

# **Clothes make the gentleman**

Personal style has no dress code

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I am not a beautiful woman. ... the only thing I can do is dress better  
than anyone else.

Wallis Simpson, Duchess of Windsor

## Thanks

My wife Brigitta has a natural interest in FASHION and creates attractive ensembles chosen from wide-ranging international designs. On our travels to large and small cities throughout Europe, I have accompanied her to all kinds of fashion retailers, thus gaining an insight into the broad range of fashion items for women. During that time, it struck me that the ladies' garments on offer might sometimes just as well be worn by me, a man. With her sharp and unfailing eye for style, Brigitta encouraged me to try on these garments, and lo and behold, quite a few fitted. Over the years, visiting fashion houses has become a shared experience, which resulted in my independent commitment towards a new kind of men's apparel. For all the support, the beautiful and interesting moments en route, as well as during the photoshoots, I am truly thankful to her.

When I am en route with my partner in my *New Look*, many people's attention is drawn to me first, rather than to her, which would be more natural. Not all women would be happy with that. For this, I am especially obliged to Brigitta. Kiss.

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## Avant propos

My intuition tells me that this book is more likely to be noticed by women, and then perhaps passed on to men or their partner. Women have an entirely different approach to FASHION than men. The creations, colours, and embellishments, that fashion designers have been creating for a long time now, can be so beautiful and fascinating that women cannot help but rummage through them all, even if their wardrobes are long overflowing.

For men, for the last 150 years or so, FASHION has been represented in endless homogeneous designs, lacking imagination and adornments. And if occasionally they were different, these creations would be so extravagant that they would hardly be popular off the catwalk. There are other reasons why men are not particularly interested in fashion trends : society, and, in particular, the business world, have created dress codes which - in the instilled general opinion - are to be observed in any possible situation. Moreover, because the men who create FASHION are also dressed conventionally, there are no examples for men to follow. In contrast, dress codes for women leave much room for imagination and personal styling. And so men often feel bewildered and helpless in deciding how to dress. Very often, it is the partner who then decides and tells him what he should wear for which occasion.

This book offers today's man an entirely different point of view in this matter : *your style does not know & need any dress codes*. To make this possible, men should not be told by their partner what to wear, but rather accompany their partner on their journey through the world of FASHION, and this until they feel the desire to choose autonomously what suits them & what they truly like.

During endless journeys through fashion houses all over the world, they will experience that among the offer of ladies' wear, there are treasures to be found for us men, which we look for in vain in the men's departments. This process may take as long as it takes for you to shop with your newly acquired stylistic confidence and to begin dressing entirely differently than before.

He who succeeds in developing a personal dress style will always appear appropriately dressed at any event, regardless of any dress codes. Following Christian Dior's entry into the world of fashion, we intend to plead for a *New Look* for men.

## Introduction

„Style – all who have it share one thing : originality“<sup>2</sup>

Diana Vreeland, former Editor-in-Chief of Vogue USA

FASHION is the ability to create in the most glamorous way. Celebrations create an opportunity for men and women to don formal attire. For many men, their wedding day is typically the only time in their life to dress up and even go a little over the top.

For women, fashion houses create something new every season, which inevitably leads to the daily question : “What am I going to wear today ?” Something suitable for today’s weather, the planned activity, and the environment. Men do not approach this question in the same way : they tend to go for what is practical & quickly achievable, and at the same time, what fits into their business & social environment. No room for adventure here. The basic principle is : do not stand out and wear something that is considered suitable for all occasions.

In contrast, the need to present oneself in a completely different way is reserved for carnival, historical societies (guilds), and, in particular, for the Street Parade. This type of extravagance might have become acceptable because many people step out of the norm on those days. And so the individual feels less exposed.

Has the development of men’s fashion always come second behind ladies’ fashion ? A look at the court of the Sun King in Versailles reveals an entirely different picture : both ladies & gentlemen appeared in colourful and lavishly made garments, which were in fact only distinguishable in the body shape, rather than in the basic design of the gowns or the embellishments. Louis XIV was an absolute fashion fetishist & a trendsetter, who, through his extravagant behaviour, incited men all over Europe to dress most lavishly, gaily coloured, and with much pomp and circumstance.

After 1945, leading fashion houses in Paris and their designers, such as Christian Dior, Yves Saint-Laurent, Karl Lagerfeld, and others, allowed themselves to be inspired by the magic of both the fashion and festive spirit of Versailles.<sup>3</sup> The FASHION they created tries to maintain the glamorous touch of Versailles : “Versailles est le plus grand salon d’essayage du monde, c’est une vitrine, un repère mouvant, fixant les usages et les caprices”<sup>3</sup>. And what is most striking in all of this ? The development of fashion has only been extended to ladies’ wear. From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4,5</sup> onwards, men were dressed in inconspicuous, plain, often black, grey, or dark blue, and barely attractive standard outfits, which are even today worn on festive occasions by those who design the most fascinating creations for women. Indeed, even important visual artists remain conventional and unimaginative in comparison with their own outfits. Picasso considered a striped T-Shirt something of an exception.

One may wonder why the most important fashion designers do not display any interest in developing this earlier tradition to menswear too. Admittedly, out of the ordinary things for men can be found among the latest creations for men on the catwalk and the respective fashion shops. However, even there, the salesmen themselves are dressed in a *business attire look* ! The fact that the creations for men which are clearly over the top, do not lead to a fashion reality which is actually worn by men, is illustrated at a glance in the photoshoots of events like “The Golden Globes”<sup>6</sup> : the ladies are dressed in ravishing gowns – the men, on the contrary, persist in wearing the eternal more of the same, without showing any signs of flair & courage. The review of the *international best-dressed list* (men) from *Vanity Fair* leads to the same conclusion : it consists mostly of men dressed in conventional black suits with tie or bow tie ! What men lack is a wearable and available FASHION, which is creatively distinguishable from the ordinary, without exaggeration.

In this context it is important to note what Gabrielle Chanel<sup>7</sup> said about the clothes of the Duke of Westminster, who was one of her lovers : she particularly appreciated the fact that he was always dressed the same way in simple tweeds. In the context of change, this is not good news. Do women want inconspicuous, formally dressed partners ? Yes, maybe because then all of the attention and admiration is focused exclusively on them.

When I am out and about with my partner, who is a very beautiful and well-dressed woman, most people will indeed look at me first. Most likely, only because I am not wearing what they expect a man to wear. Lucky for me, my wife has no problem with that – but other women might. On the other hand, similar attire for ladies and gentlemen was not such a problem in earlier days.

There is another obstacle why men will avoid wearing certain garments that seemingly resemble feminine designs & embellishments : it is the generally accepted idea that fashion designers, dancers, and other distinctly creative people are bound to be homosexual. And although this is socially accepted, men still do not want to appear to diverge from the established norms, which they feel they should represent.

In order to be able to step out of the omnipresence of dress codes and the pervasive seasonal fashion offerings, men need a clear Yes to creating their own outfits. They need, as Diana Vreeland said, personal *style*.

*Vogue America* once wrote : “Style is not dependent on fashion. People with style can either accept or ignore fashion. For them, fashion is not something you have to conform to, but rather something you can develop or willingly choose ...”<sup>8</sup> In other words : international FASHION incessantly produces a wide variety of clothing out of which it is up to us to develop our own style, regardless of the prevailing trends. It is interesting to note that most people who became style icons have never conformed to fashion trends. On the contrary : due to their originality they did not wear FASHION, they created FASHION !

My own experience in this respect is surprisingly positive : in public, I am not only approached by women, who consider my clothes special, but also by men, who admit that they would like to walk around like this but do not have the heart to do so. One day, in a grand hotel on my way to the ground floor, I was greeted by a famous English conductor who said : “Oh, isn’t that wonderful ! Where may I get such a jacket ?” So there are also exceptions to the rule.

If this book serves one purpose, it is this : I want to give men the courage and pave the way for them, so that where design, embellishment & effect are concerned, they can dress like once before, when ladies’ & men’s fashion were artistically and aesthetically in perfect harmony.

