

Gentlemen's Style Guide

Everything you need to know to style your next wardrobe.



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Welcome

Good day! Thank you for downloading this style guide - a full and comprehensive guide to choosing your next suit and the etiquette related to everything in the tailoring world.

From jackets and shirts to shoes and styling, everything you can imagine to help you to perfect your style in any situation. We wish you all the best in your endeavours and look forward to sharing more tips and tricks with you in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Fielding-Calcutt

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Jacket Types

SINGLE-BREASTED GARMENT

A jacket, coat or waistcoat with its fastening buttons positioned down the centre of the wearers torso, with no overlap between the two halves of the garment. Single-breasted garments are generally less formal than doublebreasted garments.



SB1B

A single-breasted jacket with one button is most commonly seen on casual garments and is paired frequently with a peak lapel. Single breasted dinner jackets should also traditionally be one buttons, as any additional buttons would add un-necessary additional detail to the otherwise simple jacket.

SB2B

A single-breasted jacket with 2 buttons is the most commonly seen suit style, especially in offices and business environments. A notch or peak lapel will both work with two buttons but a notch is the most common in an office environment. Generally 2 buttons are more formal than single buttons, but 2 buttons still work with casual garments. Never button the second button, only the top.





SB3B

A 3 button single-breasted jacket is a slightly more old school style, best suited to a taller gentleman. Shorter gentlemen risk looking shorter still because of the reduced exposure of your chest. A 3-button jacket can however have a rolled lapel, which adds an extra detail to a casual jacket, and makes a 3 button more feasible for a shorter gentleman to wear. The top button can be worn fastened or un- fastened, the center button should always be fastened, and the last should never be fastened.

DOUBLE-BREASTED GARMENT

A jacket, coat or waistcoat that overlaps itself in order to fasten. This overlap creates a double layer of fabric, which will increase the wearer's temperature. Double-breasted garments are more formal than a single-breasted garment. Double-breasted jackets and coats almost always have a peak lapel. This is because double-breasted garments are seen as more formal, and peak lapels are the smarter equivalent of a notch lapel.

DB 1x2

A double-breasted jacket with only 2 buttons, of which only 1 will fasten (and the anchor button adjacent on the inside). The buttons are positioned in a pair. The lapel can finish either at the middle of the torso or lower down the torso. The former will suit most body types while the latter can appear to shorten the wearer's torso. Pocket styles will differ dependent on the wearers taste, but generally they will be seen with two flap waist pockets and a welt breast pocket.





DB 2x3

A double-breasted jacket with 6 buttons but only the lowest 2 fasten (and the anchor button on the inside). The lowest 4 buttons that you see are parallel, with the top 2 being the wider two. This is the most commonly seen DB jacket style and will suit most body shapes. Pocket styles will differ dependent on the wearers taste, but generally they will be seen with two flap waist pockets and a welt breast pocket.

DB 3x3

A double-breasted jacket with 6 buttons, 3 of which fasten (and the anchor button on the inside). This style shows all 6 buttons parallel to each other, none of the buttons will get wider. The jacket will button higher on the torso than the lesser-buttoned DB jackets, because of this; the jacket can have a bit of a military air to it and will best suit taller frames. Pocket styles will differ dependent on the wearers taste, but generally they will be seen with two flap waist pockets and a welt breast pocket.



Double-breasted jackets also come in other various styles, each suited to different body types. A 6-button style, where only the lowest button fastens, is often favoured by older gentlemen, though shorter men should be cautious as it may shorten the appearance due to the lapel's placement. A common feature includes two flap waist pockets and a welt breast pocket. The 8-button jacket, with either 3 or 4 buttons fastened, offers a more structured, military-inspired look. The 3-button fastening style suits taller men, while the 4-button version, inspired by naval uniforms, buttons the highest. Both typically feature similar pocket designs.

Fitting Guide



CLASSIC FIT

A classic fit means that the jacket is much looser than its more modern counterparts. The shoulder pads will often extend further than the wearers shoulder, and the jacket will not be nipped in at the waist. The jacket will likely have no vents which means it holds its shape, even when sitting down - which can cause the jacket collar to rise off of your shirt. A classic fitting trouser will likely have pleats, creating additional room in the thigh. The hem will be about 3-4" wider than necessary to create additional room. This fit can be known as an old school or American style.

TAILORED FIT

A tailored fit jackets shoulder pads will finish neatly on the wearers shoulder, and the waist will be slightly tapered. There will still be between 1-2" of room between the closed jacket and the wearer's stomach. The trousers will likely be flat fronted and the hem only about 2" larger than the ankle measurement. This will create straight, clean lines on the trouser. This fit is a more modern style, suiting professionals of all ages, but favored by those between 20 and 45 years of age.





SLIM FIT

A slim fit jacket is the most modern take on how a suit should fit. The shoulders will either sit directly on the shoulder or even a little closer in. The jacket sleeves will be cut closer to the body and the armholes will be higher. The jacket waist will be heavily tapered with about 1" or less between the fastened jacket and the wearer's stomach. Slim fit trousers will definitely be flat fronted, and the hem of the trouser will be only 1-2" bigger than the ankle measurement. This will create a tight figure-hugging trouser. The idea of a slim fit suit is to highlight a particularly athletic figure but hugging the arms, shoulders and waist – think Daniel Craig's bond. There are points of overlap between all three of the jacket fits. Particularly between tailored and slim, though tailored suits can sometime err on the classic side. The fits also apply to coats.

Jacket Construction

FUSING

On an off the peg garment, the jacket fabric and lining is attached together at the chest and shoulder using a kind of fabric glue. This glue is called fusing. When a jacket is fused together, the jacket's shape is pre-determined, with little room for movement. This means the jacket can shift off of the shirt collar when twisting or reaching in the suit. The fusing can survive dry cleaning, but will deteriorate after the first wash or two. When fusing deteriorates, the glue bubbles and unsticks, often leaving the garment with a bumpy looking texture on the shoulders and chest.



CANVASING

Canvasing is the traditional version of fusing. It is created from horsehair and is stitched into the garment's chest and shoulder pieces, rather than glued. This means the canvas has the ability to move with the wearer's body, and will settle to the shape of the wearer's body over time. Canvasing is typically found in just the top half of a jacket, where the jacket requires the most shape and support, however - suits are sometimes made fully-canvased, to provide extra support and shape. As the canvas is sewn into the garment - not glued - the chemicals do not affect it when dry-cleaned.

Though this doesn't mean the suit can now be dry-cleaned often (dry cleaning can damage cloth over time) it will last much longer than its fused counterparts.



MELTON

A garment's Melton is the small strip of felt sewn under the collar. The Melton is generally hidden, unless the wearer so chooses to “pop” their collar. The primary function of a Melton is to support the collar, though sometimes the Melton is embroidered as a subtle way of adding a personal touch – something that is seen for wedding suits on occasion. Normally the colour of the Melton is dictated by the colour of the suit, for example a navy suit will likely have a navy Melton. Again as a subtle personal touch, the Melton can be coloured to your desire, to match the jacket lining for example.

Linings & Facings

Linings are normally satin, cupro, silk or viscos. Silk is of course the softest and most luxurious of those listed, but it is also the most fragile. This is why man-made alternatives are now the go-to choice of lining. They are all much stronger than silk and also cost less, which makes them a great alternative to silk.

