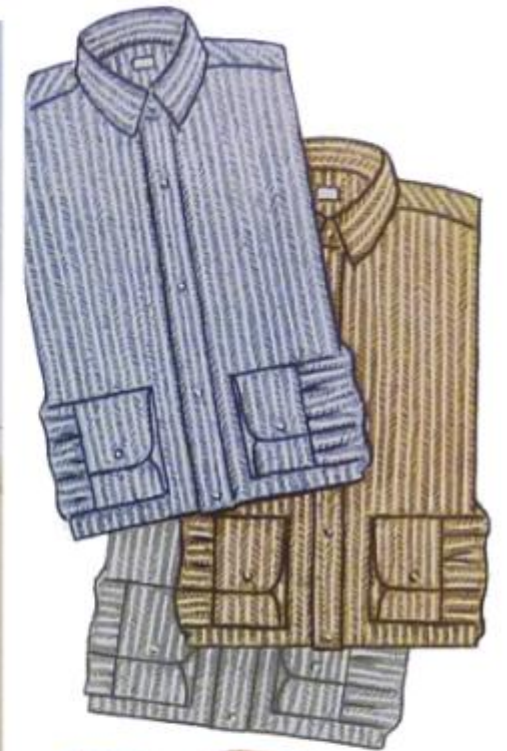
Grey suits come in such manifold varieties that it is difficult to recommend a specific shade. As a rule of thumb, the a darker the grey, the more formal the suit. Here, we have a mid grey suit that is ideally suited for casual events outside an office. The informal character of the suit is emphasized by the faint windowpane, the notched lapels and the flapped patch pockets.

In addition, informal suits or tweeds are traditionally worn with sporty button cuffs, rather than with double cuffs and cuff links. In any case, the cuff should be tight around the wrist, as you can clearly observe in the illustration.

Most men today would not wear a suit for a casual event, though this picture is a perfect example of how a suit can be worn in a relaxed environment. The key to this outfit is the fit of the suit - just look at the tight armholes - and the right accessories. The green felt hat looks very similar to the soft, slightly wrinkled hats that are en vogue again, and it matches the formality of the outfit. The white sweater vest contrasts well with the suit as well as with the dark tie and the pastel red shirt.

The brown leather shoes match the sporty walking cane, watch strap and pipe. Canes have definitely lost appeal over time, except to the dandyish few.

Note the gentleman in the background. He pulls off a combination of an orange tie, a pale yellow shirt and a green jacket with vest. Green and orange will always look balanced and are hence a great color pair for your casual wardrobe.



SHEPHERD CHECK SUIT WITH BOUTONNIERE—FALL 1933

This gentleman certainly has a look of confidence about him, as he strides into an office. He wears a boldly patterned three piece shepherd's check suit in charcoal and grey. The lapels are wider than today, have a lower gorge and are angled downwards more pronouncedly. The shoulders are padded again and we can see a bit of drape. Since the suit has a vest, the jacket is worn unbuttoned. Note how the bottom button of the vest was left undone intentionally.

The trousers have a full cut with cuffs, which are paired with solid grey socks and black captoe oxfords. The blue winchester shirt features wide stripes with a rounded club collar and white double cuffs. The blue silk tie with large polka dots stands out from the ensemble just like the red carnation boutonniere. Alternatively, a striped tie would have been even better. Whenever you wear a flower on your lapel, make sure it is worn through the buttonhole and kept in place with a stem-keeper to keep it from moving around. Off-white gloves are very elegant but require more maintenance because of the dirt. The light grey Homburg hat is the perfect companion for all formal suits. So, if you wear hats and want one hat for all your dark suits, this is it.

The cashmere overcoat features a light windowpane on a dark background and it certainly stands out. Chances are, you will only find this kind of pattern in a custom overcoat or topcoat. The color and pattern scheme in this outfit was definitely a transitional outfit between the dark and brown tweed looks of the winter and the lighter-colored lined suits of the summer. A nice individual touch is the white linen pocket square with handrolled edges that bears the initial of your first name, seen to the right.

