

Style [+ Add to myFT](#)

Boys aloud

In the City of London, brightly coloured trousers sell best

[Twitter](#)
[Facebook](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[WhatsApp](#)
[Share](#)
[Save](#)

David Hayes FEBRUARY 3 2012

In London, this is the greyest time of the year – grey streets, grey skies, grey suits – but, recently, bright spots have appeared in even the most monochrome of urban landscapes. Or to be more accurate, bright trousers. Though the pheasant shooting season drew to a close earlier this week, a quick scan of London’s Square Mile reveals a surfeit of quilted jackets, felt hats, Harris tweeds and ...coloured trousers.

“When we first started Hackett in 1983 we stocked corduroys in safe country colours such as olive, brown and tan,” says Jeremy Hackett, the founder and chairman of the British label. “But then we noticed our customers were special-ordering brighter colours, so we added red, yellow, bright green, cobalt blue and even pink. Now it seems that the more lurid the colour the better it sells. Our bestselling colour for trousers is red (£100). We have around 18 colours of chinos arriving this spring, and a colour I think will be popular is burnt orange.”

Gordon Richardson, design director at Topman, agrees. “We have had phenomenal success with our coloured chinos and cords,” he says. The store’s slim chinos (£28) are selling out in a rainbow of shades from pale mint to rust via parma violet and old rose.

Why do city folk adopt the uniform of the country? Richardson says: “There is more than a discreet nod towards the heritage trend that’s been a pervasive influence in men’s fashion for the past few seasons. It comes down to men feeling comfortable with clothing that is a tried and tested classic.”

Hackett elaborates: “Historically, coloured trousers were worn by landowners and gentlemen farmers to distinguish them from the estate workers who always wore camouflage tones. Also, army officers adopted bright trousers as part of their ‘mufti’ so as not to be confused with the ranks.”

Richard Evans, a 33-year-old City of London trader, likes the paradox of wearing country attire in town. “I bought a pair of pale pink [Jack Wills](#) cords and felt a little self-conscious the first time I wore them, but now they’re like any other pair of jeans, just a little cheerier,” he says. “I keep them for weekends but only in the City. I’d feel like my dad in a country pub.”