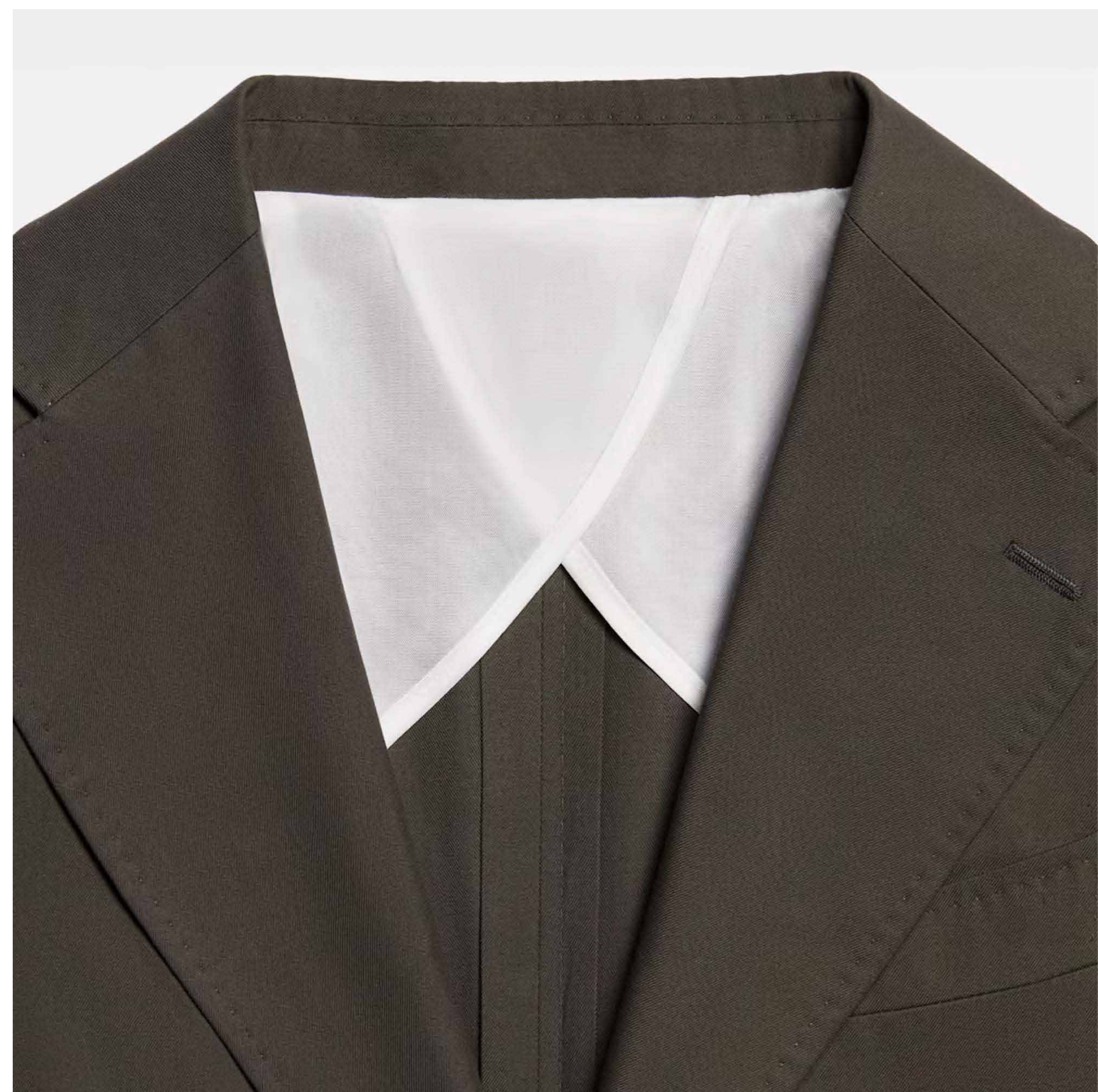


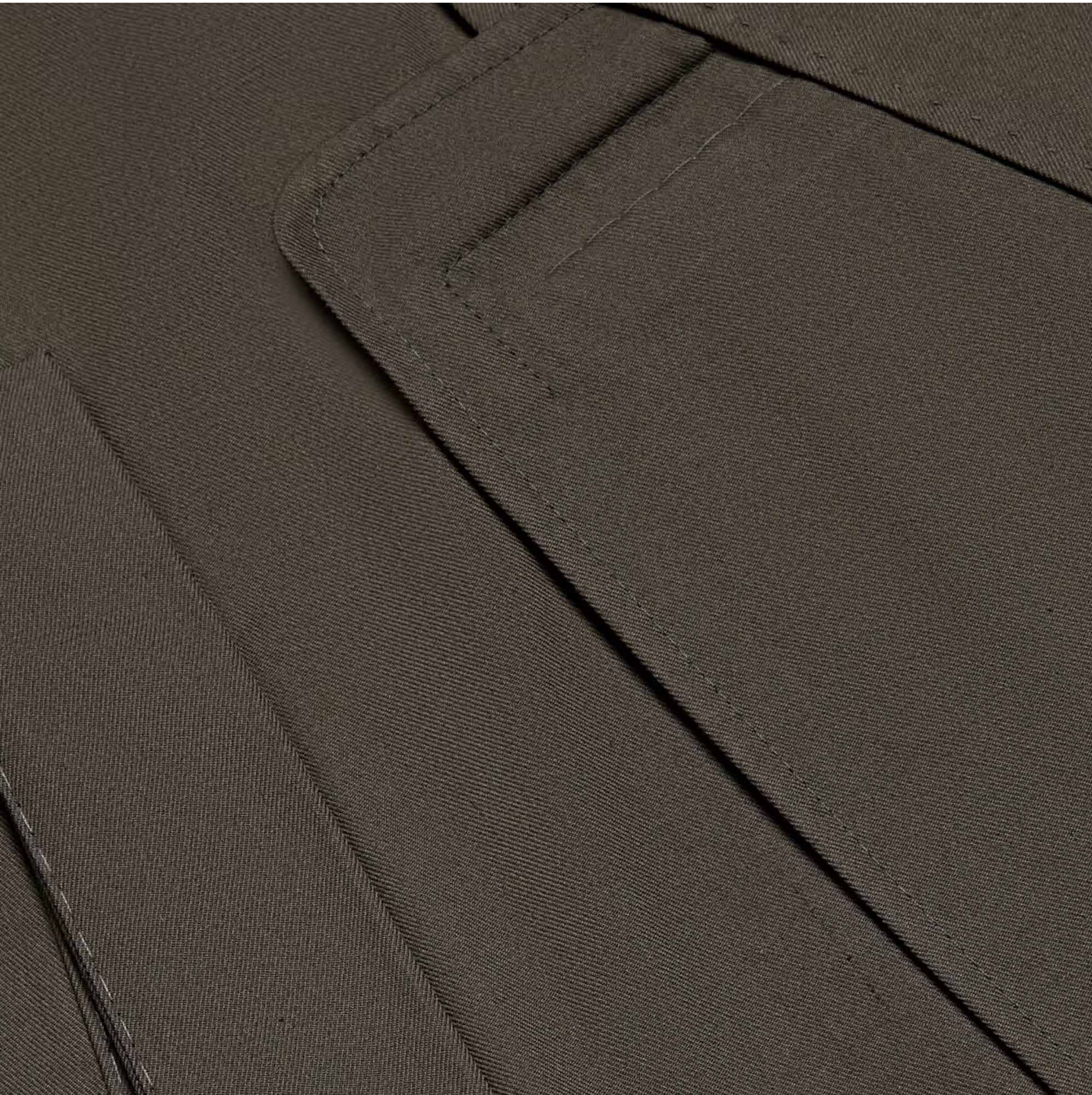
FULLY LINED

As the name would suggest; a fully lined jacket refers to a garment which has its entire interior covered with the lining of the wearers choosing. Though the lining is very thin, it will make the garment warmer to wear and so full lining is best in winter and all-year-round garments.

HALF-LINED

Semi-lined garments have some lining in parts, namely the shoulders, where two overlapping ovals earn semi-lining the nickname of “Butterfly lining”. The reduced lining means increased breathability for the garment, making it ideal for lightweight summerwear.





UNLINED

Unlined here refers to the bulk of the lining panels not being present, however the seams are often finished with a binding, made from lining cloth. This binding is just to neaten the raw edges and contributes nothing to the insulation of the garment so this type of finishing on a garment will be the most breathable.

Facing Styles

PLAIN FACING

Facing on a garment is where the lining meets the cloth. In the case of plain facing, the lining and cloth seam runs vertically up the garment with only the inside breast pockets interrupting the line.

FRAMED FACING

Facing on a garment is where the lining meets the cloth. In the case of framed facing the lining and cloth seam runs vertically up the garment to start with, but scoops round the inside breast pockets, leaving the jetted entrance of the pocket entirely on the cloth. This just adds a style feature rather than serving a technical purpose.

Facing & Lining Details

EMBROIDERY

Most embroidery on garment linings is monogramming or the full name of the wearer. This being said, on a bespoke garment you could in theory request anything, from quotes to wedding dates. Doing this is seen almost entirely on bespoke and made to measure garments, which is a subtle way of showing that the garment you are sporting is made for you.

COLUMBIA STITCH

This refers to the small stitch that runs along the edge of the lining, parallel to the lining and cloth seam. It looks very much like the edge stitch that one might find on a garments lapel. Most of the time the stitch is done with a thread that matches the lining in colour, but sometimes it is seen in a contrast colour, which adds further detail to the garment.

PIPING

In relation to garment facings and linings, piping is a decorative trim situated in between the seam of the cloth and lining. This adds more detail to the facing than the more subtle Columbia stitch. Most frequently the piping is in a contrast colour to both the lining and the cloth, but sometime the piping matches the lining if the wearer so chooses.



Trouser Types

Trousers are often segregated into types / styles by the cloth used to create them. A corduroy trouser for example is not a chino; it is a corduroy trouser. Because of this it can be harder to know how to appropriately style and wear a trouser. As a rule of thumb, wool, flannel and tweed should be treated as a slightly more formal cloth and therefore a little bit less flamboyancy on the design may be advisable. A corduroy, linen or cotton should be treated as a slightly more casual option, on which details may look a little better. This is only a guide however; your own styles and twists on your trousers will unlikely get you removed from an event because they are inappropriate – within reason.



CHINO

A chino is a casual trouser, sitting somewhere in between jeans and suit trousers on the smart scale. A chino is normally cut from a cotton cloth, though cotton blends are also used. Due to the chinos more casual nature, the styling rules are a little more flexible than with a suit trouser. A plain or a turn-up hem can be seen on chinos, depending on the wearers taste. Belt loops are seen most often on chinos, as there is no worry of breaking up a look like you should be avoiding on your suit. Alternatively, side adjusters or tab and button adjusters are seen sometimes, which can add a nice detail.

Waistband cash / fob pockets are another detail that can be added to chinos, as well as adding flaps to the otherwise subtle rear pockets.

DINNER TROUSER

Dinner trousers should be plain hemmed only, slanted hip pockets are acceptable but any additional should be removed. If the wearer so chooses, a single rear pocket could be added, though only as a jett make in satin. The dinner trousers outside seam should also have a satin band extending from hem to waistband, to match the lapel. Traditional dinner suits were made with a higher waistband, to cover the white of the shirt sometimes seen at the opening of the jackets. More modern tailoring will neglect the higher waistband, and will use a cummerbund instead. A button and tab waistband adjuster is most common, though side adjusters are acceptable - never belt loops.



Trouser Fits

LOOSE / PLEATED

A loose fitting baggy trouser is sometimes known as an oxford bag - depending on the level of looseness. The baggier fit is due to the trouser hem being cut much wider than the wearer's ankle. The baggier thigh is helped with the use of single, double or even triple pleats. This style arose in 1920 and is seen less frequently in the present age. If worn now it tends to be favored by the older gent, and is appropriate for a regatta or similar event.



NORMAL / FLAT FRONT

A trouser with a flat front means it has no pleats to make the thigh bigger. This means the trouser will fall closer to the body, looking neater. Most suit trousers will have flat fronts in the modern age, which satisfies the current generations thirst for a slimmer fit. All ages will suit this timeless cut.



SLIM / TAPERED

A slim / tailored trouser is normally worn by a younger gentleman. The slim look can make a gent look taller, and so is a good option for shorter gents and is a good way of showing off a slimmer physique. A slimmer leg on a larger gent can sometimes throw off the balance of a suit, especially if there is a belly to support above the tight thigh.



Trouser Details



V NOTCH WAIST

A V notch is located on the back of a trouser, it is quite literally - a V shape cut from the back seam of the trouser waistband. The notch is primarily a design feature, though it will allow a little more flex on the waistband.

FISHTAIL WAIST

A fishtail or “grown on fishtail” is an extension to the back of a trousers waistband. The purpose of this extension is to serve as a fastening point to which ones button-down braces can fasten. This isn’t a totally necessary feature that enables the wearing of braces, but rather it creates a detail that highlights the fact that the braces are being worn.





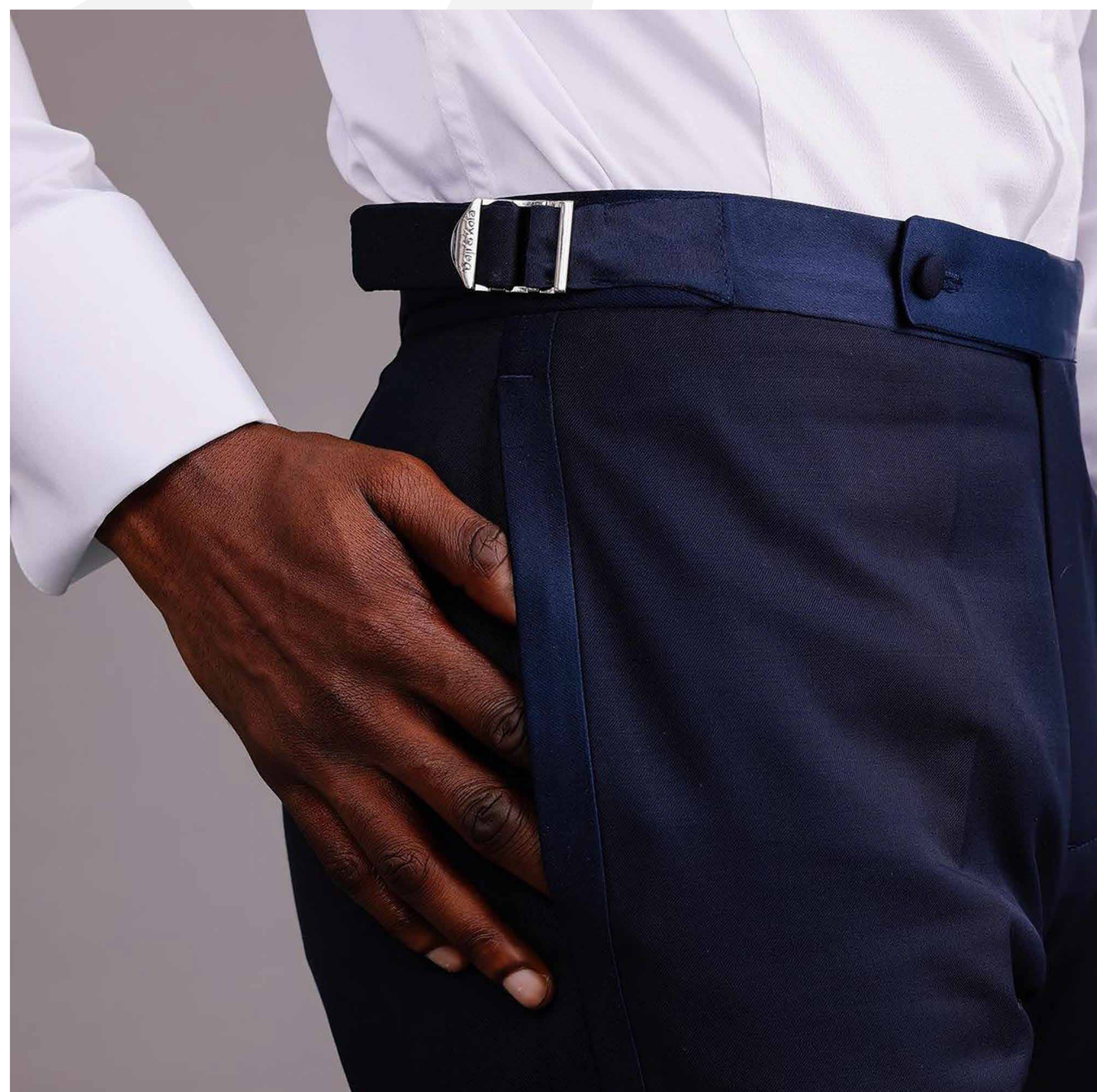
HIGH WAIST

A high waistband serves the purpose of covering the little triangle of shirt that is sometimes visible on a jacket. Covering this bit of shirt means that the suit is less broken up, and will make the wearer look taller as a result. A high waistband is sometimes seen on dinner trousers to serve this purpose, though a cummerbund does the same.

