

STYLE & FASHION

Fit For a King—Or Just You

It might seem self-indulgent to get jeans, polos and other everyday garments custom-made, but discerning guys insist bespoke clothes—like these four options—are worth the time and financial investment

By TODD PLUMMER

Bespoke suiting is known for being time-consuming and exorbitantly expensive—the sort of indulgence associated with royals, celebrities and pre-2008 investment bankers.

Reasonably enough, most men assume that all custom garments are similarly out of reach. Not so. Custom everyday garments—like sweaters, leather jackets and even jeans—can be surprisingly approachable and uncomplicated to order. And if, like most of the population, you lack a chiseled model physique, custom is the way to go. Men with long arms, short arms, uneven arms, broad necks and so forth will find solace in garments cut just for them that don't demand constant tugging and adjusting throughout the day.

And made-to-measure clothes hold a certain appeal for eco-conscious shoppers. They're the antithesis of unsustainable overproduction. And barring any extreme swings in taste, you'll likely wear your bespoke styles for years to come, unlike fast-fashion finds that often get tossed after a

single season. Picky guys, meanwhile, need not make painful style concessions. Prefer a flap pocket to a patch one? This zipper or that one? Forest green works, but hunter green is out of the question? With custom, you can often realize your exact vision.

Yes, you're going to pay more for a custom piece than something off the rack. But adherents like Nikodem Calczynski, a 29-year-old Swedish art dealer, think the premium is worth it. "I'd rather have one piece that's just perfect rather than loads" that aren't, he said. If you divide the cost by number of wears, it can make good financial sense to commission custom pieces, whether you're buying a \$200 Oxford or a \$2,000 suede bomber.

Some bespoke-focused brands offer virtual ordering, but most require in-person fit appointments which, for many, might not be an option until restrictions are lifted. But that doesn't mean you should write custom off—instead, add it to your growing "to do" list for when we reach that new normal. Here, a few custom pieces that could enhance your post-pandemic wardrobe.



The Polo, Perfected

Cheap cotton polo shirts shrink, fade and look utterly drab after a few cycles in the wash. That's why Dag Granath, co-founder of Stockholm-based **Saman Amel**, offers a custom polo in a smooth, durable mercerized cotton. "It is our single most sought-after style for summer knitwear and one that we have had for many years," said Mr. Granath. Lightweight yet refined, it works for both a day at a casual workplace and socially distant afternoons on the beach. We recommend a fit appointment at Saman Amel's New York, London or Stockholm locations, but remote consults suffice for some items, including knits. After ordering, this made-to-measure polo will land at your doorstep in six to seven weeks. "Our clients are looking for pieces [with] long-term value," said Mr. Granath. "If [those] pieces take a bit longer, that is a price they are comfortable paying." Polo Shirt, from about \$350, appointments at samanamel.se



The Wear-Forever Jacket

An investment leather jacket should last a lifetime. That's why Agyesh Madan and Nicholas Ragosta, co-founders of New York brand **Stoffa**, put so much effort into perfecting their Flight Jacket, which the then-fledgling brand launched six years ago. At just under \$2,000, the Italian-crafted, lambskin suede jacket offers a level of detail that's tough to find in comparably priced ready-to-wear options, including front pockets that are sewn into the jacket, as opposed to cheaper patch pockets just sewn (or glued) on. This customizable piece is designed to achieve the customer's preferred fit, whether slim-cut or loose, said Mr. Madan: "Suede and leather are difficult to alter...so you really want to get it right with made-to-measure." Customers must make a fit appointment at Stoffa's New York showroom, but once your measurements are on file, you can order other garments online any time. Jacket, from \$1,800, appointments at stoffa.co



Headache-Free Jeans

When buying jeans off the rack, you enter a dizzying labyrinth of contradictions and frustrations. One brand's straight fit is another's skinny; a size 32 from one label could be a 34 at the next; and even when you find a good fit, you need to find a combination of stitching, wash and cuff-style that suits you. It's a panoply of irritations. Going custom avoids these issues entirely. Sydney-based **P. Johnson** offers high-quality Japanese selvedge denim without the garish branding that often compromises mainstream jeans. Founder Patrick Johnson describes his made-to-measure style as a "confident jean" that eliminates fit frustrations. P. Johnson recommends an in-person appointment, which can be scheduled at one of its New York, London, Sydney or Melbourne showrooms; in your home (depending on your location); or during one of the brand's trunk shows in North America, Australia and Asia. Jeans, from \$425, appointments at pjt.com



Specific Shirting

Jake Wigham worked as a Savile Row tailor before founding **Jake's**, a London-based purveyor of customizable menswear, last year. His shirts, a specialty, boast all the hallmarks aficionados crave—like five-pleat cuffs, locker loops and Oxford cloth—and are made to order. Note, that's not quite the same as made to measure: Mr. Wigham's shirts come in a few preset sizes with custom options and "have a really easy, anti-slim fit." Mr. Wigham insists that "Oxford is a robust cloth," but a shirt made from the stuff will still stretch out of shape if it's, say, slightly too snug around the arms. A Jake's shirt's looser, partially customized fit means the seams are subject to less tension and they last longer. Best of all, you can order yours entirely online: Just punch your collar size, sleeve length and name (for optional monogramming) into the website and your shirt will be dispatched within four weeks. Shirt, from about \$200, jakesldn.com