And if one of my readers wants to get going, where then can he find the garments, which he has perhaps liked for so long ? Menswear departments and businesses selling the big brands are hardly ever a treasure trove to find them, because this kind of wear, particularly in a vast range, is not produced these days<sup>9</sup>. Is that enough to curb your enthusiasm ? Not at all! Just leave the men’s department and go in search of the ladies’ department. And hey presto : depending on the trend, you are very likely to strike gold here. Throughout this book, I will present many examples that were created with garments found on the racks of the ladies’ wear.

So, is it immediately obvious that these clothes were not tailored for men ? Don’t worry; modifications can always be made to a cut that is too feminine. The fact that ladies’ coats etc. are usually buttoned up from left to right (from the perspective of the observer), has hardly been noticed by anyone over the last 20 years that I have been wearing them. My experience has proven that even people in the fashion industry don’t notice it, or too late after they had already expressed their enthusiasm.

**Christian Dior, „le Maître enchanteur“<sup>10</sup>** : The son of an industrialist, his parents worried that this artistically gifted boy would come to nothing. Dior had a talent for drawing and his friends included artists like Christian Bérard and Jean Cocteau. In order to sustain his artistic needs, he studied political science and then underwent diplomatic training.

In 1928 he opened a small art gallery and promoted painters such as Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali. After both his father and his gallery went bankrupt, Dior was left destitute and from 1931 he switched to fashion design, which led to preliminary success in hat designing. In 1942 he joined the team of the Lelong fashion house. He increasingly longed to found his own fashion house. In 1945 he courageously sought out Marcel Boussac, the king of textile and richest man in France. He was able to persuade the tycoon to give him *carte blanche* to become the creative director of a new fashion house. Boussac actually allowed him all necessary freedom and judged him based solely upon his success. This was exactly the environment that Dior wanted. Success was not long in coming : in 1947 he presented his first collection “Ligne Corolle” (Flower petal line) in his residence on 30, avenue Montaigne. The American press took it up immediately and called it a *New Look*. What did Dior want ? Which heritage was he pursuing ? „... on y travaillerait selon les traditions de la meilleure couture à l’intention d’une clientèle de femmes vraiment élégantes. Je n’y ferais que des modèles apparemment assez simples, mais d’une confection très élaborée. » « Je disais que, pour les contenter et leur fournir ce qui leur manquait, il fallait revenir à la tradition de grand luxe de la couture française.”<sup>10</sup> With his fashion house, Dior created « le château de la féerie retrouvée ». He presented his models on photographs taken in the ambiance of the Trianon, an interpretation of the Louis XVI style as it was seen around 1910. A boutique was created in the hôtel at the Avenue Montaigne by Victoire Grandpierre in line with « la tradition des magasins de frivolités du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle ». Inspired by the spirits of the great traditions, he wanted an « atmosphère *decorée*, mais non *décorative*.” Over a short period of barely ten years, Christian Dior deemed himself a “marchand de bonheur”, thereby harvesting worldwide success<sup>11</sup>.

Worth mentioning for us : Dior himself was dressed the way it was customary in those days. He did not create anything new for us, men. The “Christian Dior Monsieur” clothing label was only founded in 1970.



## Mix-and-Match clothing: hard – but a no go

„Fashion in our century would be insignificant without jeans.“ <sup>12</sup>

Franco Moschino

Whether in Paris, Milan, or Sidney, three things mainly dominate today's public image of clothing : blue jeans, snipes & sneakers, and baseball caps. Because this combination is so widespread, the public scene on the street has completely transformed, whether for going out or even for attending a party or a cultural event. Wherever you are and whatever you do (privately), with this outfit, you will always be part of the crowd, and you will predominantly bump into similarly dressed people. Where clothing is concerned, nowadays monotony prevails, even though shops offer a wide variety of clothes, which are also bought.

Because of the variety of jeans, snipes & sneakers, baseball caps, and their related products (T-shirts, puffer jackets, rucksacks, ...) and their rapidly growing distribution, an entire personalised world of fashion, created with just a few objects, unites people from all ethnic and social backgrounds in one collective appearance. Very few people are aware that this offer of the lowest creative level gets in the way of any personal aesthetical perception of clothing. It does not help that renowned fashion houses join in with this trend and try to upgrade the *combination wear* and, yes, even to refine it : all it does is create price categories for clothes.

In the matter of *blue jeans*, I wonder if most people actually like these objects, or whether the reason they are worn every day is, on the contrary, the result of the effect of examples, of incessant advertising & availability, and ultimately an increased, even implicit social compulsion to belong.

It is a pity we cannot carry out the following experiment :

In an ordinary clothes shop, hang a pair of blue jeans among an assortment of other clothes : noticeably blue, washed blue-grey, and even ripped jeans. The female clientele would not be familiar with this kind of jeans, either through everyday life or through advertising : “I think a worker accidentally left his working clothes behind”, could be the comment of a rummaging client. This model would almost certainly not become a big seller overnight. To begin with, who needs 5 pockets, who wants these thick seams, not to mention all the rivets ! Typically, hardly any fashion-conscious lady would ever want to be associated with such an outfit and its association with the working world. Even the workman's world has long since developed more practical clothing for manoeuvrability and carrying tools. “Where am I supposed to put my smartphone ?”, people would ask. Moreover, they would hardly want to wear it if they knew that the blue dye on fabrics such as cotton quickly rubs off and that it is not wash-proof. So far, clients can count themselves lucky that the indigo dye is neither water- nor fat-soluble, or else people suffering from allergies would be in trouble. On top of that, environmentally conscious clients should know that each year great loads of indigo dye and other chemicals (reduction agents) end up in our bodies of water

because of the washing and dyeing processes. Moreover, from an aesthetic point of view, indigo blue is hardly an attractive fashionable dye, since it quickly turns to blue-grey when applied to cotton. The dye is not used in traditional painting either, contrary to the colour purple, once a leading colour in fashion, or even Tiffany blue.

The fact that jeans are the most commonly worn trousers today is hardly due to the object itself. It is the result of decades of efficient advertising, also focused on stars and their films. The piece of fabric, which originally started in the USA as worker's trousers, grew into a cult object for teenagers and others, who at least in those days used it to express their freedom & social criticism. It becomes cynical when particularly young people today walk around in artificially ripped and distressed trousers, turning shabbiness into a fashion statement and feeling cool about that. Today's dandy Zack MacLeod Pinset (Brighton), on the other hand, symbolically burnt his last pair of jeans at the age of 14.

The variety of everyday fashion has lapsed into monotony because of the dominance of jeans fashion – so quite the contrary to what Franco Moschino claims.

The decision to reject this dominant set of clothes shall be the first step on the road to determining your own *style*.

**Jeans : From canvas to cult object** <sup>13</sup>. Coming from Bavaria (Germany), the immigrant Löb Strauss (soon to be called Levi) came to San Francisco in 1847 carrying several bundles of canvas. First, he had them turned into tents and canvasses and then started producing overalls with double seams and sewn-on pockets for gold-diggers. Just before 1870, he founded a factory for the production of trousers, together with a tailor. To produce them, Strauss imported an even more robust cotton fabric (called serge), which had already been produced in the cotton mills in Nîmes (France) in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Referring to its origin, this fabric was later called *Denim*. One of the two threads used for weaving was dyed indigo-blue. Copper rivets reinforced areas prone to tearing. The basic pattern for the “Levi’s” with the number 501 has been produced from 1890. The 5 stands for the number of pockets, and the 1 for the first series. The small front pocket was originally intended for a pocket watch.

Europe became familiar with the new trousers in 1917 and then again in 1945 through the American troops. The first jeans were produced in Europe in 1949 and in the 1950’s they began to take their place among leisurewear. Initially, it was forbidden for children to wear jeans to school. When, however, the film industry (a young Marlon Brando in “The Wild One” in the leading role as the leader of a motorcycle gang, 1953) and artists like Andy Warhol broached the new look, the 501 became the symbol for youngsters who wanted to escape social conventions through rebellion, an idea that has long since been recaptured, since jeans have become a new convention.