Outer Details

METAL SIDE ADJUSTERS

Metal side adjusters allow the trouser wearer to pull in or loosen the waist by as large or small an increment as the wearer wishes, without having to add a belt to the mix. They are made from the same cloth as the rest of the trouser, with a buckle adjuster that holds the waist to the new desired position. These are rarely seen on off the peg suits, so are often a sign of a bespoke or made to measure. Not having the bulk of a belt breaking up the lines of a suit's jacket and trousers creates a smoother, smarter silhouette.



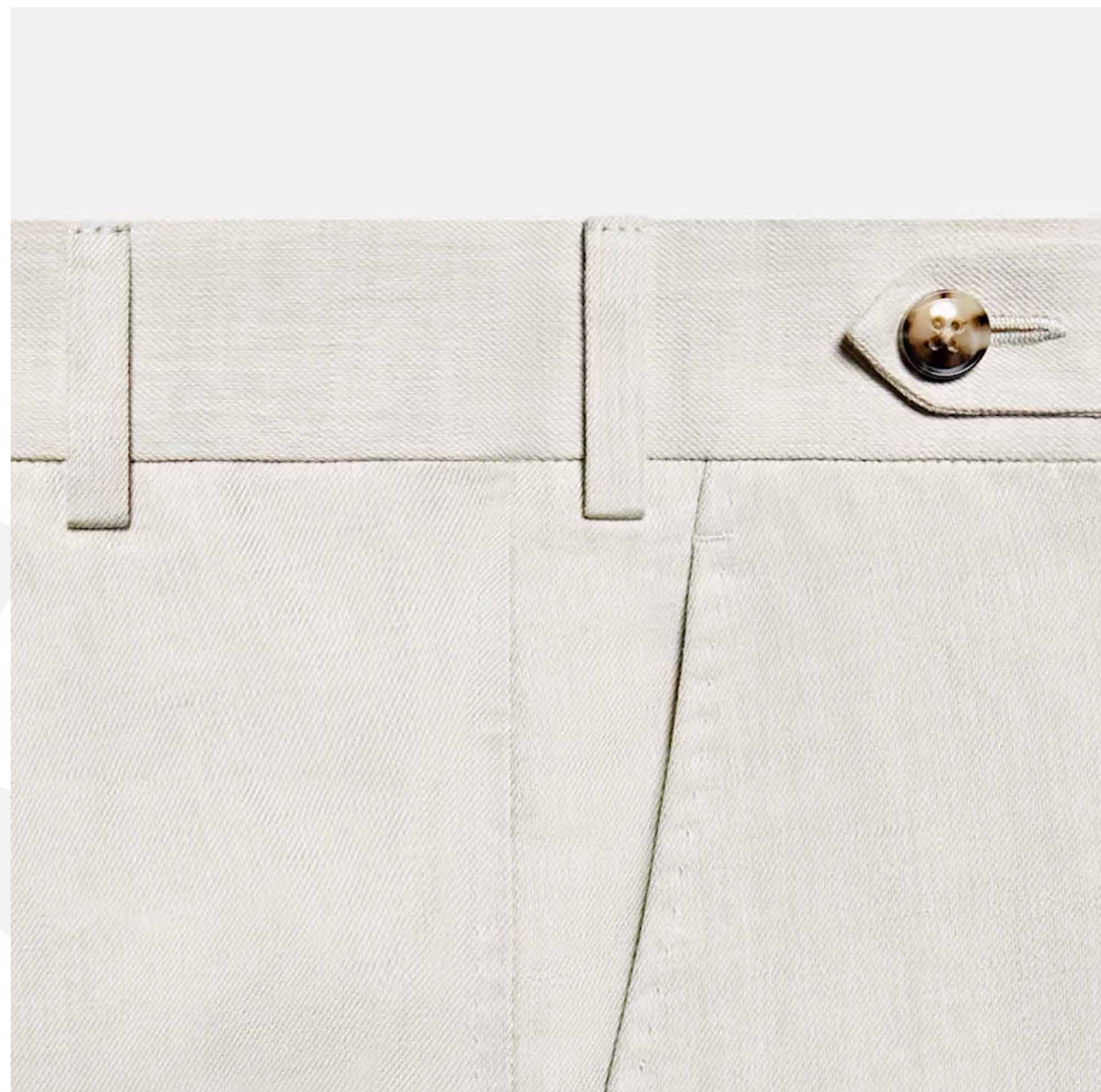


TAB & BUTTON

Tab and buttons allow the wearer to bring in the waist without a belt, but only in increments of about a half inch at a time which means less control for the wearer. Because of this tab and buttons are much less common, generally only being used on dinner suit trousers. Very formal, not typically as practical day to day.

BELT LOOPS

Belt loops are the least formal method of waist suppression due to the added bulk of a belt that breaks up a suits silhouette. Belt loops are used on chinos, jeans, cords and about every other variation of trouser. Though less formal, belts on suits and trousers are still perfectly acceptable and can even add an option of an extra style detail if executed well. To do this, a belt is best paired with matching leathers such as shoes and watch straps.



Inner Details

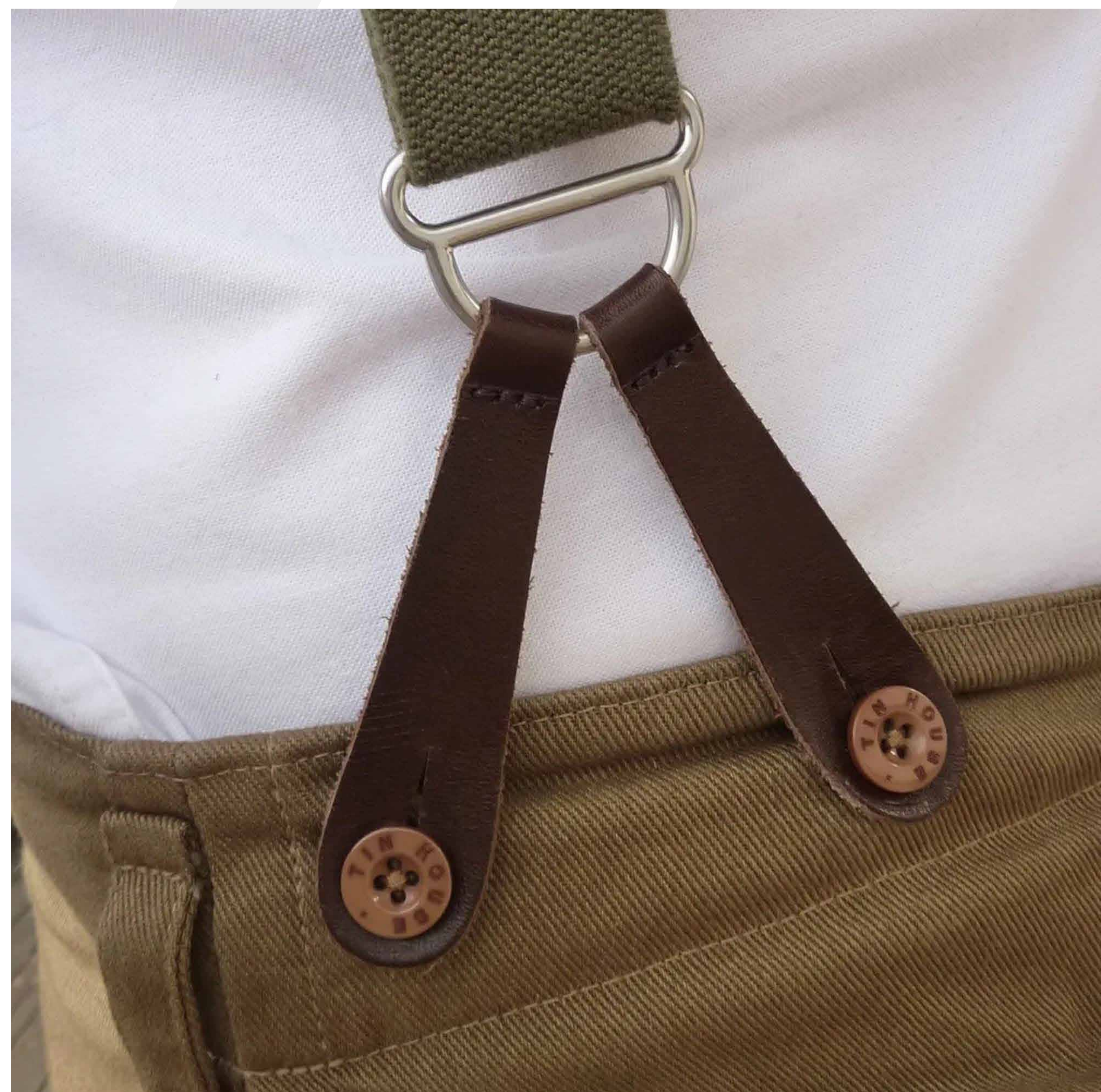


SHIRT GRIPS

A shirt grip is a thin strip of rubber sewn into a trousers waistband. They are a very useful addition to a trousers waistband that do exactly what they say on the tin; grip your shirt. A well-fitted pair of trousers will hug your hips neatly and the friction from the rubber will hold the shirt down, therefore preventing your shirt un-tucking throughout the day.

BRACE BUTTONS

These can be positioned either inside or outside your waistband, though the former is seen much more frequently. There will be 2 buttons at the back of the waistband and another two on either side of the front trouser, in line with the pocket entrances. Old school button-down braces will then attach at these points.



Trouser Construction

TROUSER LINING

A trouser will commonly have only a half-lining, extending from the waistband to the knee. The lining provides a soft, smooth interior to the trouser – instead of a coarse scratchy feeling as your legs rub up against a harsh fabric. Not all trousers are lined, as some wearers find that the extra layer traps sweat and can create a sticky sensation when worn.

Trouser Pockets

SIDE POCKETS

Almost every trouser will have side pockets. They are the pockets located at the top of the trousers outer seam, joining the waistband. These pockets have many variations depending on the use or aesthetic desired by the wearer. A slanted side pocket is the most common variation and is seen on most trouser styles (chinos, suit trousers ect). The slant pocket will start 4” down from the waistband on the side seam and will finish between 1 – 2” off of the seam at the waistband. This is what creates the slant. A side pocket can also be straight, in which case the pocket will continue up the side seam vertically.

