

225 Years in the Making – global luxury brand Johnstons of Elgin celebrates over two centuries of manufacturing excellence

Special release of limited-edition Balmacaan coat featuring a unique Digital ID enabling customers to find out more about their product's journey

One of Scotland's oldest family businesses, Johnstons of Elgin, is releasing a limited-edition Balmacaan coat in celebration of 225 years of manufacturing excellence.

In search of a design that perfectly embodied Johnstons' heritage, the manufacturer of cashmere and fine woollens explored its 200-year-old archives for an authentic tweed with a contemporary aesthetic. Designers finally selected a 1919 pattern which has been a source of inspiration for the Balmacaan coat.

Johnstons of Elgin hold a Royal Warrant of Appointment to His Majesty King Charles III, when he was Prince of Wales, for the supply of Estate Tweeds. Tweed forms a significant part of the brand's heritage, and this contemporary tweed coat, woven in its Elgin mill, is made from 100% wool, which has been processed, dyed and spun in the UK.

Introducing a unique Digital ID tag that will allow customers to find out about their Balmacaan coat's story, the tag will also contain information about its fibre source and how to style and care for it. Launched in 2020 by His Majesty King Charles III, the Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI) introduced the Digital ID concept in 2021, aiming to provide traceability and circularity on a large scale. This will be the first time Johnstons of Elgin is introducing the technology to its range.

Reflective of Johnstons of Elgin's long history and mastery of fabric, the iconic Balmacaan takes its name from the Scottish estate near its Elgin mill. It was developed by a wealthy American industrialist in the early 1800s, who commissioned his tailor to design a coat that would keep him warm and dry in the mists of a Scottish winter. The iconic design was famously worn by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII, and Duke of Windsor), a clothes horse and fashion maverick. Remaining popular throughout the twentieth century, today the Balmacaan is considered a true classic.

Jenny Urquhart, Chairman, Johnstons of Elgin, said: "We have produced tweed, a fabric unique to Scotland, since the 1840s. Initially made for those living and working on nearby estates, it has become a versatile wardrobe staple with broad appeal. For our milestone 225th birthday we were keen to use this fabric, while always remaining inspired by our surrounding landscape for colour.

"The Balmacaan Coat marries our heritage of Scottish origins and expertise in craftsmanship with modernity. Inspired by our brands' DNA from the last two centuries, this contemporary coat showcases our dedication to continual evolution and positions Johnstons of Elgin at the forefront of innovation."

In celebration of the anniversary, Johnstons of Elgin has also created a women's Stewart Check Cape. An archive design in classic monochrome tones, the pattern is based on the Black and White Stewart tartan. Crafted with Johnstons Donegal Yarn, this simple silhouette allows the luxurious fabric to be the main feature. The cape also includes the Digital ID tag, allowing customers to find out more and watch the making of The Stewart Check Cape.

Chris Gaffney, Chief Executive, Johnstons of Elgin, said: “We are a global brand with a local heart and incredibly proud of our rich Scottish heritage. This year gives us an excellent opportunity to celebrate how far we have come over the last two centuries.

“We know the level of skill and craftsmanship that goes into each and every one of our products, but it is also especially important to us that our customers understand this special journey and therefore we are launching a new Digital ID to the Balmacaan Coat and The Stewart Check Cape. This will also be featured across a selection of products from our range next year, helping customers to form a deeper connection to our products and enable them to make more informed decisions as a result – buy less, wear more.”

Retailing at £1,295, only fifty of the exclusive Balmacaan Coats will be available to purchase from Johnstons of Elgin stores and online from the end of October. The Stewart Check Cape will retail at £1,495 and will also be available in store and online.

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Issued on behalf of Johnstons of Elgin by The BIG Partnership.

Notes to Editors

About Johnstons of Elgin

In the two centuries following its establishment in 1797, Johnstons of Elgin is one of the last few vertical mills in the UK still carrying out all the processes from raw Cashmere and fine woollen fibres right through to the finished product. Johnstons of Elgin’s mills in Elgin and Hawick employ 850 people, including highly skilled textile craftsmen and women.

For further information, imagery, or interview opportunities please contact The BIG Partnership on johnstonsofelginpress@bigpartnership.co.uk.