Which winter coat will work best for you?

Save this Story to:
Facebook Twitter Google+ Save

David Pilzer 10/12/2012 5:15 PM
David Pilzer 10/12/2012 5:15 PM

Unlike many female customers, men tend to shop by inspiration rather than by brand. We don't buy coats when it warms outside; we buy them automatically, we prefer to wait until it's cold. Like now.

It pays to invest in a new coat every year: it's the first thing someone sees when you walk into a room, and the last thing they see when you leave. It's a major purchase, a piece of fashion, and don't have to be classic or timeless, but it must look good. Men don't have the luxury of a wardrobe that can be used for years.

This season, menswear designers seem to have spent a lot of time and energy on their coat offerings, perhaps they realise that with global warming, and less chilly defined seasons, a new coat needs to promise more than just warmth. The catwalks were littered with military-inspired big coats, duffel coats, padded jackets and, of course, the classic peacoat. So which to choose?

Advertisement

Duffel

Although synonymous with Paddington Bear, the duffel has a rich fashion origin, having been worn by the military in both world wars. It is not, however, wholly appropriate for work. It was a favourite of the beatnik generation and its relaxed structure and perky hood somehow doesn't suggest a business meeting. Nowadays, it has little too coolly. Investment buys that will be great for the weekend, such as Prada Prenom's beige wool classic (£2,995), Burberry's navy cashmere with a detachable hood (£1,695) and Ralph Lauren's hooded duffel (£1,495). Kashaya Venice's wool blend, plaid-lined version (£1,500) and Junya Watanabe's down-filled duffel (£1,320).

Oversized

For work, you'd be wise to invest in a large, roomy coat – something with wide lapels, possibly double-breasted, with just a nod to trans-film star swagger. Think Cary Grant – there's a reason why designers put those pockets near waist level: so they can hold your hands in them when turning up your collar is not only allowed, it's essential. Look up images of Robert Redford in *Three Days of the Condor* (1975) and you'll see why. Classic buys include JJ Sander's olive green merino style (£1,180), Saint Laurent's navy classic (£1,895), Belstaff's "Brentwood" style (£1,295), Kenzo's navy and black pinstripe peacoat (£1,295), and Gucci's shearling style (£1,470).

Advertisement

Peacoat

If you are going to invest in a coat for the weekend, then this classic peacoat – they look perfect teamed with smart dark jeans. Dress it in a roomy wool, dropped pockets peacoat nouveau, and you will look cool. This is one of the few times when turning up your collar is not only allowed, it's essential. Look up images of Robert Redford in *Three Days of the Condor* (1975) and you'll see why. Classic buys include JJ Sander's olive green merino style (£1,180), Saint Laurent's navy classic (£1,895), Belstaff's "Brentwood" style (£1,295), Kenzo's navy and black pinstripe peacoat (£1,295), and Gucci's shearling style (£1,470).

Advertisement

Padded

Another option is a padded, waterproof down-filled coat. While these used to be the preserve of the postman or the Arctic explorer, they became popular with men whose daily work is as you would expect, in the mountainside. Besides their practicality, they signal that you're the guy who made the weather look sporty and the fact that, for some reason, they look good on men, incongruously over a suit or a dinn pair of tailored trousers. There's something appealing about the contrast between the shoulder of the coat and the staff of a wind cut about the cheekbone silhouette of a padded coat. Look for a long, lean coat that hits just below the knee, so it can be pulled up and you'll see that it just works somehow. Cosy styles include Louis Vuitton's dense-ski coat (£4,650 (pictured, second right)), Moncler's "Dimitri" down jacket (£840), Jil Sander's leather-trimmed jacket (£2,000), Canada Goose's "Lodge" style (£420), and Dsquared2's shiny navy "Dimitri" down jacket (£1,000).

ft.com/styleguide
mrporter.com
net-a-porter.com
uk.burberry.com
maisonmartinmargiela.com
ysl.com
bottegaveneta.com
selfridges.com
harrods.com
alexanderwangwear.com
gucci.com
dolcegabbana.com
jilsander.com
belstaff.com
eng.moncler.com
kenzo.com
louisvuitton.co.uk
canada-goose.com
dsquared2.com

Head-gear: Woolly thinking

"You can't pull a bolero down around your ears," observes London based tailor Richard James. Yes, she's talking about the classic felt hats – fedoras included – cutting-edge menswear has embraced what can only be described as the "luxury bobble hat" this season.

Front row: Moncler; Ralph Lauren; Dsquared2; Choccley

Look online and in store and there are countless variations on the big-lips-like-a-bobble-hat look: from Dior Homme's beanies (£210) to Lanvin's cashmere-and-mink-trimmed cap (£1,250) to Ralph Lauren's red-and-black snowflake-designed hat (£195), Brioni's ribbed numbers (£260) and Moncler's knitted pom-pom effaire (£125). Yeah, there's a bobble hat for all tastes.

"We see more and more men wearing hats," says Jeroen Singh, men's accessories buyer at Selfridges. "This trend has become a true essential rather than an accessory. So for people who've been looking for a sophisticated colour palette, and you won't go far wrong."

Jeroen Singh's current natural street, Savile Row, has got in on the trend. "Knitted hats certainly feel right this winter," says James of his hats, which sell for £20 and above. "We have been producing hand-knitted hats on the west coast of Ireland for many years," he adds. "We know exactly who makes them and can trace each one back to a person."

What's more, these hats are apparently not just limited to the fashion-forward set and aspirants: we prepared for nightrunners on the streets of Bermondsey. "I've noticed a lot of our customers wearing our bobble hats during the week with a suit," says Richard James.

Mark Sebba, co-proprietor of Dover Street Market, says, "Men are more and more interested in the quality of the fabrics, and they are specially prepared for nightrunners on the streets of Bermondsey. "I've noticed a lot of our customers wearing our bobble hats during the week with a suit," says Richard James.

Mark Sebba, co-proprietor of Dover Street Market, says, "Men are more and more interested in the quality of the fabrics, and they are specially prepared for nightrunners on the streets of Bermondsey. "I've noticed a lot of our customers wearing our bobble hats during the week with a suit," says Richard James.

Sign up to the weekly FT Weekend email

Sign Up Sign Up

Copyright The Financial Times Limited 2010. All rights reserved.

Share this article | Reuse this content

Most Read in Style

Most Read Latest Popular

Most Read Latest Popular

Most Read Latest Popular