HIP POCKET

Hip pockets are also sometimes known as rear pockets as they are situated directly over the wearer’s buttocks. On chinos and more casual garments, it is not uncommon to have two hip pockets, one on the left of the trouser and one on the right. However, on formal bespoke suiting the trouser will likely have one – or even no – hip pockets. This is because they add extra bulk to the trouser, which can hinder an otherwise sleek cut. Generally if there is a hip pocket on a suiting trouser, it will be a jett – the subtlest of the pocket styles. On a more casual trouser the pocket is more of a desired detail, so flap and other more prominent pocket styles are used.

CASH / FOB POCKET

A cash or fob pocket is a pocket between 2 - 3" long, often hidden and located between the seam between the waistband and front of the trouser. The pocket was originally a handy way of storing ones pocket (or "fob") watch. Due to its small size, it's practical use in the modern age might be to store lose change or a ticket perhaps. On more casual garments, the pocket might have a flap added to provide an extra detail.

CHANGE POCKET

A change pocket is a pocket within a pocket. Normally located in the side pockets, the change pocket is normally about 1/3rd the size of the pocket it is within. Its purpose is generally - as the name suggests - separating loose change from the rest of the pockets contents, making access to the change much quicker and easier.



Waistcoats



SINGLE-BREASTED

The most commonly seen waistcoat is a 5 button singlebreasted with a pointed bottom and often two lower welt pockets. A square bottom is a more retro look so seen less day-to-day. The standard opening for a waistcoat will be about 2 inches higher than the jacket button. More or less than 5 buttons is purely a style choice made by the wearer. Typically any less than 4 buttons look odd as the buttons are too far apart. More buttons can look good on a higher fastening waistcoat, which is a more old-school style, seen rarely in business suiting environment in the present day.

DOUBLE-BREASTED

The standard button formation for a “DB” waistcoat is 3x3, though like with a jacket this can be 2x2, 2x3, 3x4 or 4x4. Two lower welt pockets are common and unlike a single breasted waistcoat, a square hem is used just as often as pointed. DB waistcoats are more formal than single - as with jackets - and because of this its rare to see DB waistcoats on business suits. They’re more common for weddings or other events as they add a detail that wouldn’t otherwise be seen in the office. In the case of weddings or indeed for the more sartorially adventurous gent, it isn’t uncommon to see a contrast DB waistcoat - either in cloth or in colour.





SCOOP / HORSESHOE

The scooped waistcoat (also known as a horseshoe waistcoat) is easily distinguished from the “normal” waistcoat by its plunging and curved opening. Rather than buttoning up to create a “V” shape on the wearer’s torso, it instead curves at the top, creating a much softer rounded finish. Scooped waistcoats can be either double or single breasted, and can be finished with or without a lapel. If a lapel is chosen, a shawl lapel will best suit as it also has a natural curve. This kind of waistcoat will always have a flat bottom.

Waistcoat Details

Waistcoats can have a shawl, notch or peak lapel for an extra detail. Lapels work on either single or double breasted, normal or horseshoe waistcoats, making them all more formal. As an alternative to having a lining back as would be expected, one could instead opt for a matching fabric back for a change of look or for extra warmth. Some waistcoats can also have one or even two breast pockets like on a jacket as well as the more common lower pockets.



Shirts

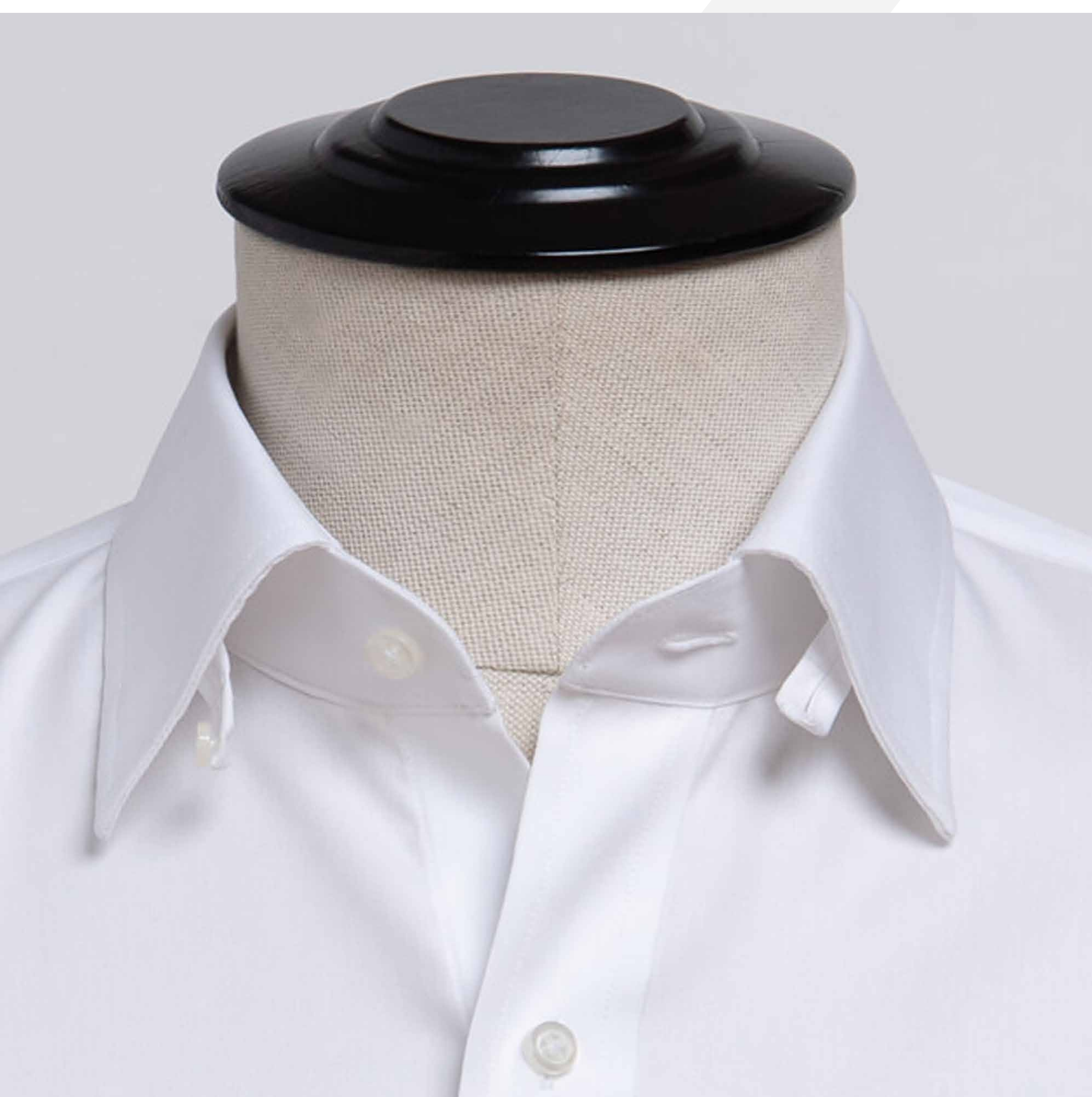


COLLARS: KENT

A Kent collar is a very basic style. The two sides of the collar will have a small spread (distance from one point to the other) in comparison to other collar styles. This kind of collar will work on both casual and formal shirts. If used for the latter, a four in hand tie knot works perfectly, though other styles will not look out of place.

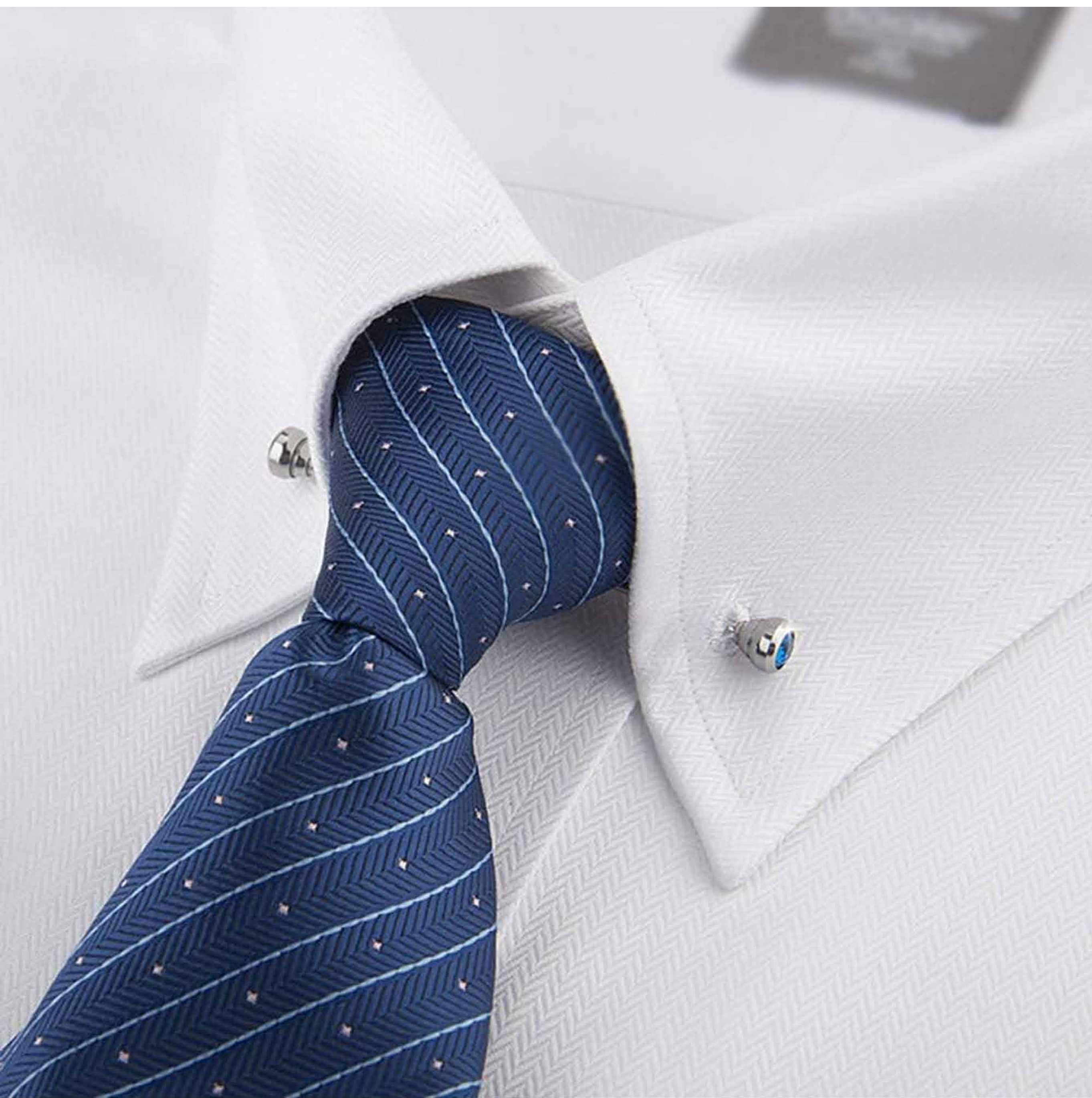
COLLARS: CUTAWAY

These collars can come with a variety of collar spreads, from semi-cutaway to wide cutaway. The wider space between the collar points means a chunky Windsor knot will sit beautifully. This type of collar is great for formal wear, especial when paired with a well executed tie knot.



COLLARS: TAB

A tab collar is named so because there is a small tab that runs between the two sides of the collar. This pulls the collar together and raises the tie knot to add a little more detail. Because of the tab, the two sides of the collar are a little closer together than on a Kent and so small tie knots (like the four in hand) will work best. This kind of collar looks messy when left open, so is best reserved for formal wear and a tie.