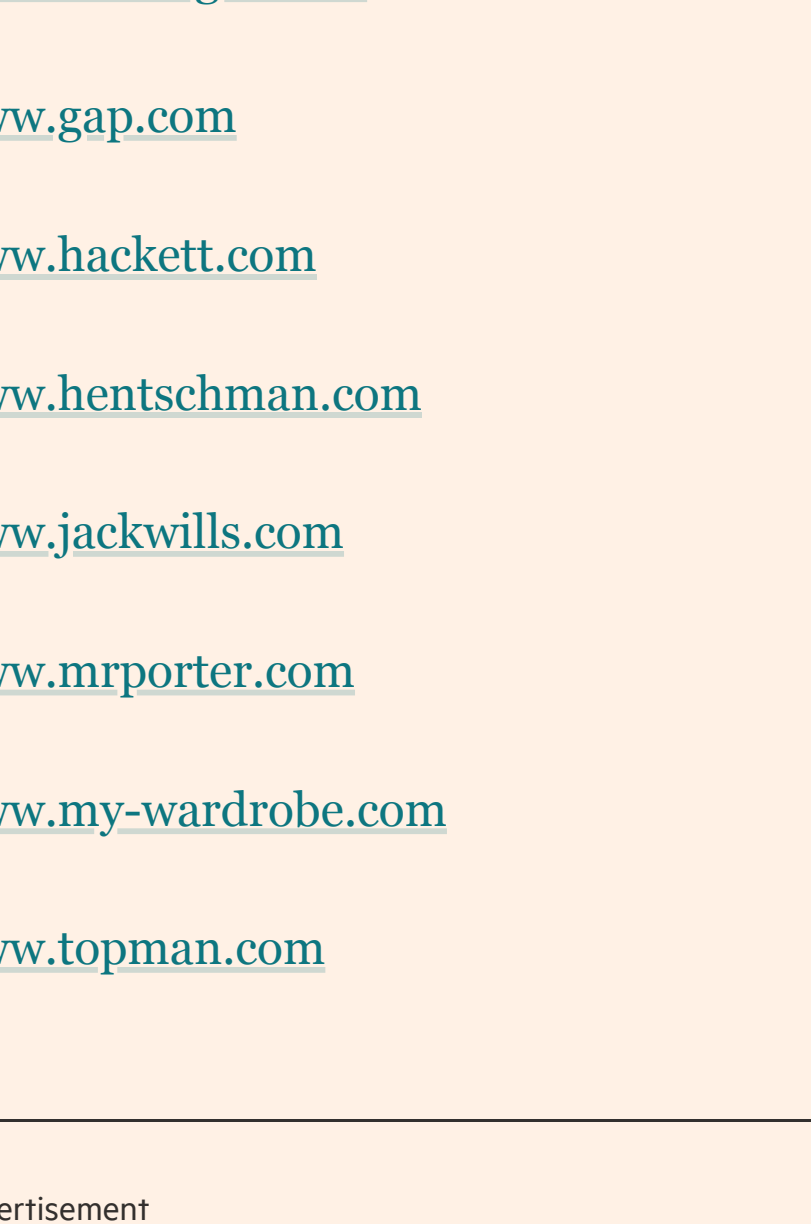


Mark Ronson in London in 2011

Aside from Topman and Hackett, Gap sells washed-out red skinny jeans (£49.95); [My-Wardrobe.com](#) has [Polo Ralph Lauren](#) moleskin trousers in deep olive (£195) and APC X Carhartt has petrol blue twill chinos (£115). Mr Porter stocks Canali’s straight-leg blue trousers (£170), Acne’s bold mustard chinos (£150), Jil Sander’s forest green skinnies (£430) and Burberry Brit’s deep plum narrow-cut numbers (£150).

“We have sold brightly coloured cords for nearly 80 years and they still remain one of our core products,” says Rosie Dixon of Cordings, which has been supplying the landed gentry with cords and chinos in outrageous shades from royal purple to acid yellow and sage green (£99). One customer loved his vibrant cords so much he bought a 50 per cent stake in the company back in 2004. And, says Dixon, “[Eric Clapton](#) has bought several pairs over the years.”

She adds: “People have become slightly more daring in their colour choices recently, particularly the younger generation and overseas visitors. The Italians and Spaniards love bright reds, pinks and purples. The quirkier members of the British aristocracy are drawn to the outrageous salmon pinks, oranges and purples.”



Andrea Tessitore, Lapo Elkann and Eric Wright at Milan spring/summer 2012 Men's fashion Week

A further update to the original line comes courtesy of young Brit label Jack Wills, which approached Cordings last year about collaborating. “They took our men’s cord trousers and came up with a slightly different version (£69) in shades from plum and olive through to gold and pink,” says Dixon. “They proved to be a bestseller.”

Advertisement

But is it possible to introduce such vibrant shades into an otherwise restrained wardrobe? Jeremy Langmead, editor-in-chief at Mr Porter, advises: “You can get away with teaming brightly coloured chinos with a navy blazer, although this can look a bit too Wasp-y. It’s better to roll up the trousers at the ankle a little, and put them with some battered old desert boots or a pair of deck shoes. Personally, I think they look best dressed down, worn more casually with neutral colours, like grey or camel. I own a pair of fairly vibrant orange corduroys by Hentsch Man. To avoid looking like ‘Fanta’ pants, I wear them with a pair of battered white Jack Purcells and a grey wool sweatshirt. It stops it from being too overpowering.” And still lets him go out with a bang.

.....

Details

www.cordings.co.uk

www.gap.com

www.hackett.com

www.hentschman.com

www.jackwills.com

www.mrporter.com

www.my-wardrobe.com

www.topman.com

Advertisement

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](#)

stories you missed

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?

Commenting on this article is temporarily unavailable while we migrate to our new comments system.

Note that this only affects articles published before 28th October 2019.

Follow the topics in this article

- Polo Ralph Lauren Corp (old name of Ralph Lauren Corp)** [+ Add to myFT](#)
- Cordings** [+ Add to myFT](#)
- Jil Sander Italia SpA** [+ Add to myFT](#)
- Jack Wills Ltd** [+ Add to myFT](#)
- City of London** [+ 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](#).