

Mick Jagger + Add to myFT

All the young dudes

This season designers are revisiting the stylish side of the 70s with silk scarves, leather jackets and white suits



Attitude: Spring/summer 2011 designs by Gucci; Roberto Cavalli; Givenchy; and DSquared

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David Hayes JULY 8 2011

The 1970s are a style decade that many would rather forget yet also one that contemporary fashion designers seem to adore. This summer’s women’s collections are awash with 1970s-inspired tailored trouser suits, floor-skimming peasant dresses, safari jackets and hot, clashing shades that owe everything to Yves Saint Laurent and an era that symbolised women’s new-found confidence. For men, though, the period conjures images of flared trousers, platform soles, gold medallions and jackets with outsized lapels. Scary.

But it wasn’t all bad. Consider the decade’s dandies, such as David Bowie during his Thin White Duke days, Mick Jagger in the nifty Tommy Nutter suit he wore at his wedding to Bianca, and the impeccably tailored designer Halston. Indeed, for a refresher course on sophisticated 1970s Savile Row style, look no further than the new exhibition on Nutter at the Fashion and Textile Museum in London or *Mick Jagger: The Photobook* (Thames & Hudson), a recently published coffee-table tome.

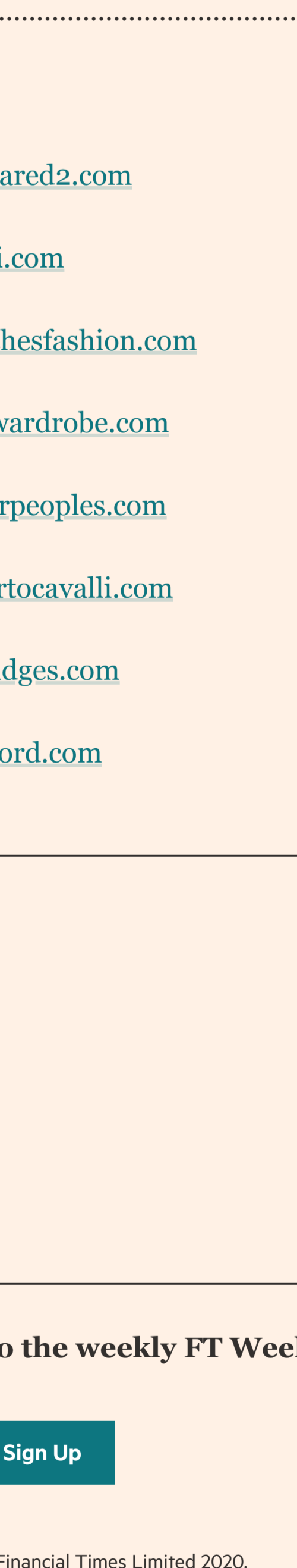
The look is also evident in some of this season’s best men’s wear collections. Gucci, Roberto Cavalli, DSquared and Tom Ford have all embraced a spirit of louche, grown-up sophistication rooted in the 1970s.

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Ford says: “That kind of slick, minimal glamour of the 1970s will always be a part of my taste. It was formed when I moved to New York.” In 1979, Ford left Santa Fe in New Mexico to attend Parsons School of Design, spending nights at legendary nightclub Studio 54. “I was a teenager in that era and that is very formative because you’re becoming sexual and attracted to other people, and are really starting to become an adult, starting to fantasise about your adult life.” Today that fantasy can be seen in Ford’s jaunty neck scarves, safari jackets and wide-lapelled suits with soft, turned-up cuff trousers in fruity sorbet shades.

Ford adds: “I also find the beauty standard of the 1970s particularly appealing because it was a softer, more friendly beauty standard than today, which can be a bit angry, aggressive and off-putting. In the 70s, people dressed to be caressed, kissed and picked up, they were ‘touchable’. Men of that time were also not as afraid of ‘style’ as they are today.”

Sam Lobban, a men’s wear buyer at department store Selfridges, says: “The 70s revived a touch of the dandy in men’s wardrobes and this is the idea to embrace now. You can take all of the quintessentially classic items of the era and wear them today: leather jackets, aviator sunglasses, white tailoring, neck scarves and print shirts all evoke the look and feel of the period perfectly.” See, for example, DSquared’s navy scarf print silk shirt (£475). Admittedly this is not a look that will work for the office but it can add a certain flair to after-hours events. “If you’re after an evening look while nodding to the trend, I’d recommend a Dries Van Noten suit from the new collection,” says Lobban. “It was based around Bowie in the 70s and the suits are perfect for adding a little subtly effortless ‘glam’ to your wardrobe.”



Lee Douros, men’s wear buyer at online retailer My-wardrobe.com, says: “The 70s is a difficult aesthetic commercially. But there is definitely a move towards tight-fitting blazers with a wide lapel, worn with voluminous trousers, which is really strong for next season. For summer, we have seen an abundance of cropped and shirt-style leather jackets from labels such as Marc by Marc Jacobs (£770), which are phenomenal sellers.”

Stacey Smith, men’s wear buyer at store chain Matches, says: “Labels like A. Sauvage have a whiff of the 1970s with velvet shawl collar jackets (£600) and African pattern silk double-breasted dress jackets (£750). Rake’s print shirts (£159) and washed paisley neck scarves (£103) are also a key look and, of course, aviator shades by the likes of Carrera (£206).”

Larry Leight, creative director at eyewear manufacturer Oliver Peoples, says of the classic sunglasses: “The double-bridge metal aviator is a classic style, yet there are so many variations of it. This season, I took inspiration from the 1970s, specifically Neil Diamond, and created an edgy, angular version called Jack One (from £206). It’s just one of those styles that looks great on many faces.”

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As well as appealing to a new generation, born long after Studio 54 shut its doors, the 70s are still fondly remembered by many of the designers who lived through the decade and are still indebted to their signature approach to style.

“The 70s will always be represented in my work,” says Roberto Cavalli. “I look to the era as a time of understated luxury, when men dressed like men who meant business. It was a definitive time for me, when everything started in both my professional and personal life. My latest men’s collection was wholly based on the 70s with sumptuous fabrics and cuts, printed shirts teamed with neckerchiefs, all in tonic colours of greens, burgundies and deep blue.”

Still, even Cavalli admits it takes a certain strength of character to get in touch with your inner 1970s peacock. “You do have to have the right attitude to carry off some of the more vibrant looks.” Or as the Bee Gees once sang: you have to “know how to show it”.

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