COLLARS: PIN

A pin collar works much like a tab collar, in that the two sides of the collar are made slightly closer to one another and then pulled together – in this case – by a collar pin. This pin will also push the tie knot upwards from underneath, which gives two added details, the collar pin and the raised tie. This collar is great for formal occasions that allow for a little more power dressing but, because of the holes in the collar, will look messy undone and without a tie.

COLLARS: OXFORD

An Oxford collar is cut much like a Kent collar, but at the point of both collar sides there is a button that fastens the collar to the shirt. Although this holds the collar neatly in place, the exposed button creates a slightly messy detail that reduces the formality of the shirt. Some older gents choose to wear an Oxford collar with a suit and tie, but we would recommend reserving them for casual wear with no tie.



COLLARS: WING-TIP

This type of collar is the most formal style available and should only be reserved for events that mirror this formality. This means white tie events and/or when wearing morning wear. NOT black tie! this is a very common faux pas. When at a white tie event, one should wear this collar type with a bow tie. If worn with morning wear, a cravat is also acceptable.

CUFFS: BUTTON

A button cuff is essentially exactly what it says on the tin: a cuff that fastens via one or more buttons. The most common varieties of button cuffs are one or two buttons. The two button styles can have either the buttons going vertically or horizontally on the cuff. There are also a variety of cuts into the cuff that are available as a detail, such as a rounded edge or a V shaped notch cut into the edge of the cuff. Button cuffs are suitable for formal wear or casual wear but never for black tie.

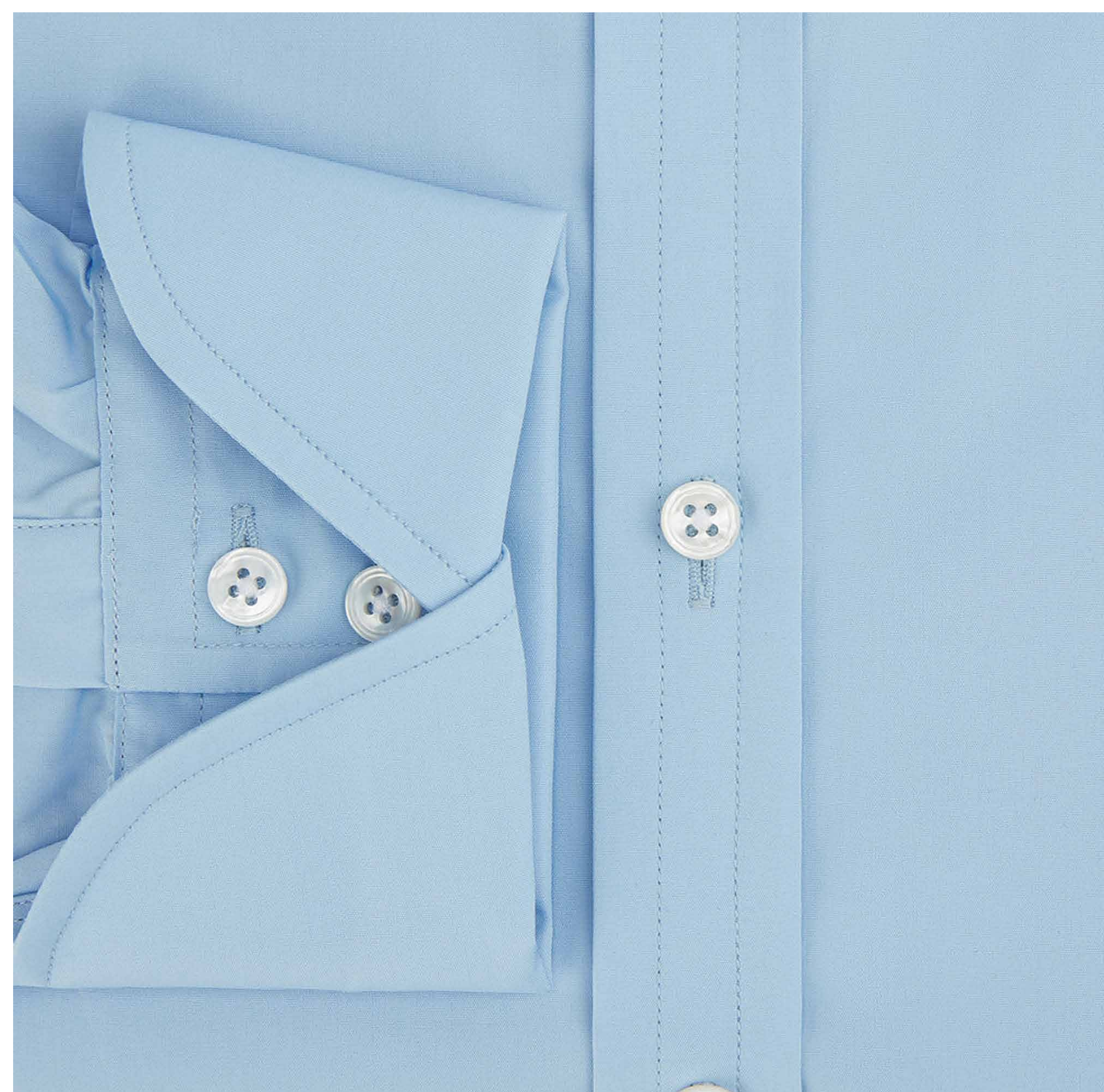


CUFFS: DOUBLE

The double cuff is the most formal of the cuff styles due to the requirement of cufflinks. The cuff is made double the necessary length so that it can be folded back onto itself. There is no button fastening on this style, but instead there are buttonholes for cufflinks of your choosing. This style works brilliantly for formal wear – including dinner and morning events – but will look out of place on a casual shirt.

CUFFS: COCKTAIL

A great middle ground between a button and single cuff, the cocktail cuff provides the folded back style of the double cuff but with a button fastening instead – great for those who like a formal cuff without the hassle of choosing cufflinks for the day. The cocktail cuff is great for formal and casual wear and – though not a traditional choice – is worn with a dinner suit by James Bond in several of his films.



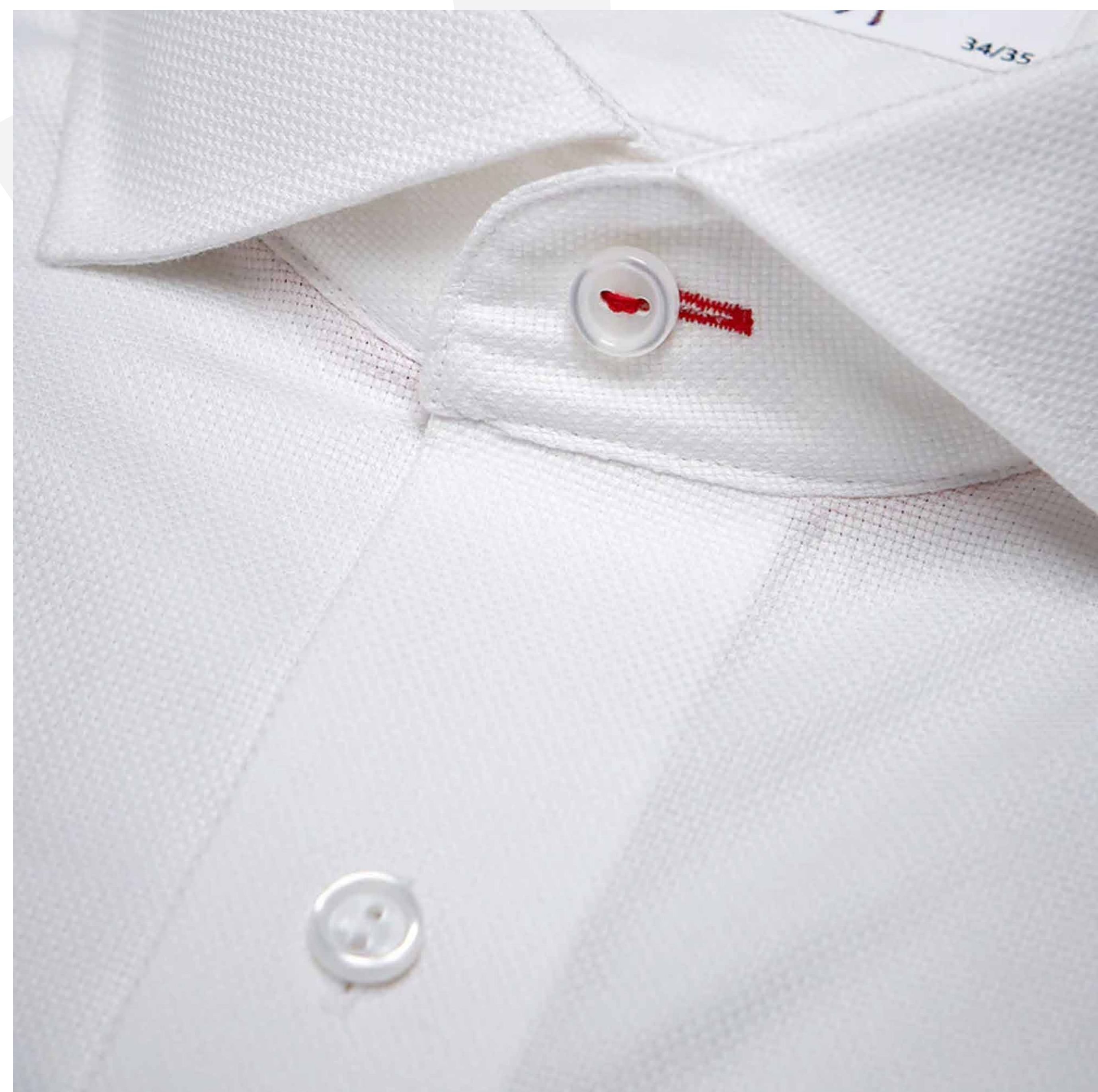


DETAILS: POCKET

Pockets on shirts immediately make the shirt more casual. However, should one choose to have a pocket on their work shirts it should always be a plain patch pocket. As always, more detail equals more casual, so a patch pocket with a flap and button is something that should be reserved for purely casual wear – like on a casual denim shirt for example.

DETAILS: BUTTON HOLE COLOURING

A plain white shirt is a fairly standard item that almost every man will have in his wardrobe. Even with different collar and cuff styles they will generally look very similar to one another. It is for this reason that one might wish to colour their button thread. A white shirt with white buttons is pretty plain, but add the tiny detail of red thread fastening the buttons and you have a subtle touch to personalise the shirt. The same can be done to the buttonholes to create unique looks for one's own unique style. This being said, for the most formal occasions, a completely plain white shirt will always be the safest option.



DETAILS: BUTTONS

Instead of opting for plain white plastic buttons on one's shirts, options like mother of pearl buttons exist. These are still only subtle, but the added shimmer of the pearl gives an added element of luxury to the look. For coloured shirts, coloured buttons also exist. Pair different button styles and colours with different buttonhole and button thread combinations to create a truly individual look.



DETAILS: DARTS

Darts are positioned on the middle back of the shirt, one to the left and one to the right. They pull the shirt closer to the wearer's body, which makes them ideal for slimmer or more athletic gentlemen who desire a closer fitting shirt.

DETAILS: PLEATS

Pleats work in the opposite way to darts as they put extra fabric into the shirt. They will either be positioned centrally with two pleats opening back to back, or with one pleat over each shoulder blade. Choosing pleats will give extra room in ones shirt and so is ideal for larger gents or those who prefer more room to move.



DETAILS: YOLK

The yolk of a garment (shirt in this case) is the top panel on the back of the shirt. They can be horizontally straight or in decorative shapes such as a curved V. As a rule of thumb, the more decorative it is, the more informal it becomes.