Today, variations of the 501 constitute the most widely worn trousers. Each year more than 300 million pieces are produced in a variety of styles. According to a survey from the British *Daily Mail* newspaper from 2007, jeans are second on the list of “most important” garments. On one is “that little black dress” from Gabrielle Chanel <sup>8</sup>. If there were another survey today, it is fair to assume that the jeans concept would end up first.

## FASHION – what does it mean ?

Jean Cocteau, a man of many talents, pointed out an essential feature : “La mode meurt jeune ...”<sup>10</sup>. It blossoms, inspires, and, before long, is replaced by a new blossom. FASHION provides us with moments where we too blossom, where we move around in order to be liked and seen. The exchangeable shell allows us to slip into the most various roles and to escape the monotony of our biological condition. And the danger to lose oneself in appearances is right here. Who, after all, are we ?

A poet once wrote, “Clothes make the man”. In the days where rank, status, and clothing constituted a unity, when rigorous rules applied on who could or would wear what, when, and where, you knew exactly whom you were dealing with. This is completely different today : rich people are often dressed very soberly so as not to attract attention, and business people, on the other hand, try to impress each other in their business dress to appear more serious. These days, FASHION is no longer a guarantee for status or quality.

Haute Couture, principally something for ladies, is losing its customers. The only people left are the nobility featured in the media<sup>1</sup>, actresses, and other affluent people from all over the world, which means that most collections will disappear to the well-guarded shelves of the big fashion houses after they have been displayed on the catwalk at the fashion show. However, this is not the original idea behind collections. The products would first be displayed and subsequently be passed on to customers and retailers. Today, a fashion show displays the pinnacle of creativity or extravagance of the fashion designers, whereas what will subsequently be produced and inspired by it, will be manufactured at a much lower cost. In Parisian Haute Couture, one of the last major industries working entirely with handcraft, it is no exception to spend several hundred and up to one thousand working hours on one dress alone<sup>14</sup>.

The products – expensive or cheap – we find on offer in the shops today, and which are renewed four times a year, are the result of planning. The aim is to incite the female customers, generally already provided with everything they need, again and again to buy something new. And so they rummage through the shops with a last bit of curiosity. However, much of what is bought first of all disappears into their wardrobe. There are two reasons for this : buying has become more important than wearing, and wearing needs a stage, which is increasingly absent. If at one time it used to be the most natural thing in the world to show off the newly purchased creation when going to a posh restaurant or the opera, today's motto is reticence.

Men, who are usually not driven by an urge to buy clothes, do not have such worries. Their standard look, presented each time as a “new” creation but differing only slightly from the previous version, does not fall out of FASHION so quickly and does not require endless pondering before going out.

This relationship with FASHION, which is based on *creating & longing for new things*, FASHION, which does not have a long life, is not what I want to achieve

and recommend here : artistically creative minds make special clothes that we like and would very much like to wear – possibly for a lifetime. These creations should have a long life because if something is good and of high quality, it does not have to disappear simply because of an urge for new things. If we have not worn an outfit for 3 years, it is as good as new, because hardly anyone will remember it.

My clothes rack is about 5 metres long, which is enough to allow me to put on something new every day, and even several times a day, should I wish to do so. It's possible, of course, that a certain garment may disappear over the years and that now and then something else is added. There are so many fascinating clothes that I sometimes cannot resist – but that has nothing whatsoever to do with FASHION as it is conceived today.

**Menswear all in black** : From the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the Baroque and Rococo periods, right up to the Biedermeier era, menswear was varied and colourful. As far as clothing was concerned, couples were harmoniously dressed. This changed fundamentally from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century <sup>5</sup> : the busy middle-class has long since taken the lead in society for quite some time and is now setting the standards. Aesthetics are still important, but they can only be legitimised by a corresponding working attitude. Accordingly, men should first and foremost appear respectable, i.e. not artful, but rather as uniform as possible, without expressing their personality through their clothes. This has gradually led to the different levels of dress code, which still persist today. In such a business world, black constitutes a neutral basis that anticipates nothing other than what everyone wants it to express : righteousness and solvency. No room here for colour & originality. This freedom is given to the ladies when for them fashion really takes off during the era of entrepreneurship and the Belle Epoque. That period also coined the concept of “fashion designer”, prominently represented by Charles Frederick Worth and illustrated by the empress Eugenie.

Monochrome black (also grey and dark blue) as a guarantor of correctness has been with us for about 150 years. It was, however, Philippe the Good of Burgundy (15<sup>th</sup> century) who introduced the colour black, to distance himself from the colourful clothes of his courtiers. After that, the Spanish court, with its strict etiquette continued this trend to use black as the symbol of authority. Under the influence of Louis XIV, courts became more colourful again, until the non-colour dominates once more from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Of course, there were exceptions, from the futuristic Fashion Manifesto in 1914 <sup>15</sup> to the fashion trade fairs of today (Florence, Milan, London, ...). But the persistence to keep coming back to black (especially for official events and celebrations), proves to be much stronger than any touch of fantasy, or the urge for something different : “And so man will stick to the trodden paths and reach for the “classic” black, without the slightest attempt to reflect upon himself and to find his own style” (Andreas Ley, former Director of the Fashion Museum of Munich). <sup>15</sup>

*What is therefore missing, is menswear which is not carried away by eccentricity, but which is unpretentious, aesthetic & elegant, and presents an individual style that provides an outfit for every situation, thereby uniting the person, the place, the occasion, and the social environment.*

## The Gentleman – truly British

Gentlemen's fashion stands for a dress code. A consistent protocol stating who has to wear what and when could only have developed in and around courts. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the English middle-class gentleman adopted the rules of the aristocratic upper class, which prescribes a special outfit for every occasion, including the hour of the day. The understatement requires that the clothes should not emphasise the person's individuality, but instead conform to time-honoured rules. As a result of the above, a highly sophisticated fashion culture developed and has been maintained to this day, which guarantees the real gentleman to be "appropriately" dressed at any given time. And what is considered "appropriate" is never questioned and only changes very slowly over the years. Styled from tie to socks & shoes, the attire becomes a person's calling card.

The core piece, which bears a different name depending on its use, is the *suit* : "The suit is still the most elegant garment a man can wear, provided the cut, colour, and fabric are right, i.e. carefully chosen for the occasion, the time of day, the time of year, and the climate zone." <sup>16</sup> The colour palette for formal occasions is limited to dark blue or light grey. On the other hand, the jacket should be red for fox hunting on horseback. The approved fabrics are indeed quite expensive, but they cannot compete with any of the great textile creations used for ladies' fashion. If a gentleman steps out of his regulation filled zone, i.e. when he gets home, he is allowed to wrap himself in a colourful dressing gown <sup>5,16</sup> ...

England is known as the motherland of modern men's fashion, from where the entire range spread all over the world and today dominates the business environment as well as the representative areas of society.

The fatal flaw in the entire concept is that the man does not need to think. No imagination is required. All he has to do is know the rules and follow them strictly. This does not lead to individual fashion consciousness, and, in tandem with the above-mentioned combination wear, it turns public places into unattractive areas, only brought to life artistically by the presence of ladies' fashion.

These "instructions to follow", which are also the norm in the USA, have serious consequences for the further development of men's fashion : when even artists, who create new worlds and turn everything old upside down, dress in a gentleman's or a business look, how can the vast majority of men adopt the idea of casting off these looks and going their own way ?

In contrast to this phenomenon of sticking to the rules, practically anything is permitted in today's world. Permitted means that there are no consequences if

you violate one of these propagated or even dusty rules. There is no rule against having red wine with fish, just as there is no rule against wearing an expensive Oxford Street coat in combination with blue jeans and sneakers from a cheap shop. Unfortunately, only a few people have the knack to use this freedom to express their creativity.