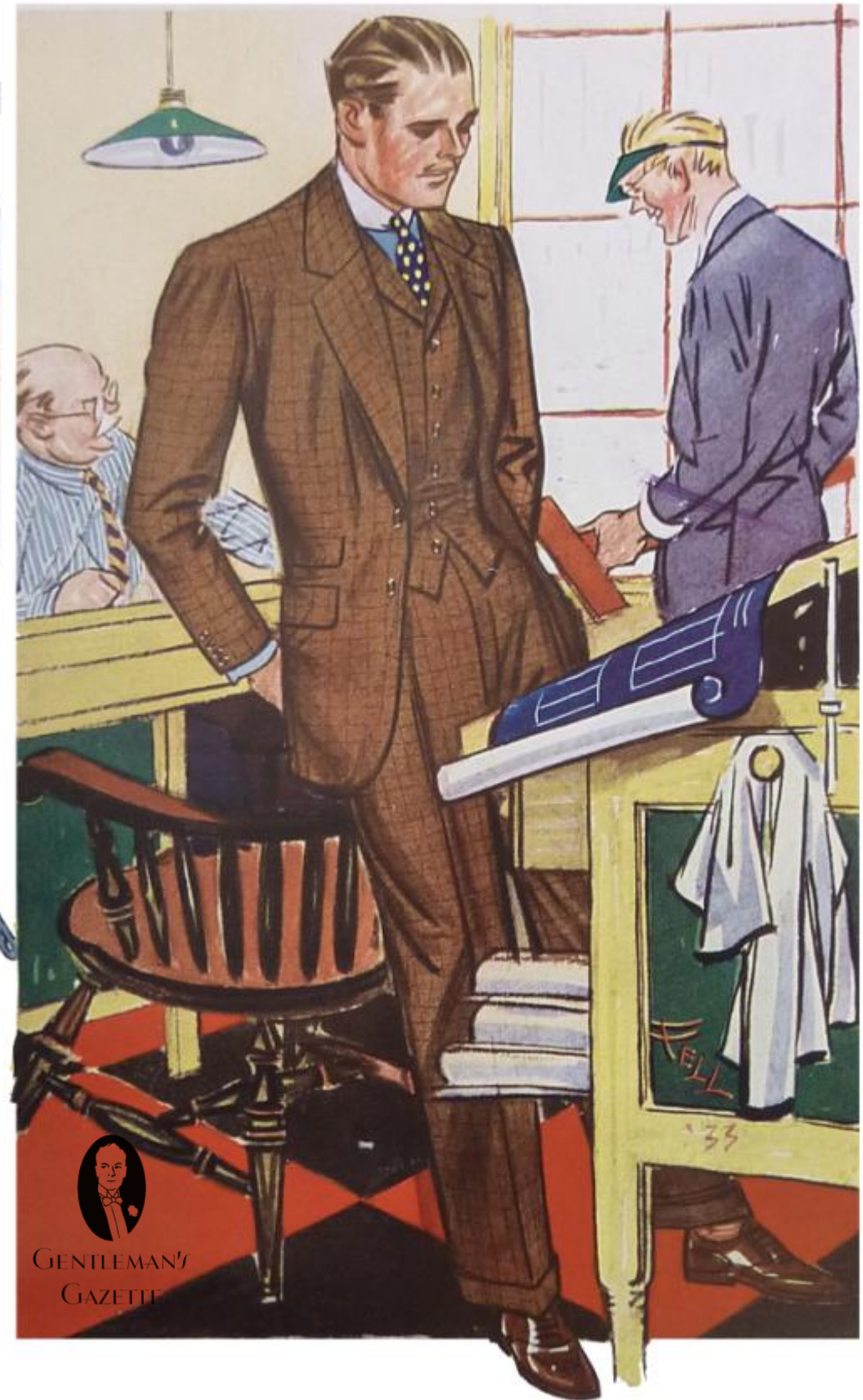


BROWN WINDOWPANE THREE PIECE SUIT

Today, brown suits are underrated and often neglected in favor of navy, charcoal and grey, even though it is a wonderful suit color that pairs well with many things. Here, we see a three piece version with a slightly darker windowpane with a ticket pocket and a full cut. Chances are, you will have a hard time finding this pattern, but alternatively, a solid brown sharkskin or needle head pattern works just as well. Both weaves create a solid look by incorporating two tones of brown. From about 10 feet away, it will look solid but once you come closer, the subtle pattern which creates a slightly *changeant* effect depending on the angle.

When wearing a vest or waistcoat, it is always recommended to wear suspenders instead of a belt for several reasons. A belt will show through with its added volume, and suspenders allow you to wear slightly larger trousers that feel more comfortable.