Dinner Suits

ORIGINS

Dinner suits were first invented by Henry Pool of Savile row in 1886. The then Prince of Wales requested that his tailor make him a short tailcoat to be worn at formal dinners. He felt that his everyday lounge suits were too informal for such events, while tail-coats he saw as too formal - besides the tails were an awful nuisance whilst seated or dancing. The original dinner suit was cut from midnight blue mohair, as the cloth had a slight shine and appeared black in low light whilst appearing blue in the day.

Though a midnight blue was the first type of dinner suit, black became a more popular option, which is why most dinner suits seen today are black. This being said, many celebrities have popularised the idea of different coloured and textured dinner suits. While this experimentation is great if you are a celebrity, arriving to a black tie event in a red jacquard dinner suit may raise more than a few eyebrows and could even leave you thrown out in the cold.



LAPELS

For a dinner suit there are two options for your lapel, these options are shawl or peak. Shawl lapels are typically only seen on dinner suits and smoking jackets, as these are very formal garments. A peak lapel is also very formal and so is perfectly acceptable on a dinner suits. Notch lapels are the least formal lapel and so should be saved for day-to-day lounge suits. Whichever lapel you chose, it should always be in satin.

POCKETS

A dinner suit should always have Jetted pockets in satin to match the lapels. Flap pockets and patch pockets both created unwanted bulk – a dinner suit is very formal and so should have as little detail as possible.



BUTTONS

Dinner suits used to always be single breasted with only one button. This button should be kept fastened at all times. The addition of a second button (which should never be fastened) creates extra unnecessary detail which is to be avoided – if its single breasted it should only ever have one button. This button (and the cuff buttons) should be cloth coloured to match the suit, again helping blend it into the suit and remove unnecessary detail. Some dinner suits in the modern age are double breasted. When this is the case, as long as the rest of the previous rules are followed it is still perfectly acceptable at a black tie event. However, if you are following the theme here, the less buttons on the garment the cleaner the look is. By that rule, a 2x2 double-breasted garment will be smarter to look at than a 3x2 double-breasted.

TROUSERS

The trousers can be pleated or flat fronted, depending on the wearers taste but must always have a plain hem (to reduce detail) and a satin band running down the outer seam to match the lapels and pockets. Some people will choose to have the trouser high waisted to prevent the white triangle of shirt showing between jacket and trouser – with the triangle gone there is no need to wear a cummerbund or waistcoat.

VENTS

On a British lounge suit you will likely find two vents on the back of the jacket. These allow for movement and comfort when the suit is worn all day. Dinner suits on the other hand do not need this added movement; their only function is to make the wearer look immaculate. It is for this reason that a true dinner suit should have no vents. No vents mean the jacket will remain stiff with little movement, reducing the risk of creasing and as it is worn only one or two evenings a year, you needn't concern yourself with comfort.

SHOES & SOCKS

There are really only two shoes styles you can choose from, the first (and safest in Britain) is a patent whole-cut oxford. The whole-cut eliminates detail on the shoe (such as toecaps) and the high shine that a patent shoe offers adds formality that your day-to-day oxfords do not have. The second, riskier option is to wear a formal pump with a ribbon atop the shoe. This style shoe should still be black patent leather, but exposes more foot and adds a detail that some might frown upon – so wear with caution. Traditionally, socks would always have been black silk but, in this day, as long as they are black they will be perfectly acceptable.

SHIRTS

Perhaps the biggest faux pas seen with black tie is not the suit itself – but rather the shirt that it is paired with. A dinner suit should only ever be worn with a turn-down collar, be it a kent or a cut-away. NEVER a wing-tip collar. Wing-tips are to be reserved for morning wear and white tie functions. The cuff should always be a double (French) cuff, or – again because of Bond – a cocktail cuff. Both cuffs require folding back, but a French cuff creates the need for cufflinks while the cocktail cuff fastens with buttons. Traditionally shirts would be worn with a pleated bib, though nowadays this is seen as a very oldschool style. A Marcella bib is a more modern alternative. The shirt should either have its buttons hidden under the front placket, or it should be fastened using black or pearl shirt studs.

CUFFLINKS

Another common faux pas is to wear any old cufflinks with a dinner suit. Cufflinks should be either in black or pearl – much like dress studs.

POCKET SQUARES

When wearing with a dinner suit, one should only ever wear white and (if following the rule book) linen – folded into a neat rectangle. Anything more flamboyant detracts from the rest of the tidy/ immaculate look of the suit.

BOW TIE

As long as the bow tie is black, you are fairly safe from the fashion police. This being said, tiny or huge bow ties are a huge no-no. The bow tie can have pointed ends (suits a pointy peak lapel beautifully) or flat (best with shawl lapels). The edges of the bowtie should be in line with your pupils. A ready-tied bow tie is acceptable, but a self-tie bow tie is preferable – besides, is there anything cooler than an undone bow tie at the end of a night?



WATCH

Wearing a watch to a dinner event is traditionally unacceptable. It signifies that you are watching the time, a very rude thing to do when you have been invited to a party. If you absolutely must wear a watch however, it should be as subtle as possible; this means a black leather strap and a silver casing.

COATS

If you are wearing a coat it must be black. Double-breasted is preferred as it is more formal, though a single-breasted coat will not have you thrown out.

SCARVES

A white silk dress scarf is a nice addition to your dinner suit – it gives you a chance to add individuality, as not many people will have thought of it. This being said, make sure it is white and silk – anything else is traditionally unacceptable. However, in the modern world wearing a scarf of colour with your dinner suit is not going to cause any problems.

CUMMERBUND

A cummerbund should only be worn if you are NOT wearing a waistcoat. It is to prevent the little white triangle of shirt and so is redundant if wearing high waisted trousers or a waistcoat. If you are wearing one however, it should only ever be black silk.

WAISTCOAT

Not seen very often these days is a waistcoat with a dinner suit. It used to be that a dinner suit should only ever be worn with a waistcoat or a cummerbund so as to stop the little white triangle of shirt from showing between the jacket and trouser. If you opt for a waistcoat, it should be a horseshoe (scoop). Either double or single breasted is acceptable.

Outer Wear

GENERAL RULES

Any coat made from a fabric below 14oz is classed as a topcoat, 14 - 18oz is classed as an overcoat and anything above 18oz is a greatcoat. These rules apply regardless of style.



PEA-COAT

A pea-coat is a double-breasted coat, with a large military style collar that will “pop” to shelter the wearer’s neck. Shorter than an overcoat, a pea-coat will fall anywhere between the top and bottom of the wearer’s thigh. Pea-coats are generally made from quite a heavy cloth and are quite stiff, making them a very warm garment. They are a much more of a casual option, as they work well with jeans and smart shirts / jumpers. Though a pea-coat can work with a suit, it may make the overall look more informal than would be recommended in a work environment.

DOUBLE-BREASTED OVERCOAT

A doublebreasted overcoat is arguably the smartest option. Often styled similarly to a doublebreasted suit; the coat will normally have 6 buttons in a “Y” formation. Most double-breasted suits and coats will have a peak lapel (as will almost all double-breasted garments) though shawl lapels are used on occasion. The opening may be a little lower than on some coats due to the style, so if you find that you normally feel the cold, be sure to ask your tailor to raise the opening. This type of overcoat will fall just to the back of the knee, offering a little more trouser protection.



POLO COAT

The polo coat is styled like the double-breasted coat as mentioned previously. What makes it fall into the specific category of being a “polo” coat is the golden tan colour. Polo coats also come with a turn back or gauntlet cuff.



SINGLE-BREASTED OVERCOAT

Smarter than a pea-coat, but not as formal as a double-breasted – the single-breasted coat is a great middleground. Styled very similarly to a single-breasted jacket, a single-breasted overcoat can have either a peak, notch or shawl lapel and will have very similar pockets on the waist and sometimes the breast – useful for gloves, or even a pocket square for that extra detail. Like it’s doublebreasted brother, a single breasted coat will normally fall to the back of the knee, though on a shorter gent a tailor might recommend a slightly shorter length to maintain proportion.

BRIDGE COAT

Bridge coats come from a military background, similarly to the pea-coat. This similarity is also reflected in the design. Like the pea-coat, bridge coats are double breasted and have a very similar collar style. The main difference between these two coats is that the bridge coat will be much longer, Finishing at the back of the wearer’s knee. Bridge coats also tend to have an adjustable belt on their back; this allows the wearer to alter the amount of waist suppression. This means the coat can be worn with the belt loose and a suit underneath it or tightened and worn with just a shirt.





TRENCH COAT

The trench coat is very unique in comparison to the other coats. This is partially down to the cloth and partially because of the style. Where all of the other coats are typically made in a wool or cashmere cloth, trench coats are made in a waterproofed cloth; either a wool gabardine or waxed cotton. This is because trench coats are specifically designed to keep water out. This is also reflected in the style. They are double breasted which means water has two layers to try and get through. The storm flap is a feature unique to the trench; it buttons down over the opening of the coat so that water flows over it and down the coat, not in through the gap. For the same reason; they have belts on the waist and cuffs that allow the wearer to pull the coat close together, sealing gaps that water may otherwise get into.

Shoes



OXFORD

An Oxford shoe is the smartest option for formal wear. An Oxford shoe is any type of shoe with a closed lacing style. Within the Oxford style there are several style sub-genres: completely plain (whole-cut/one piece), a toe cap Oxford, a wingtip Oxford and a plain toe Oxford. As a rule of thumb (similarly to suits), the more detail/decoration on the shoe, the more casual it becomes. For this reason alone, the whole-cut Oxford is the smartest shoe followed by a plain toe Oxford; the toe cap/wingtip is the most casual style of Oxford. The smartest colour for an Oxford is black, though a deep brown comes a close second.

DERBY

A Derby is very similar to an Oxford in style, the difference is that Derby's have an open lace rather than a closed lace. This gives the shoe a little more flexibility and makes the shoe slightly more informal than an = Oxford. Derby's can be found with a wingtip (most informal), a toecap (moderately formal) or a whole cut (most formal derby). Derby's are most commonly seen in black, which is the smartest option. Brown or Oxblood Derby's give a much more casual look.





BROGUE

A brogue is technically not a type of shoe. A brogue is any kind of shoe with “brogueing”. Brogueing is the term used to describe the decorative perforations punched into the leather either following the shoes seams or in a decorative pattern. Though brogueing can technically be used on any shoe, it is most commonly seen on Oxford, Derby or Monk strap shoes. The most common types of brogueing are; Full brogues (wingtip brogues), quarter brogues, semibrogues and long wing brogues. A brogued shoe in black is less formal than an Oxford or Derby, but is still acceptable for formal suiting. Brown or tan brogued shoes are still a smart option, but will be better suited to jeans or chinos.

MONK STRAP

Monk strap shoes offer certain flexibility to ones wardrobe. Instead of having a lace fastening like most shoes and boots, monk straps have one or two straps that cross the top of the shoe and fasten to the side using buckles. These buckles add a splash of detail that not many other shoes provide. Dressed down with chinos or jeans monk strap shoes will suit very well. As well as this, a plain work suit can be given an extra bit of umph with the decorative buckles of a monk strap. The monk strap can have a toe cap or be plain and isn't exempt from brogueing. As usual, black is the most formal colour, with dark brown and oxblood close behind.





LOAFER

Loafers are the most casual shoe type on this list. They have no straps or laces, as they are simply a slip on shoe. They were originally created as a comfortable shoe to be worn around ones abode and only up until recently did they become a shoe that can be worn casually. There are three main types of loafer: the penny loafer, the tassel loafer and the bit loafer. Some would argue that the bit loafer is most formal due to the decorative metal bar across its front. A penny loafer has a leather strap across the front, with a decorative shape cut into it. The tassel loafer looks most like a vintage slipper, with tassels attached to the front of the shoe instead of a leather band.

