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## Men's wear designers revisit the camel look



David Hayes SEPTEMBER 11 2010

Women's wear has not been the only sector of the fashion industry to rediscover the allure of what has been termed "camel-lot"; men's wear has too. The reason? "A man wants to feel assured he looks good," says Kim Jones, creative director of Dunhill, "and wearing something classic is the answer, whether it is the perfect single-breasted suit or a camel overcoat. Every man should have one."

"We have a customer," continues Jones, "a 'hedgefunder', who always had shirts custom-made by our tailor but wore them with jeans, sweaters or chinos. Last year, he started to visit our tailor to have suits and blazers custom-made. He explained that 18 months ago, when he was making his clients £30,000 a week, they didn't care what he looked like. Now, when he could potentially be losing his clients £30,000 a week, he needs to look like he cares and to instil faith in his ability and professionalism." His latest purchase: Dunhill's updated camel coat, off-set by modern seaming and the luxury of brushed baby camel hair (£1,295). "Pieces like this become instant heirlooms," says Jones.

He isn't the only designer to think so. "A well-cut camel coat represents the essence of style and timeless dressing; no frills, just luxury that will last," says Carolyn Springett, Aquascutum's brand director, whose New Holborn Cashmere Coat (£1,400) debuts this season.

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Meanwhile, heritage brand Crombie has reintroduced a camel version of its "Crombie" coat style (launched in the 1870s and mentioned in the Oxford English Dictionary) for the first time in five years (£675).

Then there's Ede & Ravenscroft's hardwearing wool number with velvet collar (£450); Daks' beautifully cut cashmere wool mix single-breasted for £300; and interpretations of the camel coat from Junya Watanabe, Dries Van Noten and Gucci's Frida Giannini.

"Gucci's cashmere and angora mix double-breasted camel coat (£1,610) is a personal favourite of mine," says Stacey Smith, men's wear buyer at Matches. "The modern camel coat needs to drape the silhouette as opposed to drowning it. Buy the right coat and it can take you anywhere; shrugged over a tuxedo for a party, perfect for the office or dressed down with jeans at the weekend."

Richard Johnson, men's wear buying manager at Harvey Nichols, says, "We have bought into camel coats across all our designers this season. But my favourites are Dries Van Noten's oversized double-breasted style (£1,020) and Dolce & Gabbana's sharper, more fitted silhouette (£795). Double-breasted is the ultimate statement in camel as it stays true to its roots in English gentlemen's clothing but, as camel can actually be such a bold colour, single-breasted and fitted styles will be easier to wear for most men."

Not surprisingly the high street has been quick to embrace the camel movement, with Banana Republic's lightweight cashmere mix single-breasted style (£165) and the wool mix, double-breasted camel coat at Marks and Spencer (£129) notably good. Finally, Gap's quirky camel style, £110, mixes a classic heritage feel with the ease of a duffle coat, complete with toggle fastenings.

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