When combining trousers, socks and shoes together, follow a simple system. First, you decide on a color and/or pattern for your trousers or suit. Second, you choose a matching pair of shoes. For a mid brown suit, chocolate brown, mid brown or something lighter like cognac shoes will work. Third, choose a pair of socks that matches the trousers and contrasts with the shoes, or choose something that contrasts with both. Avoid matching it to the color of the shoes, because it looks odd. Always wear over the calf socks that are long enough; one of the benefits of these socks is that a well-fitting pair stays in place without cutting off your circulation — nobody wants to see your hairy legs.



DOUBLE STRIPE NAVY SUIT—WINTER 1933

Many men wear pinstripe suits, or even a chalk stripe suit, but few wear double stripe suits anymore. This 1933 example of a grey-blue 6x2 double breasted suit proves that this style can look magnificent, classic yet different at the same time. Fortunately, this fabric is still available, mostly for made-to-measure or bespoke suit customers. This pattern is great for every executive, attorney or other white-collar professional who wants to wear a proper business suit with an individual twist.

This fashion illustration shows us a typical thirties double breasted business suit: drape, full cut, wide shoulders, black bowler & oxfords. Interestingly, he also opts for a striped shirt, which makes the ensemble a bit too accentuated, especially in combination with the bold polka dot tie and the red boutonniere. A solid shirt and micropattern or small polka dot tie would have created a superior look.

The off white gloves match the degree of formality perfectly, and the dark blue Paletot overcoat complements the business outfit. Mr. Fellows, ever attentive to detail, reveals the bold black and white houndstooth lining, which was an upcoming trend back then. Just like today, fabrics were becoming lighter, and to compensate for the lost thickness, linings were added for more warmth and comfort. Interestingly, what was considered to be very light then would be classified as heavy nowadays. While wool cloth was heavier and generally draped better, the finishing processes today are far superior, creating a softer wool overall. Modern day lightweight fabrics often look flimsy and is prone to wrinkling; 12oz. cloth or above usually drapes better. However, the overall performance of a fabric is determined by the raw material, density, weave, weight, etc., which is why it pays to determine the use of the garment before making a cloth purchase.



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THE BOLD HERRINGBONE SUIT—FALL 1934

Although herringbone is rather popular today in many colors and combinations, this heritage pattern for men's suits generally comes in smaller sizes. In the 1930's, it was not uncommon to see men in really bold herringbones, such as the gentleman to the right. A simple black and off-white herringbone can have a dramatic effect if the cloth is woven with a 3" wide pattern.

This spectator at a polo game was certainly dressed in a fashion-forward manner. In fact, the visitors of polo games in the US were known for their dapper outfits, and so many would attend these events to observe the latest "street style" fashion trends rather than the game.

Just like with the diamond pattern, it is important to keep the color scheme of a bold herringbone simple to create an elegant look. Here, the color palette was reduced to grey, black and red.

The club collar shirt is closed with the ever-popular collar pin and has a very unique color. This greyish-red is really hard to find but in combination with the grey suit and black patterned tie, it works very well. The pocket square has a more saturated red but it harmonizes with the suit as well as the tie without matching either red perfectly - this is exactly how it should be done!

The unlined gloves are reddish-brown, the Homburg hat is charcoal and the shoes are black. Considering the event, a brown snap brim fedora and burgundy full brogue shoes would have been preferable to the plain toed blucher shoes.



