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The Best Men's Spring Jackets from Four Brands You Should Know

By Jacob Gallagher



From left: Jackets by Ddugoff, Childs, Aimé Leon Dore and Adsum PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, STYLING BY GABRIEL RIVERA

LAST OCTOBER, as I tore the tags off my new winter coat, I couldn't wait to show it off. Some mornings, I actively hoped the mercury would drop. Today, you couldn't pay me to stick my arms back into those sleeves. Winter coat fatigue takes its toll, whether you bury yourself in a bargain Uniqlo puffer or a cumulus-plush Loro Piana baby cashmere overcoat.

Enter the *spring jacket*. The very words evoke a hopping bunny. Both lighter in weight and less burdened with responsibility, it needn't serve nearly as many functions as a winter parka. In short, it's a piece of outerwear with which you can have a little fun—perhaps forgoing go-to labels (your J. Crew, your Brooks Brothers) to try a jacket from a brand you've never heard of. It can't hurt to bring a bit of fresh creative energy into your wardrobe.

These four jackets are from new New York brands—all founded in the past four years, all making high-quality, small-run designs mostly in America, if not the city itself. They're not aiming for downtown cool but rather reflect a new, more nuanced sensibility. Retailers, like Saager Dilawri, owner of Neighbour, a shop in Vancouver, Canada which carries two of these brands, Childs and Ddugoff, have taken notice. New York designs “are now more about tailoring and subtle details,” said Mr. Dilawri, “as opposed to something loud and noticeable.”



PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, STYLING BY GABRIEL RIVERA

THE EXTROVERT

Ddugoff

\$495, Ddugoff, 212-256-0256

Brought to you by: After studying to be an architect, Daniel DuGoff shifted from designing spaces to clothes three-and-a-half years ago.

For fans of: The whimsical patterns of Marni designs and the straight lines of Acne Studios.

Material matters: A Japanese rayon-and-cotton blend which delivers the best of both worlds. The rayon provides airiness while the cotton adds a bit of structure. “I love techy fabrics that don’t feel too techy,” said Mr. DuGoff.

Fit 411: A straight body loosened up a bit with a roomier dolman sleeve. You’ll notice this subtle tweak when you reach out to hail a cab and the jacket doesn’t ride up.

Distinguishing details: The tabbed throat closure helps you steel yourself against the wind. An inner chest pocket, a signature detail in all Mr. DuGoff’s jackets, is designed for smartphone stowage.

Spring shower ready?: Not entirely. The silky rayon will wick off a drizzle, but anything more than that will leave you damp.

Wear it with: A pair of classic khakis or white jeans to lighten up the jacket’s slightly moody blue and olive-green pattern.



PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, STYLING BY GABRIEL RIVERA

THE MINIMALIST

Childs

\$1,050, stormfashion.dk

Brought to you by: Robert Childs, who spent four years working for the reigning king of avant-Americana, Thom Browne, before launching his own label last year.

For fans of: The clean, urbane look of A.P.C. and Mr. Browne's eye for high-quality fabrics and subtly tweaked silhouettes.

Material matters: The Italian polyester is waterproof, so it has the sheen of a classic rain slicker. The bright white might lift your mood on overcast days.

Fit 411: Mr. Childs dubbed this "the short jacket," and he isn't kidding. It hits right at your belt. "It's not overly cropped but a bit shorter than you'd normally find."

Distinguishing details: A hood, which can be folded and zipped into the collar. The scooped pockets (and their distinctive oversize flaps) are prominent, but practical.

Spring shower ready?: Though the jacket doesn't offer so much coverage, the material is waterproof. Said Mr. Childs, "If you wear it in the rain it will do its job."

Wear it with: Pants that aren't too low-rise given the jacket's cropped waistline. You want the jacket to cover up the lower part of your shirt.



PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, STYLING BY GABRIEL RIVERA

THE GOOD SPORT

Aimé Leon Dore

\$400, aimeleondore.com

Brought to you by: Queens native Teddy Santis, who founded the label in 2014 with just 13 pieces. It has since grown into a robust direct-to-consumer business offering trousers, sneakers and sweatshirts.

For fans of: The sporty splash of Nautica in the '90s, minus the Biz Markie bagginess.

Material matters: Mr. Santis was inspired by retro windbreakers, but he wanted to avoid their dated sheen. He finally found his holy-grail fabric in Japan: a matte “oxford” nylon with a texture similar to that of a button-down shirt.

Fit 411: Its at-the-hip length is pretty standard, but raglan sleeves and higher armholes ensure a taut, tailored fit through the chest.

Distinguishing details: A soft-mesh lining that gives the jacket “a great feel on the skin if you’re wearing it with a T-shirt,” said Mr. Santis.

Spring shower ready?: It’s not technically waterproof, but the tight weave of the nylon will protect in a drizzle.

Wear it with: Dark denim and a solid shirt. Keep it simple. The vivid color-blocking transmits a sufficiently strong style signal.



PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, STYLING BY GABRIEL RIVERA

THE STEALTH STYLER

Adsum

\$308, adsumnyc.com

Brought to you by: Brooklyn designer Pete Macnee, who went solo three-and-a-half years ago, after working for neo-prep godfather Mark McNairy at Woolrich Woolen Mills.

For fans of: Woolrich's weather-ready functionality (but not the frumpy fits) and the slim cuts (but not the preppy pastels) of Mr. McNairy's own label.

Material matters: The inky shell is a Japanese canvas that's hand-dyed so the fabric breaks in as you wear it. "The jackets are crispy when you get them, but they soften nicely," said Mr. Macnee.

Fit 411: Though it has a workwear look, the jacket is actually so slim you might want to size up.

Distinguishing details: Tucked underneath the pocket flaps are "hidden" button snaps to discreetly secure a phone charger.

Spring shower ready?: While not waterproof, the sturdy canvas will shield you in a shower after one very important step: Give it an initial soak in the tub to get rid of the excess dye.

Wear it with: A hoodie layered underneath, à la Mr. Macnee. The jacket's lack of a lining and open cuffs make it an easy layering piece.