I remember visiting Cambridge and being invited to an end of term dinner, a formal dinner in honour of professors and other people teaching at the university. On this sort of occasion, men, as well as women, must wear the black gown. I had already given my speech dressed in a red jacket from El Tumi and wore this at dinner as well. This triggered some discussion, but in the end, I was not obliged to wrap myself in a black bag. Somewhere during the evening, one of the lady professors whispered in my ear, that what I had done was great, at last something with a bit of flair.

**The tie** <sup>13</sup> : Since antiquity, people have wrapped cloths of different shapes and colours around their necks, whether for protection or decoration. In Roman culture, women used to wear a focale (something warming), although the neck usually remained uncovered in social life. An exception was made for the orators, who used it to protect their throats. In the Baroque era, a scarf was introduced, a piece of clothing that was probably taken over from Croatian mercenaries, and was therefore called a Croatta, which later became “Krawatte” in German. In those days, the new fashion to cover your neck spread throughout Europe. There was a true necktie-cult at the court of the Sun King : when the king got up in the morning, the courtiers had to present him with a selection of ties, of which he would choose one and put it around his neck. Signor di Miramond, His Majesty’s Cravatier, would then pleat the tie into the required folds <sup>17</sup>. During the days of the Revolution, the tie became a symbol of allegiance and the expression of a political conviction. Nothing was more suited to personify art or a form of expression than a cloth wrapped around the neck. Oscar Wilde considered a well-tied cravatte the first step in life : “... the fundamental symbol of taste and culture .“ <sup>15</sup> The arrival of the industrial revolution considerably reduced the effort spent on ties, which had by now developed into a so-called long tie. Around the same time, most businesses obliged their employees to wear a tie. In the sixties of the last century, the tie experienced a crisis, as it became a synonym to bureaucracy & middle-class bourgeoisie. Today a man can / may use the tie to create an individual statement, all according to the dress code. In fact, the tie is the only fashion item (apart from shoes) that may be of certain interest to a number of men because it has become disassociated from its practical use. According to Umberto Eco, the tie even reveals a person’s personality <sup>15</sup> : it is a messenger that can transmit individual mood connotations.

## Clothes make the gentlemen

A short film report from the sixties <sup>18</sup> of the last century shows some young men with fashion fever. In keeping with the time of radical social upheaval, their hair is long, and their demeanour is extravagantly pop.

“The traditional fashion show [for women as well as for men] has long since become a show of young fashion, because they no longer show what the clothes look like, but rather how crazy the fashion designers are.” <sup>18</sup>

“The handsome young men have long since forgotten what a classic suit is. Fashion boutiques offer today’s [then !] generation of people in their 20’s and 30’s body wraps, in which two years ago, a young man would at best have gone to a fancy-dress party. Fluttering tissues, no shirt, trousers as skinny as can be, eye-catching boots, vibrant colours, and if the belt buckle does not fit 100 per cent, that is a cause for concern. They spend a good part of their time in front of the mirror, these young men, and when they like what they see, all is well. Their hair teased high and waist tightly belted, that is how they have the upper hand over women. For these youths, vanity is a virtue no longer restricted to women alone. What so-called grown-ups express with their daily changing ties, drives young men through the changing rooms of the fashionable boutiques and Topshops. They are dandies and not afraid to admit that they like to look good, like to groom their curls, and are absolutely convinced they are in no way effeminate. The striking self-confidence with which they admire their Adonis-like figure in the mirror is the ultimate expression of fashion emancipation with which men have freed themselves from the drab grey-on-grey of the business environment.” <sup>18</sup> On top of that, they wore lots of jewellery and were not afraid to use hairspray.

Today, little is left of this awakening to a trend of autonomy in the choice of outfit. What we need now is a FASHION for men, which forgets about the blind following of rules (dress codes) and extravagance (dandy), but which, on the contrary, embraces diverse aesthetic & elegance. For a movement of this scope to happen, the big shots in FASHION must take up the idea and develop it.

I wrote to Karl Lagerfeld once : “Come on, you fashion designers, imagine : after more than 150 years of monotony : men with fashion fever – the need to catch up is huge. All you need to do is get a few alpha stars to consider it cool to wear this kind of FASHION on any occasion, casually, and as a matter of course. And you will see that after a brief period of reflection, everyone will flock to the boutiques and empty the shelves ... They will change clothes at least 3 or 4 times a day, take a look in every mirror and realise : at last a man can be seen again !”



One is allowed to dream, isn't one ? Walt Disney's key to success was to escape reality and enter into the fantasy of his own imagination ...

**The Dandy** : Contrary to popular belief, a dandy is nothing like a vain peacock, "... but a fashionably elegant, yet inconspicuously dressed gentleman, who is distinguished by his good manners and social etiquette." <sup>13</sup> Dandyism is a state of mind <sup>13</sup>, already represented by the minstrels and knights of the courtly period. As the first dandy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, George Byron Brummell revolutionised English men's fashion <sup>13</sup>. Another novelty was the fact that he washed daily and did not use perfume. Men's fashion, which wanted to dispose of the French influence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, became much simpler under his influence : white linen shirts, tight-fitting waistcoats, as well as double-breasted blue or black jackets with tails. This was worn in combination with long trousers instead of knee pants (culottes) with long socks. White neckties, worn in multiple layers and artfully pleated, were new. Brummell's outfit can be considered as the predecessor of the subsequent suit and tie, which was to become the standard office wear by the end of the 1930s.

Dandies have a tendency to perfection and exaggeration. Brummell, for instance, needed about 6 hours to get ready for the outside world. Friendships with the British high aristocracy meant that he became the advisor at court for fashion and etiquette. As a consequence, London became the centre of men's tailoring. Zack MacLeod Pinsent is a contemporary dandy, a couturier who manufactures his own outfits striving for Historical Accuracy and sells them all over the world. <sup>19</sup>

Typical for dandyism is that they rebel against "... the routine and triviality of bourgeois life ..." <sup>13</sup> From a spiritual point of view, it is "... a rejection of minimalism, the desire for diversity, not to have to be rational in a rational world (Robert Herzog <sup>20</sup>)."

Unconcerned about financial matters, Brummell's mission ended in debt. He spent the last years of his life in an asylum for the mentally ill.

## Reasons for wearing the same things over and over again

„I wear my sort of clothes to save me the trouble of deciding which clothes to wear.“<sup>8</sup>

Katharine Hepburn

Why do famous people often stick to the same look ? For purely practical reasons, argues Mark Zuckerberg, who renounces formal dressing: “I really want to clear my life to make it so that I have to make as few decisions as possible about anything except how to best serve [the Facebook] community.“<sup>21</sup> Barack Obama argues in the same way : “... I wear only grey or blue suits. I am trying to pare down decisions.”<sup>21</sup>

Psychologists like Roy Baumeister have scientific proof that making a lot of small decisions will tire the brain and therefore prevent it from being able to make important decisions. A lot of small dilemmas, like “what shall I wear now,” etc. would cause stress and make it harder to make other decisions. Consequently, sticking to habits or rules would generally make things easier. Men who are preordained by imitation & role models and are, therefore, generally hardly interested in clothes may indeed find it stressful to dress with fantasy day after day.

Indeed, creative people are also hindered when ceaselessly confronted with organisational & administrative worries. Karl Lagerfeld<sup>23</sup> clearly recognised that, and never let it get in the way of work. Christian Dior, on his part, transmitted the administrative tasks and the financial management to others immediately upon founding his fashion house<sup>10</sup>.

All of this can be understood completely. However, the daily question of what to wear can really only then be a problem if a person lacks experience, intuition, or is simply not interested in what they wear. Mark Zuckerberg adds to that, he does not want to spend energy “... on things that are silly or frivolous ...”<sup>21</sup> What is questionable about these two statements about efficiency is the fact that life, in general, is full of such small decisions, like eating, for instance. Would these people want to eat the same things day in day out, just because they do not want to make a choice ? Here, we can fall back on experience gathered since early childhood, which facilitates decision making, but that is not true for dressing. If one really wants to make a change regarding menswear, then boys (and not just girls) must also be allowed to grow up with the notion of FASHION. At the moment, this still poses a practical problem : the offer of clothes for boys, from the point of view of style & originality, is just as reduced and unattractive as it is for men !