OFF-WHITE LINEN SUMMER SUIT—SUMMER 1935

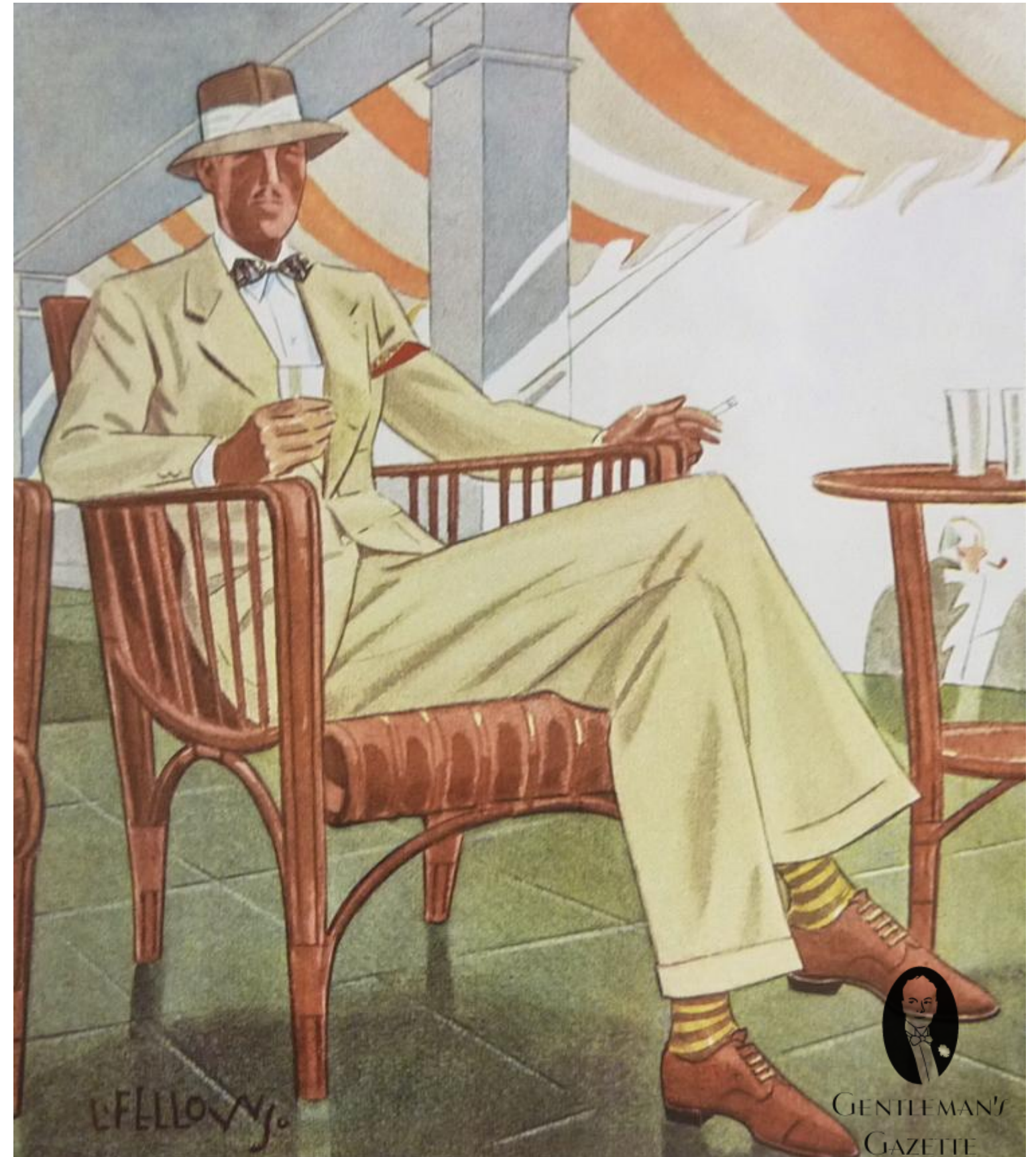
During summertime, many men prefer to spend the day in t-shirt and shorts, but in the thirties, a gentleman would rely on his summer suits instead.

This chap on the right enjoys a drink and a cigarette in the shade, wearing an off-white linen suit. Although prone to wrinkles, it has always been a favorite for summer wear. Unlike dark suits, it does not absorb the energy of the sunlight and keeps the wearer cooler. In addition, it does not stain as easily as plain white garments and the weave is solid enough to breathe yet simultaneously avoids transparency. Due to its casual nature, the cuffs show 2 buttons instead of the usual 4, indicating that it is less formal than a regular lounge suit.

This suit is combined with a rare brown Panama hat with a white ribbon, white shirt, and a red pocket square. To add a dash of color, the socks are horizontally striped in yellow and olive green. The brown captoe blucher shoes are similar in shade to the hat and create a consistent look.

If you live in a warmer climate, consider adding an off-white linen suit to your wardrobe; you will look elegant and feel a bit more comfortable at the same time.

The madras bow tie is also a great companion for summer, because unlike a regular neck tie, it does not add another layer over your chest. So, whenever you travel in warmer climates, skip the neckties and bring some bow ties instead.



SPORT COATS




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6 FELLOWS

THE NORFOLK JACKET—SPRING 1933

The Norfolk jacket is another garment that exists in numerous varieties. The name is attributed by some to the Duke of Norfolk, and by others to the county of Norfolk . In any case, it appeared in the 1860's as a shirt-like garment. A few years later, it turned into a jacket that was popular for cyclists, golfers and even hunters. Today, there is not a specific style for a Norfolk jacket, but most have either center back or shoulder pleats and front pleats with a belt. It is cut a little roomier, and in combination with the pleats, it allows for greater movement when shooting a rifle, biking or golfing. Back then, it was often worn with matching knickerbockers in tweed, but in the 1930's there was a trend towards combining the Norfolk jacket with contrasting rather than matching trousers.