Casual Separates

Casual separates in bespoke tailoring offer a relaxed yet refined approach to classic menswear, focusing on flexibility and comfort. Key pieces include unstructured jackets and blazers in breathable fabrics like linen or cotton, paired with slim-fit chinos or wool trousers. Knitwear, such as merino or cashmere sweaters, and tailored shirts in Oxford cloth or linen provide layering options. Casual outerwear like field jackets or overcoats in waxed cotton or wool blends adds versatility. Footwear ranges from suede loafers to minimalist trainers, with accessories like slim belts, pocket squares, and leather bags completing the look.

Knitwear

Knitwear is a key component of a well-rounded casual wardrobe, offering both style and comfort. Here's a breakdown of essential knitwear pieces for a bespoke tailoring company, with a focus on materials, fit, and styling.



CREW NECK SWEATERS

These are versatile staples. Choose a slim or regular fit, which allows for layering without adding bulk, and ensures comfort over dress shirts or under jackets. Merino wool, cashmere, and cotton are excellent fabric choices for breathability and comfort. For styling, a crew neck can be dressed up with an Oxford shirt and chinos for a smart-casual look, or layered under a blazer for a refined, yet laid-back outfit.

V-NECK SWEATERS

These should have a tailored fit that comfortably accommodates a shirt or tie underneath, with a slightly deeper V ideal for layering. Fabrics like merino wool, cotton, or cashmere are preferred for softness and warmth. This piece works well for more formal casual looks when paired with a shirt and tie, or it can be worn casually over a T-shirt. For a balanced, smart-casual look, pair the V-neck with tailored trousers or jeans.

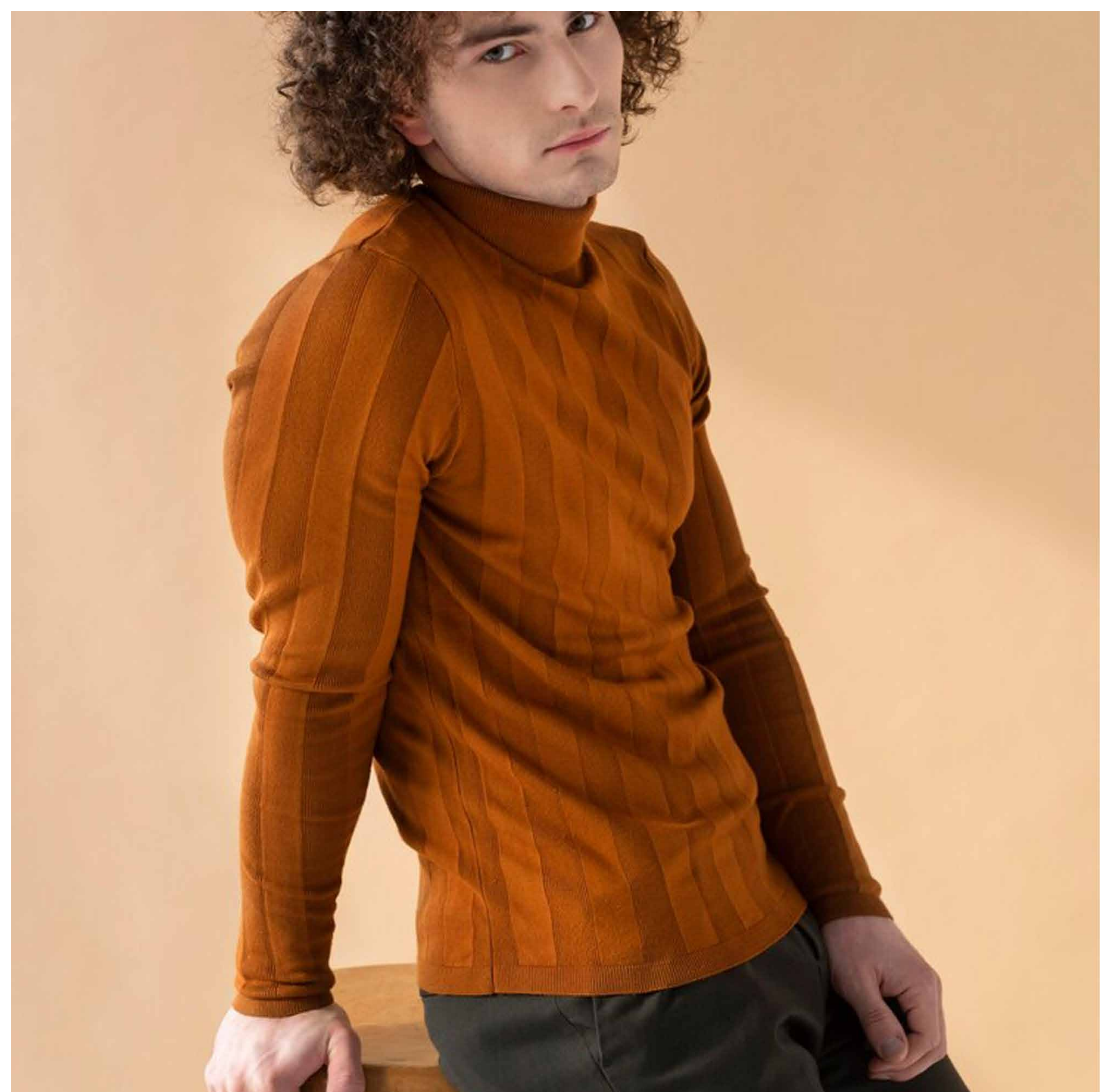


CARDIGANS

Come in either slim or relaxed fits depending on whether they're intended for layering. Choose buttoned or open-front styles for added versatility. Cashmere, cotton, and wool blends are ideal for lightweight layering, while heavier knits like cable-knit wool add texture and warmth. Cardigans can be worn casually over a T-shirt or layered over a collared shirt for a polished appearance. They pair well with chinos or denim and can be worn under a jacket for an elevated casual style.

TURTLENECK SWEATERS

These are best in a slim fit that creates a sleek, streamlined look. The neck should be comfortably snug without sagging. Merino wool and cashmere offer luxurious softness, while heavier wool blends work well for colder weather. A roll neck can be paired with a tailored jacket and trousers for a chic, modern outfit or worn casually with jeans for a more relaxed vibe.



HALF-ZIP / QUARTER ZIP SWEATERS

Both practical and stylish. A slim or regular fit works well, with a comfortable neckline that allows for layering. Fabrics like merino wool, cotton, and cashmere blends provide both durability and luxury. These sweaters are perfect layered over a shirt or under a blazer for a contemporary look. Pair with chinos or tailored trousers for a relaxed, yet refined, ensemble.



POLO SWEATERS

Great for adding structure to casual outfits, thanks to their collared design. Tailored without being too tight, they offer comfort and flexibility. Fine merino wool, cotton, or silk blends give a polished look, while cashmere adds a luxurious feel. Polo sweaters work well in smart-casual settings when worn with tailored trousers or chinos, and they can be layered under a blazer for an elevated yet relaxed look.

CHUNKY KNIT SWEATERS

Offers a more rugged look that provides both texture and warmth. These are typically relaxed or slightly oversized in fit, adding to their cosy, casual aesthetic. Heavier wool or wool-blend fabrics are ideal for colder weather, while cashmere blends provide a luxurious touch. Chunky knit sweaters are best worn with jeans or more rugged trousers and can be layered under a heavy jacket for extra warmth on colder days.



Chinos & Jeans

Both chinos and jeans, when made bespoke, provide tailored comfort and flexibility, making them the foundation of a polished casual wardrobe. Their adaptability ensures they suit a range of occasions, from smart-casual events to everyday wear.

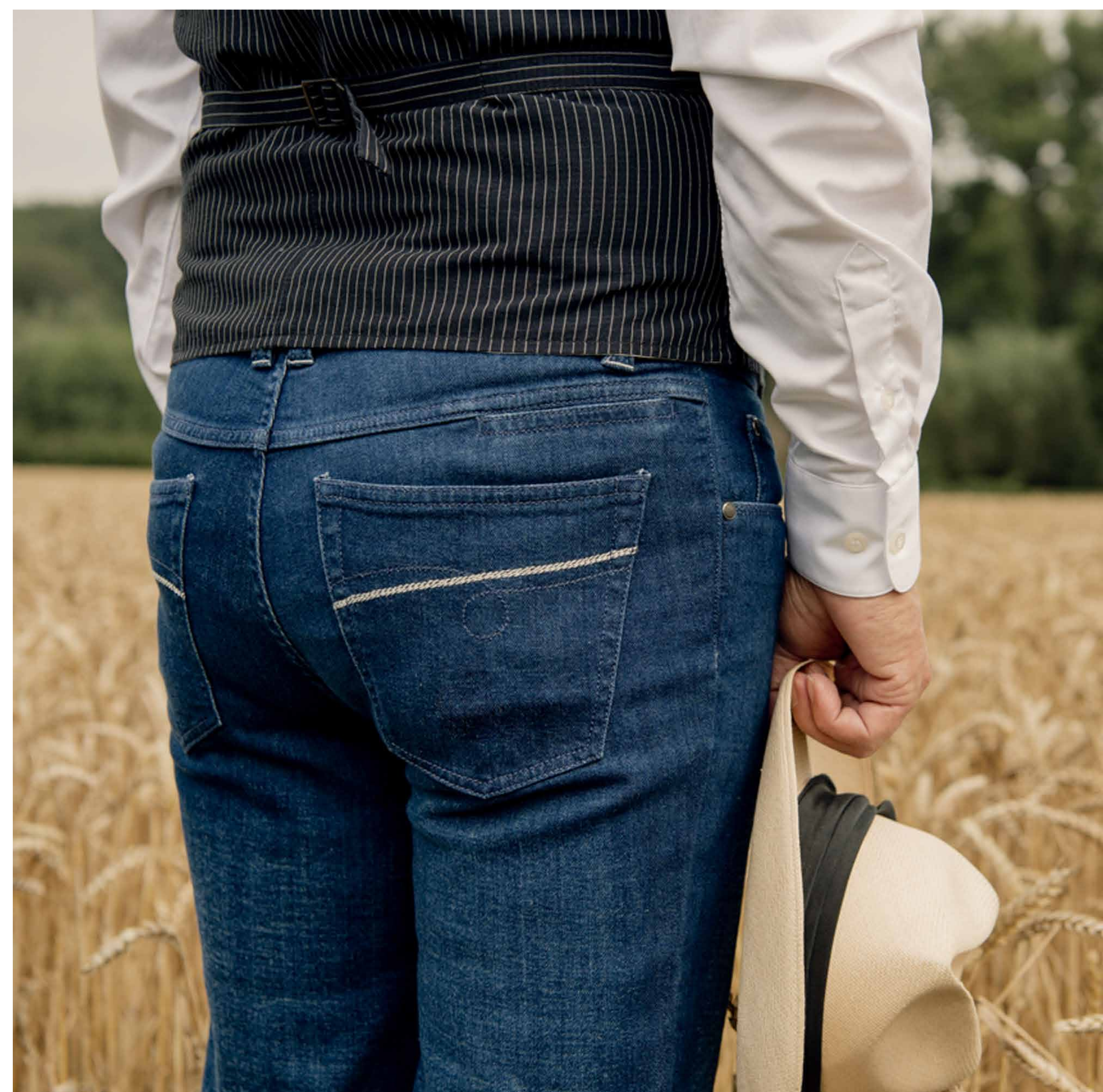


CHINOS

Versatile trousers that blend casual and smart dressing. A slim or regular fit, with a mid-rise waist, ensures comfort and structure. Made from cotton twill or cotton-linen blends, chinos are ideal for year-round wear. Neutral colours like navy or beige work well for both casual and semi-formal settings. They pair easily with a blazer for a dressed-up look or with a polo for something more laid-back. Bespoke details, such as pleats or cuffed hems, add an extra touch of refinement.