Something else is hidden behind the habit of constantly wanting to wear the same clothes : it reveals a feeling of insecurity regarding one's outward appearance : the familiar outfit works as a shield, offering protection against their current state of mind. Originality, on the contrary, could signal something about their current state of mind, which could lead to a disadvantage for individuals who are in authority over others.

There is another very plausible reason to stick to the same kind of clothes : Albert Einstein wore grey suits and no socks for years <sup>21</sup>. In his mind, everything was relative (theory of relativity), but his clothing was a constant. This meant that he was always outwardly perceived in the same way. Karl Lagerfeld, for his part, created a signature brand for himself, and for his creations, with his black coat, high stand-up collar, glasses, gloves, and ponytail.

As such, clearly defined and unvarying clothing ensures that those wearing it are perceived clearly and reliably, which can transform these people into personalities. This is part of a long tradition : status and professional wear, and also the uniform.

Whereas I am not convinced about the arguments of paring down on decision making, I do believe that consistency in clothing is a great advantage in the social sphere. For years, I attended international conferences, wearing the same colourfully striped jacket (El Tumi). And then, one day I decided to wear another, equally special, jacket. I received immediate feedback : "Why are you not wearing your jacket ? Your appearance is not the same without it !" That made me realise something very important : Clothes you wear often have the ability to create normative expectations, and these expectations are difficult to escape.

For those just wearing ordinary clothes, this is not a problem. However, for someone who has invented their own style and aims for consistency, an unintentional side-effect is what others will expect from you from now on. A possible way out of this (and this will be demonstrated in this book) is to keep diversifying while maintaining certain elements at the same time. In that way, people will still develop expectations (that cannot be avoided anyway), but the element of surprise remains : what will he surprise us with today ?

Women are familiar with this sort of problem, albeit from the other side : they are often worried they cannot wear the same thing several times over : "I already wore that dress at the wedding of ...! I urgently need to buy something new for the party of ...!"

The deep-seated attitude is : we expect consistency for men, and we expect something new every time for women.

## Dress codes and well-intended advice

Advice can be found everywhere. Internet sites and printed publications<sup>24</sup> dictate how men should dress for business or festivities. The communication is highly differentiated :

*Casual* : Refers to leisurewear, not to be confused with a baggy look, however. Here, wearing jeans and & sneakers is totally ok. The baseball cap is not.

*Smart Casual* : In between sportiness and easy elegance, informal and associated with the business world.

*Business casual* : Suit and tie, white shirt, appropriate footwear. The look is ideal for the after work theme and for business trips. Do not even consider wearing jeans here.

*Business attire* : The business environment expects a serious appearance. This means a single- or double-breasted (for the front buttons) suit, a plain shirt with tie. The advisors unanimously emphasise that knee socks will prevent parts of the bare skin to become visible between the trousers and the shoes, when sitting down.

*Black tie* : “Formal events always call for dark clothes”<sup>24</sup> In this case a dinner-jacket with waistcoat or cummerbund, a dress shirt and (black) bow tie, so no long tie.

*White Tie* : This attire reaches the highest degree of dressing : tailcoat with white dress shirt and a handmade white, silk bow tie, as well as shining patent-leather shoes. In this outfit, you will fit right in at the Vienna Opera ball.

American and British business society, in particular, is responsible for the creation of the first four codes with the aim to establish firm rules regarding the appearance of the protagonists on both sides, i.e. the salespeople & the customers. The corporate strategy is meant to be copied by the employees, virtually imposing it upon them. Together with “etiquette”, everyday business life is moulded into a protocol, in which the expectations resemble those of a royal court.

It is undeniably true that people rate and value each other on outward appearances, such as origin, integrity, and quality of work. But this is preceded by a fundamental split-second appraisal, which happens subconsciously. If this triggers a perceived discrepancy with what the outfit may have suggested, like “I don’t like that man”, a dress code cannot change this perception. Vice versa, a subconscious appraisal resulting in “likeable” because of personal behavioural characteristics, can lead to depreciation because of unattractive clothing. Hence,

we can conclude that the following is to be observed, irrespective of any form of dress code :

Whatever we are wearing, wherever we are, a man has to feel good in his outfit. His clothes must *represent* the man who is wearing them. The people he meets must automatically “be convinced,” so to speak. An old nobleman once said about Casanova : “He is just a servant in disguise.” Authenticity is particularly important to today’s generation Z <sup>25</sup>. This generation does not accept a superimposed, formal authority. They only accept authenticity when it comes to professional and social skills. And thus, in every social setting, clothes have to be chosen in a way that they plausibly convey to most people who we are and what role we want to play and represent in the system.

The distinctions between the first four codes have other important functions : they are intended to divert attention from *insecurities*, wiping out the individual touch. In business life, there are often tense situations that require, for instance, that things are hidden, remain unsaid. In this situation, a uniform is useful to some extent, but psychological mechanisms still remain decisive factors.

Many people will use *prestige* as a label, with which they attribute value to themselves in a social environment, without having to add anything personally. Others of a similar disposition will reward this value. If one has what it takes at a certain level, one really becomes part of the crowd and will possibly also be allowed in.

*Hierarchy* is present in all levels of society, even if the nuances seem to be rather insignificant these days. Clothes, and more specifically, where they come from, their level of embellishment and their material value, create the possibility to determine status. Anyone who appears overdressed in the eyes of his superiors can unintentionally trigger a conflict. A person who is underdressed conveys their readiness to subordinate. In such an environment, *the right* clothes are those that unequivocally express one’s own place in the system and one’s personal strength.

Even though fashion guidebooks give the impression that our counterparts always know exactly whether we are wearing the “right” outfit or not, one may assume that those who should judge, in most cases, have no more than an inkling of knowledge and only cling to certain clichés of etiquette. Consequently, the other party is often intimidated whereas everyone would be much happier if they could just discard the clothes that make them feel uncomfortable.

The two last codes, *Black Tie* and *White Tie*, are restricted to occasions that are the exception to the average citizen. Here too, society tries to create a dress

code. The credo is : “... the more sophisticated the event, the darker the clothes.” <sup>24</sup> As far as we know, this motto is only about 150 years old. The times before that were much more colourful and varied. The idea that everything should be black (or grey or dark blue), is a typically middle-class attitude, dating

from the times when towns were blackened by soot, days of disillusionment and disenchantment with the world at large. There is absolutely no reason to stick to it.

Reality is quite different anyway. I remember a visit to the Wiener Staatsoper : we arrived festively dressed (neither *black* nor *white* tie !) and noticed to our regret that more than two-thirds of the people, regardless of seat category, had come in their everyday clothes. Just a very few people were wearing festive clothes or traditional black.

In today's business world, companies resembling Mark Zuckerberg's, have already abandoned dress codes, others are following, and surprisingly, fashion houses too. Even the financial world is becoming more relaxed. Today, if you go to the bank to ask for a loan, you have to provide so many hard facts about your situation that the outfit you're wearing during this conversation is of no importance at all. So we now have the opportunity to put aside these covers, which no longer represent certain values, and only stand for a business-social cabaret.

If those, who set or have to set the tone anyway, also adopt a different attitude towards FASHION than that prescribed by dress codes, this can spread throughout all levels of society and hierarchies. So, the more influential a person is (manager, chairman, artist, etc.), the more important their fashion-conscious appearance becomes.