The gentleman on the right wears a Norfolk jacket made of grey donegal tweed. This coarse-looking tweed is ideal for country outfits because of its nubs, which are part of the weaving process of the cloth. Here, it is combined with a contrasting brown Shetland trousers with a dark window-pane. The contrast is softened by the snap brim fedora, which incorporates the same colors as the trousers. Interestingly he wears a white button down shirt with a pale micropattern foulard tie. Generally, white is more suited for business outfits rather than casual ensembles. The yellow day-wear gloves match the socks but contrast with the trousers and the shoes. Overall, this is certainly not a subtle outfit', but it is very unique and appropriate for the country. In the past, if you wanted to own a Norfolk jacket, were basically just two options: either custom or vintage. For a list of current sellers of current suppliers of this coat, [please click here](#).



THE HOUNDSTOOTH ODD JACKET—SUMMER 1933

At the beginning of the 1930's in the U.S., the most popular odd jacket combination (another term for a sport coat) was the navy blue blazer with white wool flannel trousers. Apart from that combination, little else was acceptable to wear. By the mid thirties, an appreciation for patterns and broader color ranges had arrived over from England and a new odd jacket combinations were seen across the pond.

The gentleman in this illustration wears a bold black and white houndstooth odd jacket, a pattern that is more commonly seen in women's overcoats today. For the more reserved, a sport coat in a slightly smaller houndstooth is extremely versatile and can be worn on almost any occasion nowadays. Traditionally, sport coats always featured a center vent, because they originated as riding garments, and so the center vent covered the rear at all times. Note that this coat has side vents, which became more popular in the U.S. in the 1930s. It is better suited for sitting on regular chairs and it even makes you look good with a hand in your pocket.

The outfit is combined with brown solid flannel trousers and a yellow cotton flannel shirt. Unlike today, it was unusual then to have the collar attached to the shirt because they used to be starched heavily. This collar was softer and the tie was likewise made of cotton flannel and it really pops in white. For your own wardrobe it may be interesting to experiment with solid white or off white ties because they really change the look of the outfit. Since he wears brown-white spectator shoes, the green and white horizontally striped socks create a just the right amount of contrast. He is just about to stuff his pipe, which accentuates the vintage qualities of this image, and yet there are so many wonderful details present that would easily translate to a bold, modern gent's wardrobe.



DOUBLE WINDOWPANE SPORT COAT—FALL 1933

Previously, we introduced the triple windowpane fabric. In its footsteps follows the double windowpane fabric that is likewise rare, yet makes for a great odd jacket, especially if a full suit is too bold for your tastes.

Here we can see a chap in the country with an ash stick and his sheepdog. Of course, he needs the proper attire to go along with the setting. The pale blue tweed fabric with a rust windowpane is predestined for a sport coat. Sport coats in tweed should always be single breasted with notched lapels, and one or two cuff buttons in order to underline its character as a casual country garment. The buttons here are all leather, which further amplifies the rural look. Alternatively, stag horn buttons would also achieve this affect. The flapped patch pockets are expandable and deep, so belongings won't fall out unexpectedly. Sadly, it is difficult to find interesting patch pocket styles because they are more difficult to produce.

It is combined with a pale yellow flannel shirt, an off white knit vest, a collar pin and green knit tie. The stone-colored trousers are solid and feature a hand turned cuff, creating a softer look and feel. The outfit is complemented by the thick soled, cognac brown ankle boots. Finally, the checked tweed cap tops off this true country ensemble.

One aspect you should always pay attention to with sweaters and ties is the look of the "V". Whenever you wear a V-neck sweater a necktie is recommended, otherwise the V below looks empty. A bow tie works if the V-neck is short. On the other hand, crew neck sweaters are not suitable with ties, because they hardly display the tie knot and make the ensemble look crowded.



GREEN SPORT COAT WITH BRASS BUTTONS—WINTER 1933

In the 1930's the American gentry would winter in Florida or maybe even the French Riviera. The fashion illustration on the right was drawn by Hurd and depicts a scene at a French resort town.

