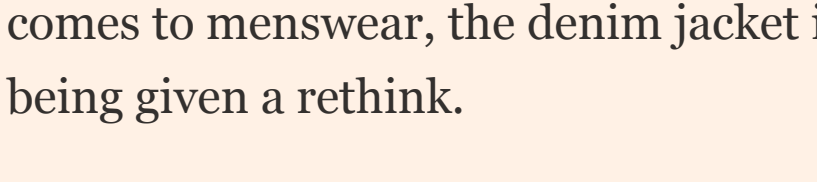


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Jean genius

The men's denim jacket is having a style moment



David Hayes JUNE 7 2013

Shorts are not the only item to be re-imagined by the fashion world; when it comes to menswear, the denim jacket is also being given a rethink.

“We’re seeing a greater offering of denim jackets in the market,” says Eric Jennings, men’s fashion director of Saks Fifth Avenue.

“They appeal because they’re lightweight, great for layering and work in almost any climate and season,” he adds.

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Toby Bateman, buying director at online retailer Mr Porter, says: “Denim jackets are definitely having a moment again. They never really fade away to be honest, they drop below the surface only to emerge again as the seasons change. Guys like to wear denim, be it as a jacket or jeans. They feel comfortable because it is masculine and has its roots in utility, not fashion.”

The classic version of the jean jacket is, of course, the original Levi’s “Trucker” (£85). “In 1878, the first Levi’s triple-pleated ‘blouse’ was created,” says Jonathan Kirby, vice-president of men’s design at Levi’s. “In 1936 the trucker jacket that we know and love now was born, made of a heavy quality denim.”



Denim jacket by Saint Laurent, £475

Since then, denim has morphed from a workwear basic to become the uniform of youthful rebellion and, finally, the mass fashion commodity it is today. Maria Erixon Levin, creative director and founder of Nudie Jeans, says: “The denim jacket is one of our core products – one that becomes more personal with time.”

But it doesn’t stop with the specialists; Mr Porter offers distinctly posh versions from Gucci (£770), AMI (£235), Saint Laurent (£475) and Maison Martin Margiela (£515), and denim jackets also turned up on the runway for spring/summer at labels such as Calvin Klein Collection, Junya Watanabe and Brit designer Richard Nicoll.

“I’ve always been interested in functional, utilitarian uniforms,” says Nicoll. “The denim jacket is a versatile classic that perfectly manages to straddle casual and formal as well as different subcultures.”

And all ages too, says Saks’ Jennings: “There is absolutely no age limit for men to wear a denim jacket.”

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Still, Gordon Richardson, Topman’s design director, has some words of advice: “If you’re young, you can look great in double denim – jeans and a denim jacket. But if you are older, stick to a dark denim jacket with a muted chino.”

Bateman suggests going the high-end route, as “designers tend to clean up the denim jacket, smarten it up and make the silhouette slimmer.”

“A slimmer shape in a dark denim will age beautifully over time,” agrees Richardson. “It won’t look out of place 10 years down the line.”

But naturally, only if the same can be said of its owner.

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