**Justaucorps** : Today's ever-same coat, which is perpetually praised as "new," has a magnificent precursor – the justaucorps<sup>26</sup>. As of 1661, a chosen few in Versailles were allowed to wear a special long coat by royal decree. It was called the justaucorps. This coat, which had a very narrow upper part and hung to the knee, developed from the cassock and the soldier's tunic, which came after that. Typical for the early shape and the later models were the downward fanning out of the garment, the long row of buttons along the lapels, as well as the cuffs on the sleeves. A stand-up collar was optional. This garment is usually worn open, sometimes closed with a few buttons on the upper part. The size and shape of the lapels, cuffs and stand-up collar have changed over time until they disappeared altogether in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 18<sup>th</sup> century justaucorps used to be richly decorated (flower, gold, or silver embroidery as well as diamond buttons). It was combined with a matching vest, a frilled shirt and knee-length trousers (culottes) with knee socks. The justaucorps from the golden times of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is the most elegant and noble garment made for men in Europe. Today's tailcoat is nothing but a distant echo of this former model ! The long jackets that you will find under GALLERY and MORE are modern versions of the justaucorps.

## Jewellery and accessories

To adorn oneself in one way or another with regard to clothing is still reserved for women today. On the other hand, it was not customary in bygone times for men to appear unadorned : around the 17<sup>th</sup> century, lords and kings were covered with diamonds and sparkled like Christmas trees <sup>1</sup> and were clearly more adorned than their ladies.

Today, the only striking “item of ornament” allowed by dress codes, is the tie, which can be colourful and patterned. It may be completed with a breast pocket handkerchief in the same colour (shirt pocket, whereby only 1 cm of the handkerchief may be visible <sup>24</sup> ), a tie pin or a lapel pin, cufflinks and possibly a signet ring, or a ring with a link to a preferably renowned university. At the *Black Tie* level, a silk cummerbund (sash) and sometimes a scarf is advised. But in the business world, even the tie has discretely disappeared and showy cufflinks, rings, etc. are not appreciated.

As mentioned before, the young men of the 1960s <sup>15</sup> experienced FASHION in a different way, including even jewellery chains, etc. Mediterranean men today often wear golden chains or bracelets. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, noble gentlemen wore diamond buttons on their justaucorps (elegant, elongated jackets) in those days a typical way to embellish a men’s garment.

Wristwatches play an important role in both men’s fashion and their appearance today. These are technically and creatively so well equipped that one might think (or possibly should think), that all those men wearing them visibly are ship’s captains or aircraft commanders. Advertising that targets men will, amongst others, pay special attention to wristwatches. 18<sup>th</sup> century noble gentleman would wear as many as two pocket watches although they were not visible.

Within the concept of *personal style instead of dress codes*, all these additional items (apart from the sash) may be omitted. If a person wants to wear jewellery, whether it is a ring with a special stone, an heirloom perhaps, or a necklace with a strong emblem, it depends entirely on what he is wearing and to which event. Just like for ladies, it is important to carefully combine the amount and kind of accessories to go with the outfit. Dolling up must be avoided at all costs.

Apart from being decorative, accessories have practical functions as well : women are always wearing bags, small or large. They contain everything a woman thinks she must have with her at all times. If she asks her partner : “Darling, can you hold my bag for a second ?”, he is frequently astonished by the sheer weight she is carrying ! Small bags would also be very useful to us, men. You sometimes need a small tool, or a bit of duct tape, or whatever. Other than briefcases, sports bags, etc., bags like these are not on offer. What I mean are bags that resemble those for women regarding their function, but which



could look a little more “masculine” for us. Men from the former Eastern Bloc typically carried small shoulder bags.

**Sashes and ribbons**<sup>13</sup> : A sash is a broad piece of cloth that is tied around the waist or draped over the shoulder to the upper body, from the top right to the bottom left. The latter is known as the “cordon bleu” (blue ribbon), a decoration that represents the allegiance to a knightly order. What is known as a cummerbund today, has nothing to do with “cumber” : the word comes from the Hindi (kamar) and means a broadened band of cloth, tied around the waist in India, the Orient and the Balkans. It contained small sewn-in pockets. In 1893, the English started to wear a similar band with several horizontal pleats under their summer dinner jacket, instead of a waistcoat (gilet). The waistcoat, which is much less popular these days, was replaced by the cummerbund in the 1960s.

When we use the word sash, we mean a band of cloth, which hides the transition from the trousers to the shirt in suitable colouring. You will find numerous examples in the photo section (see GALLERY, MORE). A colourful sash can add a special touch to a monochrome outfit.

From a practical point of view, the sash holds the trousers and prevents the shirt from becoming untucked. When there are no pockets in the trousers, which undoubtedly adds a positive note to their design, you can hide a handkerchief in the sash. You can also replace a sash with a broad belt and a decorative buckle.

*Ribbons*, which hold together a shock of hair at the nape of the neck, date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century French tradition of the bag-wigs<sup>13</sup>. A person’s long hair, which was visible from under the mostly white wig, was stuffed in a bag and fastened together with a ribbon so that only the decorative ribbon was visible. Within the concept of the *New Look*, several different ribbons were used to embellish the ponytail.

## **The trouble with shoes**

Besides bags, shoes are the most frequently bought items of clothing by women.

If you enter a shoe shop, you will find row upon row of all kinds of models, beautifully arranged, and many of these creations are a contribution to elegance and festiveness.

For men, on the contrary, the search for shoes very often involves a visit to the basement level. There you will also find a neat display, only this time of about a mere three types of shoes: the Gentleman Look, shoes for normal use and a growing variety of “hermaphrodite” shoes, i.e. a mixture of the traditional shoe and sports shoes (Snipes & Sneakers), with bright colours and fearsome soles. There is apparently no market for light-footedness & elegance combined with a high aesthetic value among men. Back in the ladies’ department, on the way out, we wistfully marvel at all the creations, which would suit us fine, but which will not go beyond size 42 (8 in the UK).

You might possibly find a suitable creation, however, at the great brands like Gucci, Dolce-Gabbana or Versace, and others – sadly not among the normal shoes, but among the home slippers, which are often decorated. Then again, the Repetto fashion house (France, traditional supplier of ballet shoes) offers a collection of light and elegant patent-leather shoes, which are also available for men. The Italian label Scarosso offers, amongst others, patent-leather shoes for men.

What other alternatives do we have ? A few manufacturers of ladies’ shoes produce plus sizes up to 44 (9.5 in the UK), but only in a very limited range. The manufacturers who work for the theatre, film, and history branches are another source. If that does not work out, the only other option is to find a shoemaker who makes customised & tailor-made shoes – but these do not come cheap ! Italy is always a good address for shoes, also for custom-made shoes.

Men’s shoes that do not come from the offer produced in compliance with dress codes or from the dominant world of sports are clearly hard to come by. This is mainly because, unlike women’s fashion, they are not available in the required sizes. Hence, there is an urgent request for shoe manufacturers to meet new requirements. This is an undertaking that can only succeed in the market if today’s men are prepared to actually wear them.

**Red heels & soles :** If men show any interest in FASHION at all, it is usually in shoes and ties. For both of these, we have a great role-model : Louis XIV. As far as shoes were concerned, the monarch was totally avant-garde. In the famous portrait by Hyacinthe Rigaud (1701), the king is wearing shoes with red heels ! Where did the red come from ? During the Carnival of 1662, the king's brother, Philippe d'Orléans, visited a nearby market where animals were slaughtered. As he walked, his soles and heels were covered in blood. Once he was back in Versailles, the fashion for the high aristocracy to start wearing red heels <sup>3</sup> took off. In our times, French designer Christian Louboutin creates shoes with red soles & heels <sup>1</sup>. Carla Bruni wears them, for instance. A look at the range will tell you that this thrilling fashion item from Versailles is mainly produced for the ladies these days. Most commonly, only the sole of the existing men's Louboutin shoes is red.

Red-heeled shoes are to become the silent symbol for fans of the *New Looks* for men presented here, which will help them recognise one another. Since we can only buy such shoes as an exception, we have to paint the heels ourselves (a prime coat first) or cover them with red leather. For this purpose, Louboutin specially offers red enamel paint.