This chap wears a royal blue polo shirt with his green 3-roll-2 flannel jacket that features brass buttons. Underneath, you can see the high waisted, light grey flannel trousers with brown buckskin shoes. This particular sport coat was British and decorated with a breast pocket insignia in form of a fish, a bird or a club crest. Adding such artwork will certainly make your blazer stand out more, but it is a nice way to personalize your summer outfit.

In temperatures above 90°F flannel is probably not the most comfortable choice, and instead, a fresco is probably better suited for warm evenings. Moreover, a Beret in this day and age is rarely seen except on soldiers, Olympic teams and by some men in France. In its place, choose an airy Panama hat in off-white that will serve you much better.

Note the server in the background wearing a black bow tie and black vest with a white jacket. This dress code serves to distinguish the servers from guest under any circumstances. Servers always intentionally dressed against classic dress rules in so that guests would never be mistaken for a server. Here it was the addition of a black vest; in the evening, a tailcoat was often worn with a black bow tie instead of a white one .



BROWN DOUBLE BREASTED SPORT COAT—SPRING 1934

Cruising in the thirties not only meant good food, relaxation and evening galas; men also had more time to think about their dress.

Here, we can see two very different cruise outfits. On the left, the gentleman wears a grey knit polo shirt and a double breasted 6x2 sport coat. A decade before, peaked lapels would not have been appropriate for such a casual combination. The full cut cotton trousers have a tone somewhere in between chartreuse and yellow, which is rather unusual. The brown-white spectators work well with the outfit and the polo shirt enabled the chap to take off his jacket if he was too warm. Now, double breasted jackets wear warmer than single breasted one of the same material and construction due to the overlap in the front. Hence, for summer, opting for a single breasted suit will keep you cooler, unless you have fallen in love with the DB style.

The gentleman on the right wears an all white three piece suit with a white pocket square and white suede wingtip shoes. The only elements of color are his stiff collar shirt in blue and the boldly dotted tie. Now, most people spend their cruises in warm weather locations so you will inevitably get a tan. Wearing all white makes you look even more tan. Such an ensemble also hints at his social class; white had always been the color afforded only by those who had no fear of staining them. This gentleman wears peaked lapels, jettied pockets and a double breasted vest. If you wear a vest, you can always leave the coat unbuttoned. In fact, it often looks preferable. As it stands, you can only see a tiny bit of this gentleman's vest. However, when in warmer climates, note that while dapper, a vest adds another layer of cloth.



At THE TENNIS COURT—SPRING 1934

Just like golf or equestrian sports, tennis was an elegant activity. Not only did the players wear all-white outfits of flannel trousers and short sleeved polo shirts, but the spectators would also dress the part.

In the foreground, we see a tennis club member in his blue club blazer. The 8x3 button configuration is rather rare to be seen in everyday life and typically associated with a specific club, hence the insignia on the chest pocket. The same is true for the foulard scarf in club stripes. Today, a muffler during summer time is not the optimal accessory. If you want to skip the necktie, choose a bow tie or an ascot.

In accordance with the players, his trousers are made of lightweight, white flannel and the socks are thick, white and knitted. Combined with white buckskin shoes with a red rubber sole, these socks are quite appropriate. Today, many men *only* wear white tennis socks, which makes for a disinterested look at best and cheap at the worst. If you can, avoid tennis socks at all costs, unless you actually play tennis or another racquet sport.

Note the panama has the shape of a planter hat, with curled brim edges. This style was en vogue at that time. In this day and age, to achieve the same shape, you either must have your hat reblocked or have a custom-made hat.

It seems hard to believe that people even exercised in long flannel trousers, but at that time exposing one's hairy legs was considered embarrassing and inappropriate.



BROWN ODD JACKET & GREY FLANNEL SLACKS—FALL 1934

Brown and grey is a combination that goes together exceptionally well, but it was relatively new in the 30s. As such it was common to see these two colors combined in fashion illustrations. The chap in the park wears a fashion-forward combination of these two colors.

The jacket is made of mid brown Shetland tweed and has a chocolate, rope stripe windowpane with flapped patch pockets. Note it also features the informal two-button cuffs and is cut with side vents - the new thing to do back then.

The slacks come in a very light grey that harmonizes perfectly with the brown. The blue and white stripe shirt is combined with a tie in the same colors, but with much bolder stripes. The solid blue wool sweater vest with v-neck helps to keep the tie knot popped up ever so slightly, which creates a debonair look. Together with the color coordinating, nonchalantly folded pocket square and the relaxed snap brim hat, it makes for a perfect picnic or weekend outfit.