JEANS

When tailored, offer a polished yet relaxed look. A slim or straight-leg fit in stretch or selvedge denim ensures a clean, flattering silhouette. Dark indigo or black jeans can be dressed up with a jacket and shirt, while lighter washes are perfect for casual outfits. The focus in bespoke jeans is on achieving the perfect fit, with customised waistbands and precise detailing that elevate them above off-the-rack options.



Casual Shirts & Polos

Casual shirts and polos are essential for a well-rounded wardrobe, providing versatility and comfort while maintaining a polished appearance. Here's a breakdown of key styles in this category for a bespoke tailoring collection.

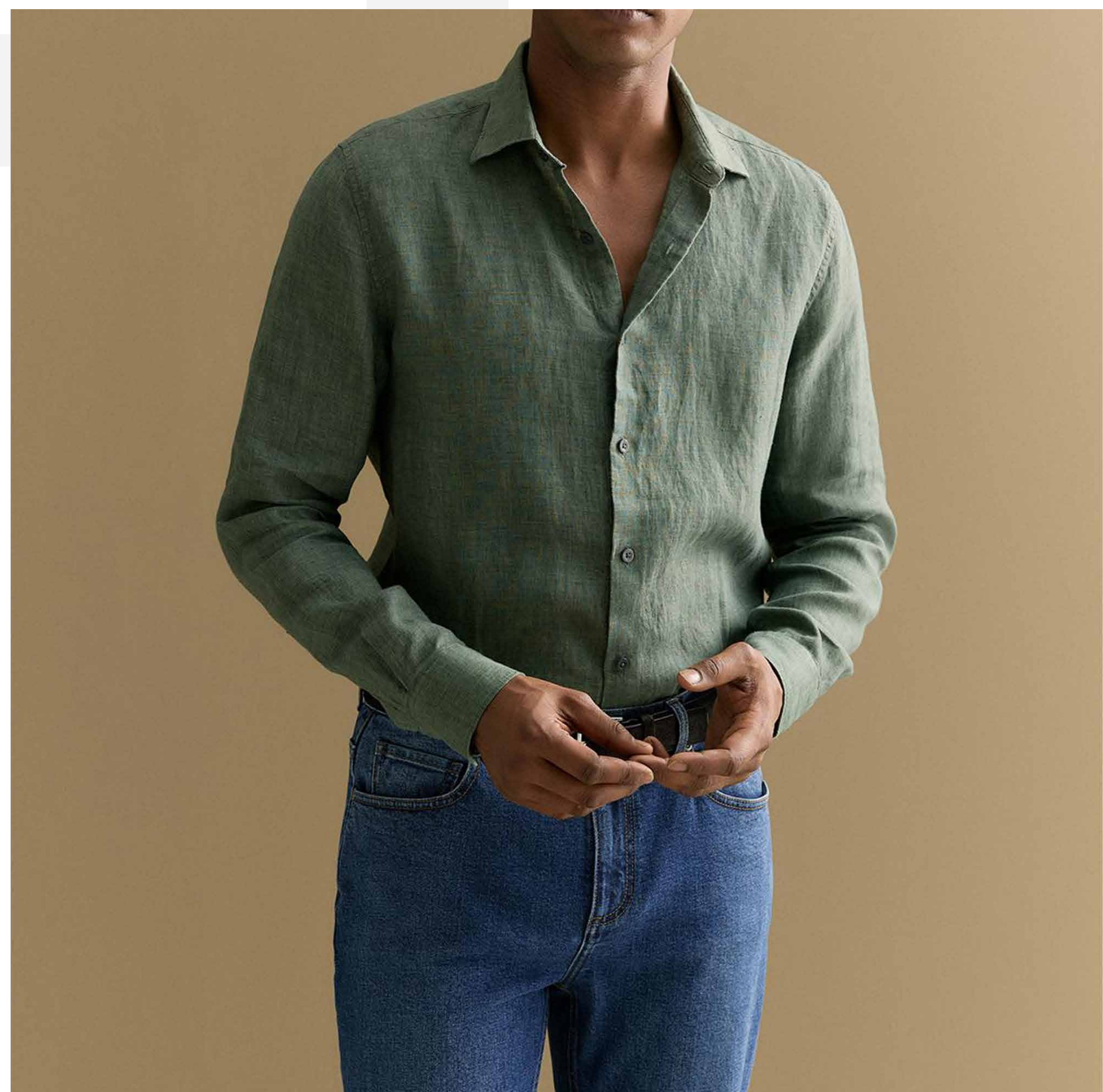


OXFORD SHIRTS

Timeless casual staples. With their button-down collars and slightly thicker fabric, they offer a relaxed yet refined look. They pair well with chinos or jeans and can be worn tucked or untucked, making them ideal for smart-casual occasions.

LINEN SHIRTS

Lightweight and breathable, perfect for warm weather. They add texture and casual elegance to any outfit, especially when paired with chinos or shorts. Linen's natural drape gives a relaxed look, while a tailored fit keeps it sharp and sophisticated.





CHAMBRAY SHIRTS

Offer a denim-like appearance without the weight. They provide a relaxed, textured look that pairs well with casual trousers. Chambray's lightweight fabric makes it a versatile option, offering a more refined alternative to denim shirts for casual styling.



POLO SHIRTS

A versatile blend of casual comfort and smart style. Tailored from fabrics like cotton or silk blends, they offer structure with their classic collar and button placket. Polos pair effortlessly with chinos or shorts and can be layered under jackets for an elevated casual look.



NEHRU / GRANDAD COLLAR SHIRTS

Offer a soft, textured fabric that enhances comfort and breathability. Slightly more structured than jersey polos, they give a refined finish to casual outfits. Pique polos are ideal for smart-casual settings, pairing well with tailored trousers or chinos for an effortless look.

Smart Casual Capsule Wardrobe

A smart casual capsule wardrobe combines versatility, comfort, and style, allowing effortless transitions between casual and refined looks. Below are essential recommendations, using previously mentioned items, for creating a cohesive smart casual wardrobe in bespoke tailoring.

A navy unstructured blazer is the cornerstone of a smart casual wardrobe. Its relaxed fit and breathable fabrics, like linen or cotton, make it ideal for layering over a casual shirt or polo. Paired with chinos or tailored trousers, it strikes the perfect balance between casual and polished.

Oxford shirts in neutral tones like white and light blue are essential for smart casual outfits. They pair seamlessly with chinos for a refined yet relaxed look, while they can also be layered under a crew neck sweater or a blazer for added sophistication.



Tailored chinos in shades like beige, navy, and olive provide versatility. Slim yet comfortable, they pair well with shirts, polos, and even lightweight knitwear. When styled with loafers or brogues, they effortlessly elevate a casual outfit into smart territory.

A cashmere crew neck sweater is an ideal layering piece for year-round smart casual dressing. Neutral tones like grey or navy allow it to pair with shirts or over a polo, worn with tailored trousers or jeans for a polished yet laid-back appearance.

Polo shirts in classic cotton or pique fabrics are perfect for warm-weather smart casual outfits. When paired with tailored chinos or a lightweight jacket, they offer a sharp, yet comfortable alternative to traditional shirts, easily transitioning from daytime to evening settings.

A roll neck sweater in merino wool provides a sleek alternative to collared shirts in cooler months. It layers elegantly under a blazer or overcoat and pairs perfectly with tailored trousers or chinos, offering a sophisticated, modern look for smart casual occasions.



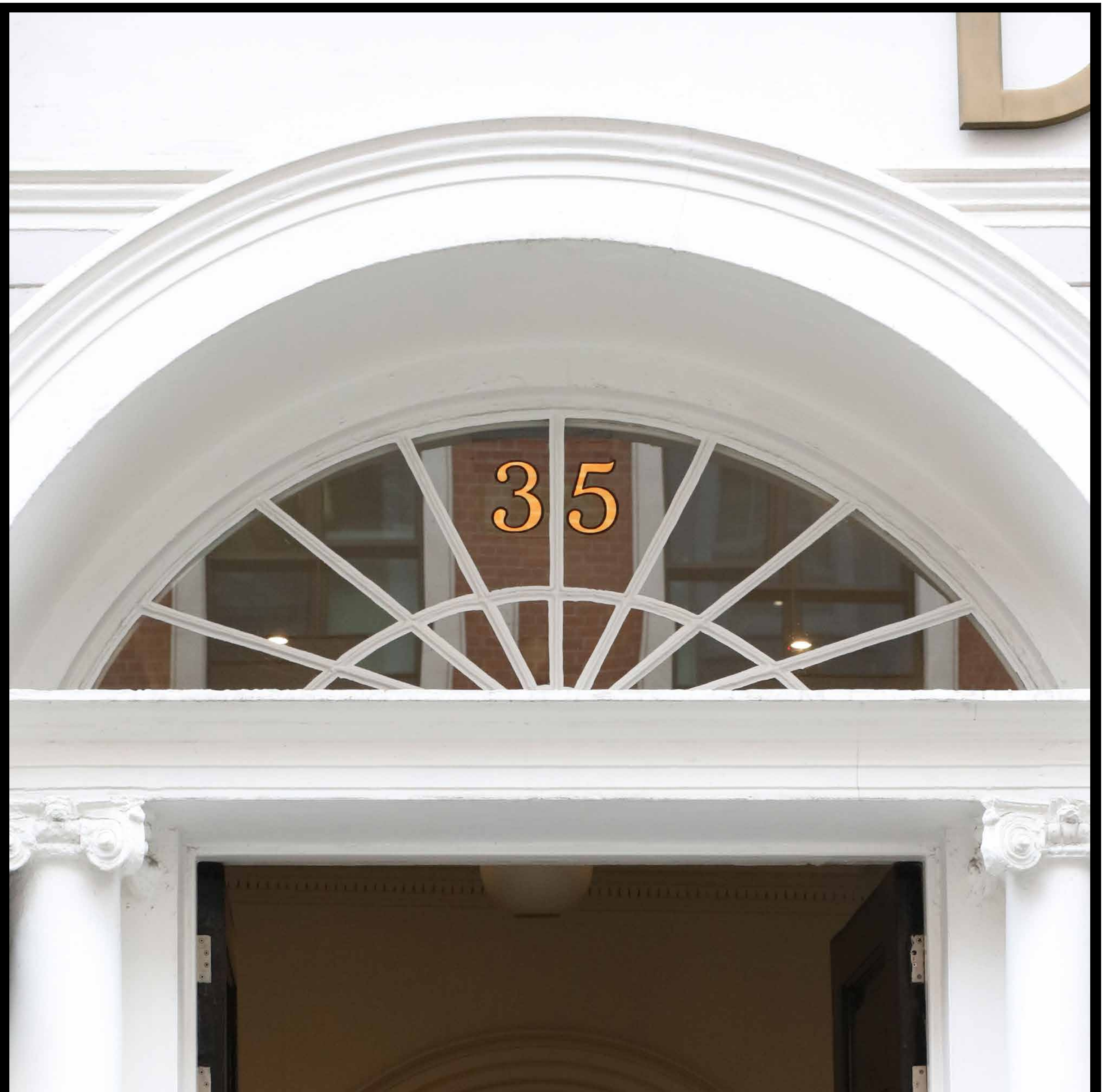
Loafers in suede or leather are the perfect footwear option, bridging the gap between formal and casual. Their slip-on style pairs effortlessly with chinos or tailored trousers, while their refined finish adds polish to a smart casual outfit without appearing too formal.

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