## On the way to your own style

„Fashion fades, only style remains the same.“

Gabrielle Chanel

It can be a great advantage if a man, on his road to FASHION, immerses himself in the world of ladies' fashion first. Spending some time in Paris, Milano, Vienna, or Munich will ensure that we get to see a representative range. Some women adore rummaging through boutiques and leading fashion houses for hours. Finding & buying are often not the most essential goal, but rather curiosity, watching, trying on, and pondering. So, our men will accompany their partner from the leading fashion houses to the most unassuming boutique. In doing so, they will, in due course, begin to understand what *their partner* really looks good in and what *they themselves* particularly like. Women really appreciate a man who has a close look at everything they try on and comments if necessary. Quite often, nothing much needs to be said, but a straightforward opinion can help : does it fit or not ? This is a role usually taken up by sisters, friends, or even the sales assistants.

Since many of the purchases only seem worthwhile at the moment they are tried on and consequently disappear in a wardrobe first, our contribution can be really important to make sure that ultimately, only the truly wearable is bought. That means : garments should make everyday life more beautiful. To make this happen in the future, we will have to go far beyond just carrying the bags.

If you have been going through this process long enough, you will perhaps feel the urge to start rummaging for what could look good on *you*, what *you* really like. Precisely because dress codes for women are much more loosely defined, their assortment is the ideal starting point for us men, to learn not to stick to the norm.

Over the years, during my kilometres' long tracks alongside innumerable racks, I have learned to grasp in a split second what is definitely worth trying on. Unfortunately, many creations have to be put back, simply because they do not fit. The number of clothes from the ladies' world which could be of interest to us, is therefore very small : only one in a hundred, or maybe even a thousand pieces, may fit ! There are also seasons, even entire years, when hardly anything can be found. That should not discourage anyone, just smile and carry on. The item we will eventually find will be the very best there is on the market. This is particularly true for jackets and coats. The success rate is much higher for trousers when size & cut fit.

On the internet, on the discovery engine *Pinterest*<sup>9</sup>, you can find manufacturers of magnificent men's jackets in a justaucorps style. However, most of these creations are too opulent or are based on historic examples (uniforms, stately clothes). The concept of the *New Look* that we are proposing is not looking for the eccentric, the exaggerated, or the historic. Exceptionally beautiful, elegant, yes, but in such a way that one can wear the outfit anywhere.

Near the Hofburg in Vienna, there is a well-known business selling traditional Austrian fashion. I first slipped into a red suede jacket for men. The creation was truly beautiful, of excellent quality – but somehow a little tame. So I asked for the corresponding ladies' model. At first, the saleswoman did not even want to show it to me, but in the end I stood in front of a mirror, wearing it : chic, no doubt about it ! In the end, the employees were also convinced that this was, by far, the better option. The creation was called "Sissi" (10), after the empress who rejected all convention.

Over the years, you, as a man, will enter any ladies' department (on your own too) with the greatest self-assurance, looking for the aforementioned treasures. The salespeople will immediately recognise that wearing individual pieces of ladies' wear comes perfectly natural to you, without encountering the common misunderstandings. Not in the least because you will continue your search wearing this sort of clothes.

As you can see in the photo section (see GALLERY, MORE), the presented outfits are *in no way effeminate* : that is not at all the intention ! What is the explanation ? It has to do with an important development in ladies' fashion : in the days of Gabrielle Chanel <sup>7</sup> and later of people like Yves Saint Laurent, ladies' fashion acquired a pronounced masculine look. This can be explained by the changes in the business world and by the new role that women began to play in society. After 1945, Christian Dior <sup>10</sup> successfully turned back the clock for a while, by creating enchantingly feminine garments of great elegance. Today sees us mostly immersed in the combination look, and that, sadly, goes for women too.

And so, paradoxically, we will find masculine-looking clothes in the ladies' department. For manufacturers, this means a market expansion, which is, however, so far only profitable in ladies' wear. So, in the end, we are very lucky : if it were not for the masculinization of ladies' fashion, we would still have to make do with the "black, grey and dark blue" !

Where do designers get the ideas that lead to such creations ? FASHION, which does not go for the ultimately impossible, such as linking small concrete stones like a chain to a dress (Karl Lagerfeld), can these days mainly reproduce or offer a variant since everything has already been done before. So, what might appeal to us men is mostly modelled on elements of the golden era of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A visit to relevant museums will provide an insight into the beauty of men's fashion from those days. From today's point of view, many people would draw the hasty conclusion that all these ruffles & flower patterns were surely exclusively meant for softies, but that is not true : ministers, generals, architects, ...

In 1991, I had the opportunity to visit an exhibition on the historical development of clothing from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, in the Hamburger Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe <sup>28</sup>. It was there that I suddenly realised, that all these ruffles & flower patterns, which turned already elegant jackets into real showpieces, were at one time considered unequivocally *masculine*.

**Clothes used to make the gentlemen :** A clear example of the huge range of impressive men's wear, available during the period from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and into the 19<sup>th</sup>, is represented by the outfit of the Comte Antoine François de Nantes (French statesman, painting by Jacques Louis David, 1811. An illustration is available on the internet under the name "Comte de Nantes") : the gentleman is seated, wearing a kind of cloak (pèlerine) with lapels decorated with a vine pattern, and completed with a broad, richly decorated stand-up collar. A jacket, also decorated with vines, appears underneath. A very small visible part of his shirt suggests lace. The necktie evokes the fashion of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. On top of that, the magistrate is enveloped in an oversized white-blue sash (like a Roman senator) with golden tassels. The blue velvet trousers are also embroidered, and underneath he is wearing white stockings. The shoes are not visible, but we can reasonably assume that they are court shoes. And there is even more decoration : his hat is abundantly adorned with ostrich feathers. The decoration on his chest (Légion d'Honneur) makes it undoubtedly clear that this is not someone dressed for a fancy-dress ball, but rather : this is the outfit in which Nantes performed his stately functions as Conseiller d'État while earning him respect & approval among his contemporaries.

When you look at it from today's point of view, in the concept of the *New Look* for men, this outfit appears totally over the top. The model Beauté2 (29), on the other hand, tries to offer a new interpretation, thereby maintaining the essential aesthetic and stylish elements.

Let us assume you have found some garments after having visited a great number of ladies' departments and you have proudly taken them back home. Where do you go from here ? I recommend you initially wear this new FASHION only in your private circle, i.e., mostly inside your own four walls, until you and your close relatives are entirely relaxed & comfortable with it. Maybe your relatives will also change a few things about the way they dress. After all, FASHION can be contagious.

But then, one day, the moment has come for you to go out onto the street, sit in a restaurant or a theatre, dressed in your *New Look*. What can you reasonably anticipate ? If you go out as a couple, the majority of people will look at you first because you look so unusual. Teenagers will turn around and giggle. Women will speak to you and almost always find it adorable, as will some men. The comments of the latter will often sound as a surprise : "I like your outfit – but I wouldn't dare to walk around like that myself." This gives you the unexpected opportunity to help someone else to get started ! Most reactions come from people who are just curious to know if you are on your way to a party, or if you are a member of a costume society. In those situations, I always answer : For me, even an ordinary day is a good enough reason to dress well. On those occasions, it will often seem to you that those who asked the questions start contemplating their own attire.

It also leads to amusing encounters : I was coming down the stairs in a posh restaurant when I came face to face with a nice elderly lady who asked me : "Will you play some more for us today ? " I had to let that sink in before I realised what the lady meant : she assumed I was a musician, hired to play in the restaurant. I replied that I considered it completely normal to appear nicely dressed in an equally nice venue. Impressed by my answer, she said: "I absolutely must say that to my husband." I then advised her to handle this subject with the greatest possible tact.

Another time, we were visiting an exhibition on "Viennese society and art in the 19<sup>th</sup> century" in the lower Belvedere Palace (Vienna). Everything was beautifully arranged. I was suitably attired to confront this venue and the huge efforts it had entailed with dignity. Suddenly, one of the museum attendants addressed me and said: "Your clothes are a sight for sore eyes. All day long, I watch people in miserable clothes, which are totally unsuitable for the occasion."