The brown suede blucher shoes have a hint of burgundy red, but other dark brown or mid brown shoes would have worked just as well. The crepe soles add to the casual character of the ensemble but a leather sole would do as well. Alternatively, a pair of ankle boots would also be in line with the outfit.

In case you have garments in these colors, don't miss this guide about [matching blue and brown](#), because it can help you to get more out of your existing wardrobe and make more deliberate purchases in the future.



BROWN PLAID SPORT COAT & GREY SUIT—FALL 1934

This scene shows two men aboard a 1930's ocean liner in two more interesting brown and grey combinations. On the right we see a mottled, plaid odd jacket in brown with a red overplaid. Once again, it was illustrated with side vents instead of center vents, but more importantly, the blonde gentleman is wearing it with a blue and white dotted bandana. This accessory adds a very nonchalant note to the ensemble. The pocket square is not different enough and I am sure a plain white square would have looked preferable. As discussed before, brown jackets go beautifully with grey slacks and brown shoes.

On the left, we have a chap in a typical 1930's full cut drape suit in mid grey. The pointed quarters are a result of his hands in his pockets and not the cut. However, unlike other double breasted jackets in this book, it is only buttoned at the lowest button, in this case 6x1 (meaning that only 1 button out of six is buttoned). This double breasted style is called *Kent Fasson* and was named after the Duke of Kent, who popularized this look. Others such as the Duke of Windsor enjoyed wearing it as well. As a result, the lapels get wider, the V in the front increases in size. Also, the buttoning point moves well below the waist, creating the illusion of a taller torso. It is rarely seen anymore and it was popular for the last time in the 1980's. If you like wearing double breasted 6x2 jackets, you should experiment with this style because it will create a very different look. Make sure that you have an inside keeper button on the lowest buttonhole, otherwise the lapels will hang asymmetrically.

The combination of khaki shirt, brown sweater vest and brown tie works beautifully with the grey suit and red boutonniere, especially since the spectators have the same colors.



OVERCOATS



GENTLEMAN'S
GAZETTE

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DOUBLE BREASTED CAMPUS OVERCOAT—FALL 1933

This young man is on an Ivy League campus in 1933. He and his peers represented the fashion elite in America, and the manufacturers and haberdashers closely observed the novelties displayed by those students, which is why they were covered in fashion trade magazines.

Here we have an interesting overcoat because it is neither a trench coat nor an Ulster but rather it is a blend of both classic overcoat styles. Back then, belted overcoats in various weights were quite popular. Here we have a beige tweed overcoat with a triple windowpane and leather buttons. It is paired with a grey herringbone Harris tweed suit and burgundy-brown brogues. The hat, gloves and shoes all have a slightly different shade of brown but the ensemble works together. Note, the effortless stand-up collar and the fastened (not tied) belt are all little details that made him look distinctly different from a more seasoned gentleman in town. The small polka dot bat's wing bow tie revived in popularity in the 1930s with students and professors alike wearing them to express their individuality.

In the background you'll noticed the young man on the bike as well as the chap in the green suit sitting on the steps. Both wear yellow tone socks but they are combined very differently. The mustard yellow mix with light grey and off-white suede is subtler and even better than the green, yellow brown combination, but both looks stand out from what you see today. So next time you want to experiment with different socks, try a pair of yellow over the calf socks and see what you can come up with. In any case, it will be something rather unique that no one else is wearing.



BRITISH WARM — SPRING 1934

The original British Warm was a military greatcoat made of melton cloth for British officers that first surfaced in WWI. Since we already wrote an in depth article about [the British Warm](#), let's focus on the rest of this gentleman's outfit.

If you start counting the colors in this outfit, you will notice that he combined 10 different colors, though remarkably it still looks rather subtle.

The overcoat has the typical taupe color, which is a beige with a hint of green and pink. The trousers are made of a fawn tweed with a pale red overplaid, which on its own makes for a great country suit. Note how short the cuffs are; men in the U.S. today have a tendency to wear cuff trousers far too long. Generally, cuffed trousers can be worn a little shorter than uncuffed ones. Of course, at the end of the day, the choice is yours but as a guideline this rule can be quite helpful.

The dark brown shoes are an outstanding addition to this outfit because they contrast but blend in at the same time. Interestingly, he wore [grey daywear gloves](#), which were usually used for city suits.

