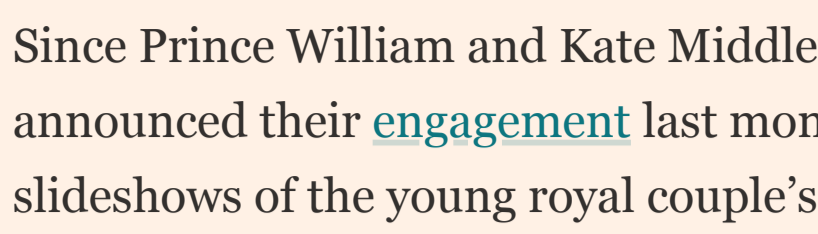


Style [+ Add to myFT](#)

Tweed is good



David Hayes DECEMBER 3 2010

Since Prince William and Kate Middleton announced their [engagement](#) last month, slideshows of the young royal couple’s “style” have been unavoidable, whether at a friend’s wedding, a polo match or out hunting. When it came to his stalking gear, Prince William – with his tweed outfit – was definitely on-trend.

Johnny Allen, sales manager at bespoke tailor Huntsman, says: “Tweed has evolved from being something worn by the country set at weekends to a wardrobe essential for many of our customers. It is increasingly being selected for the city as it gives a nod to dressing up but without the formality of a classic business suit. It has a slightly edgier, relaxed look to it.”

Blame it on Mark Ronson. The recording artist, DJ and dapper man about town has been wearing tweed suits in the city for years and others are following his sartorial lead. Gordon Richardson, creative director of British high street chain Topman, says:

“Celebrities endorsing a look are a powerful trigger for our customers, especially when it is someone who has innate style, like Mark Ronson.” Topman is offering a full range of Harris Tweed to its twentysomething customers, including bow ties and ties (£16), herringbone suits (£220) and loden green overcoats (£200).

Advertisement

“We trialled a few tweed pieces in our flagship store last autumn,” says Richardson. “Based on their success, we felt we could expand the range further this season by hooking up with the noblest tweed of them all, Harris Tweed, and offer something that was exclusive to Topman.

“It is, in part, a reaction to the whole heritage vibe currently out there but is also part of a general smartening-up for men. By cutting our tweed suits in a sharper and more slimline manner, we’ve opened up the market to a fashion audience.”

Lydia Walton, director of Harris Tweed Scotland, says: “The old classic Harris Tweed does have a reputation for being bulletproof and scratchy. But our new lightweight tweed has been made with fine wool and, hence, finer yarn, so it is 25 per cent lighter than classic Harris Tweed. It is now much smoother to touch, so hopefully it will dispel that old reputation.”

Thomas Pink has collaborated with Harris Tweed this winter, offering a green windowpane check jacket at £495, and Reiss and Banana Republic have come up with their own versions of the herringbone blazer, priced at £225 and £150 respectively.

A new generation of British tailors has adopted the classic fabric too. Thom Whiddett, co-founder of Thom Sweeney London, says: “Tweed has definitely become more appealing to a younger generation of clients, especially those wishing to build a true gentleman’s wardrobe. It may not be the first suit a guy orders but once you’ve covered the classic, then tweeds can be a great addition. For a more modern look we make tweed as separates using softer tweeds spun with wool flannel or cashmere.”

Patrick Grant of tailor E Tautz, says: “We have had a huge surge of interest among younger men, driven by a desire to get back to something more real, to wear something of enduring value, a product where they have a direct connection with British craftsmen. We offer about 3,000 different tweeds from over a dozen British tweed mills, from one-man weavers to the bigger mills of the Borders and Yorkshire.

Advertisement

“The blend of colour in woollen yarns give tweed a depth and a life that worsted cloths find difficult to match. It has a texture and a response to the tailors’ needle that lighter cloths just don’t have, and, like all great materials, it improves with wear.”

Classic Savile Row is enjoying a surge in orders too. “Tweed has always been a major part of what we make and sell,” says Huntsman’s Johnny Allen. The tailor has produced its own range of house tweeds, made on the Isle of Islay in the Hebrides, for more than 50 years and introduces a range of limited-edition patterns every 18 months.

Allen says: “Tweed has an understated quality about it, it never looks too new. Many of our customers have had their tweeds for decades and bring them back to us for a ‘tidy up’ from time to time.”

Sign up to the weekly FT Weekend email

[One-Click Sign Up](#)

Copyright The Financial Times Limited 2020. All rights reserved.

[Share this article](#)

[Reuse this content](#)

Latest on Style

Style

[From ceramics to life drawing: millennials are getting crafty](#)

Fashion

[Why the knitted tabard is a new wardrobe staple](#)

Fashion

[Does streetwear have a future?](#)

Comments have not been enabled for this article.

Follow the topics in this article

Prince William, Duke of Cambridge

[+ Add to myFT](#)

Mark Ronson

[+ Add to myFT](#)

Duchess of Cambridge

[+ Add to myFT](#)

Johnny Allen

[+ Add to myFT](#)

Life & Arts

[+ Add to myFT](#)

How easy or hard was it to use FT.com today?

[Leave feedback](#)

Support

[View Site Tips](#)

[Help Centre](#)

[About Us](#)

[Accessibility](#)

[myFT Tour](#)

[Careers](#)

Legal & Privacy

[Terms & Conditions](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Cookies](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Slavery Statement & Polici...](#)

Services

[Tools](#)

[More from the FT Group](#)

Markets data delayed by at least 15 minutes. © THE FINANCIAL TIMES

LTD 2020. FT and ‘Financial Times’ are trademarks of The Financial

Times Ltd.

The Financial Times and its journalism are subject to a self-regulation

regime under the [FT Editorial Code of Practice](#).