The shirt is light blue and features a collar out of yellow and blue checked cloth. Even without the yellow and navy striped necktie, this would be overkill. If you want a contrasting collar, go with simple white because anything else looks pretentious beyond good taste.

On the other hand, the moss green soft felt hat is a great companion that goes well with the taupe of the overcoat, the fawn trousers as well as the brown shoes.



CAMEL HAIR COAT—FALL 1934

Interestingly, there were always trends among the Ivy students with regard to overcoats. First, it was the fur coat that was a must have item, followed by the Polo coat for a while. But fashion is never static and so the single breasted camel hair coat appeared and it remained popular for several years.

The natural color of camel hair is golden tan and you will only find it in shades of brown, because dyes in this color keep the material soft although it can be dyed in broad ranges of colors. The advantages of camel hair over wool are its thermostatic properties which protect and insulate the camel in high mountain climate while keeping it cool in desert heat. These characteristics are inherited by the cloth. The best quality is either pure virgin camel hair or a blend of it with wool. Often, inferior camel hair is blended with nylon, polyester etc. which you would do well to avoid.

While the overcoat in the illustration may seem long by modern standards, it was in fact short for the thirties. The design was simple and practical: buckles on the cuffs to keep out the snow or cold air and slash pockets are for easy access.

It was combined with a brown glencheck suit, yellow socks and dark brown buck skin shoes with crepe soles. The white oxford button down shirt works well with the red, blue and yellow striped bowtie. Note that the hat is made from beaver felt, has a tapering crown and it not pinched. Today few would notice such a subtle difference, but back then the fashion conscious could spot slight distinctions right away.



VERSAILLE NAVY PALETOT—FALL 1934

One of the most versatile overcoats you can own is the navy blue Paletot. It can be worn with navy, charcoal, brown and many other suits and even with dinner jackets and a tuxedo. If you can afford just one good overcoat, you will be best served by the navy blue Paletot.

The model here has some slight variations but is still considered to be a Paletot. First of all, look at the length. It reaches above the knee and is very classic. The skirt is full and the waist slim, giving it a beautiful flare line with a trim fit. The pockets are angled, which underlines the dynamic of this overcoat.

Generally the coat is buttoned with just two buttons and is made as a 6x2. Deepening on the button placement that can create a big V in the front, which may be too exposed in very cold climates. The Paletot here can be buttoned with either two or three buttons, which makes it even more versatile in the cold. The lapels have a bit of a belly (meaning they are slightly rounded), the gorge is lower than on most coats today, and the peaks are nice and wide. A carnation in the buttonhole always works well with navy, no matter what color you choose.

This gentleman wears is a blue worsted flannel suit with white chalk stripes. The shirt is made of a light blue broadcloth with a contrasting white collar, which is combined with a Macclesfield tie, a bowler hat and yellow chamois gloves, as well as black captoe blucher shoes and a Malacca cane.

Obviously, this outfit was very much inspired by Bond Street in London at the time. If you subtract the hat and the cane, you will look like a perfectly well dressed gentleman of the 21st century. Vintage aficionados may keep both, of course.



WINDOWPANE FOOTBALL COAT—WINTER 1933

Last but not least, it is time to introduce you to the football overcoat. On Saturdays, students would watch their team compete in football games and during the winter this was quite a cold event. Similarly to fashion shows today, this was an event to see and be seen. Consequently, many showed off their new clothes for the first time at a football game.

Since the weather would be colder, a substantial Ulster collar was the way to go. Some would line their coats with fur, so they would stay warm for sure, while others would skip this step and choose a heavier fabric. This young man here brought a blanket to keep warm.

In any case, this overcoat is a stunning example of a football coat in the thirties. The pattern is bold yet it works with a proper navy blue business suit and black captoe oxford shoes. The heavy cuffs lend a more informal character to the garment, and the eight buttons could be buttoned up all the way. The quilted chamois gloves add a nice contrast, while the dotted scarf is the only part of the ensemble that seems a bit over the top. The formality of the bowler hat was broken up with a blue feather, though a snap-brim hat would have been better to begin with.

Sadly this kind of cloth is rarely seen anymore and if so, it is only as a bespoke garment or maybe made-to-measure. The advantage of vintage overcoat fabrics is their increased weight, which not only keeps you warmer but it also guarantees that the cloth will drape more nicely.

Altogether, one can only hope to see more of these overcoats in the future because the world already has enough solid black, charcoal and navy overcoats., wouldn't you agree?



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