Can everyone dress like this ? That is a bit of a delicate issue. Men of considerable build are unlikely to find the right size. Moreover, not every model works if the body proportions are not right. Therefore, the *New Look* will address mainly middle-sized and slim men.

Because clothes make the gentleman, we cannot rule out the social component either : when a man is considered overdressed for his usual environment by his colleagues, this can lead to conflict.

Wherever you are, *you will, without exaggeration, always be the best-dressed man around*. Hardly anyone else will even come close. That teaches us how much clothes can exclude or uplift. That means that only strong and independent characters can afford to do this. Even I, a former university

professor, have heard behind my back that a person who walks around like me, can hardly be expected to accomplish any proper research ! Up to a point, we are not a free society. Not everyone is magnanimous enough to accept someone else's norm-breaking style.

I remember a country inn, mostly frequented by local farmers. We entered the inn : older gentlemen from the village were sitting around an oval table, having a typical conversation among regulars. When they spotted me in my red and very special jacket, the conversation stopped for a moment. What's he doing here, they must have thought. Throughout the evening, they witnessed our interaction with the staff and also some of our own private conversation. When we left, they all bade us a very natural "Auf Wiedersehen." It touched me deeply.

When the subconscious assessment from the people around you is positive, the fact that your clothes are out of the ordinary can be much better accepted. If, however, your outfit suggests that you want to differentiate yourself from others, or if you add a whiff of arrogance to it, you can generally be sure that all is lost. So we not only have to learn how to dress more aesthetically and elegantly but also how to present ourselves, so that we are not cut off from our social environment. It is best to try this out within your familiar environment first.

Just meeting people who are dressed differently, is often already a difficult thing for men to absorb. How much more difficult it is for them to wear these outfits themselves, is illustrated by this last anecdote : we were again in a restaurant, and a nice elderly cultivated couple occupied the table next to ours. When, upon leaving, I put on my leopard coat and ocelot hood and strap on one of my special handbags, the man asked me very kindly : "Are you perhaps an artist, from a circus, maybe ?" It should obviously have been clear to the man that a tightrope walker or a circus director would probably not be wearing a leopard coat with all those accessories. My interpretation is the following : this man cannot imagine to the best of his ability that anyone can walk around like this, and not have a special, or even an exceptional reason for doing so. His wife, though, had quite a different reaction : she was immediately won over and found the outfit super.

Which kind of clothing do we wear for which occasion ? I usually distinguish between practical situations and all other activities. For all everyday activities, which risk being associated with touching things and dirt, I wear normal clothes (although, even then, the combination wear remains a no go), and for work and garden I only wear well-worn clothes.

The professional environment is the greatest challenge here : when I was still working at university, I wore clothes that were clearly not following dress codes, but I tried in a moderate way to display my own personal style, which is possible, without unduly standing out. Here, everyone must figure out what works and what does not in terms of his own environment. *Aesthetic clothes that fit and are suitable for the venue can never be wrong, even if they do not comply with what others are accustomed to seeing.* With Generation Z, today's business world has a challenging time ahead anyway<sup>25</sup>, so that an impeccable, but an



individual way of dressing can no longer be a source of mockery towards a talented and dedicated employee.

The decision to approach our environment dressed in an appropriate and dignified way is of great concern to all people committed to their own, original *style*.

## **Role-model Dandy ? A clear distinction**

The former dandy (18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries), was only ever interested in his outer appearance and fostered a refinement that was in danger of celebrating itself : “The dandy loves exaggeration, is obsessed with detail, for him, fashion is a fetish. He is a narcissist, an aesthete, and a flâneur with an obsession for outward appearance who loves to play with fabrics, colours, and shades.” <sup>28</sup>

The approach proposed by me, to consciously dress differently and more originally as a man, does neither pursue perfection in the matter of fabrics nor intends to dress up the creations of the important fashion houses. The origin of the garments is of no importance for their everyday use, and will not be communicated. Shirts are generally not ironed, shoes not polished to a high gloss, and getting dressed does not take hours (about 10 minutes). Because, even if you do aim for elegance and harmony, clothing is, after all, a practical necessity, which may, however, excel in beauty & elegance. Such behaviour is neither protest nor provocation or nostalgia.

This does not require a search for an ever-changing FASHION, but rather for aesthetic & elegant clothes we can wear again and again over the course of many years under the right circumstances. Contrary to the opinion of Jean Cocteau, the right FASHION can grow old very well !

## For fashion designers only

There is no shortage of new and eccentric ideas in today's men's fashion – but these creations will never really brighten up the street scene, a festive occasion, or even individual private life. What does not disappear, however, is the inevitable dominance of sportswear, jeans wear, or all those same old suits and shoes, which make it impossible for the vast majority of men to find something that would really please them and in which they would look good.

However, clothes produced for women and which, strictly speaking, appear to be more masculine upon closer inspection, are so far the only acceptable alternative to counter monotony with chic, charm & elegance. Since many women today prefer a more masculine look to a more naturally feminine one, men are offered real opportunities to make a find in the ladies' department, provided they have the courage to go there.

Should these creations for ladies then also be on display in the racks for men ? It could at least be worth a try. Some men would be surprised to find something completely different – but I doubt if it will be a roaring success. What has become clear from the history of fashion is that it needs role models (King Edward VII, Duke of Windsor, Diana Spencer, Audrey Hepburn, etc. <sup>1,8</sup>) – and then the picture can abruptly change overnight.

Would it also be possible to design and produce these clothes, especially for men ? In that case, it will be tempting to copy characteristics from existing models to make them more “masculine” (meaning more sellable), in line with the more widely accepted sense of the word. And that would be the wrong way to go about it – a step backwards. *The New Look for men must be kept firmly away from any emblems, sports attributes, business worlds, and inconspicuousness.* Only then can an environment & an aesthetic emerge, which will put ladies' and men's wear on the same level of creativity, as it once was.

In order to make this at all possible after approximately 150 years of monotony, it is in the first place up to the men who make FASHION, to reconsider their own outfit – to renounce their combination wear and dress code in front of the camera <sup>30</sup>.

## The outfits

The word *outfit* is used here to describe a combination of garments that result in a creative entity, which is tailored for a specific event, if possible. It is also important to take into account whether we are going there on our own, or with our partner.

The following descriptions of the outfits, all of which bear a name (as with Christian Dior), provide information about their acquisition and special characteristics. The clothes all date from the last 15 years. That means they are neither new nor were they specially ironed for the photo shoot. Jackets & trousers always hang ready to wear on my racks. A word about the cost : a (good-quality) suit according to dress code is generally much more expensive than most of the outfits presented hereafter.

In case anyone would like to wear one of these outfits, I am afraid I have to disappoint them : the current way of production & sales is entirely based on seasonal selling, which means that the presented clothes (barring a few exceptions) are no longer available today. If you are very lucky, you may find one or other of these items in a second-hand shop or an outlet store.

However, this is a welcome side-effect within the framework of the concept advocated here : after all, men are supposed to scour the fashion houses and try to find what they really like & what they look good in. And so, the outfits presented hereafter are only considered as suggestions, motivations. The aim is not at all to copy, which is traditionally the case with fashion or role-models : as soon as such a person wears a new garment, before long, thousands of people will wear the same clothes. The recommendation is : *find that particular item among the general offer, which allows you to create your own original, elegant, and personal style.*

It goes without saying that we, men, are entirely responsible for our own clothes (maintenance, storage, repairs, etc.).

The photos of the outfits hereafter can be found under GALLERY.

**Biarritz (1)** : A summer outfit, suitable for a garden party, a seaside town, or a street café. Cotton ladies' jacket by the Rofa Fashion Group (White Label), together with light, dark-blue and white striped cotton trousers (ladies). Ideally, trousers should zip up at the side. This kind of fastening is much more elegant than a fly located in the centre in menswear. The white shirt with a stand-up collar is a neutral colour element. The dark-blue velvet sash highlights the masculine waist, provides support, and hides the imitation pockets on the back of the trousers. Trousers of this kind do not need pockets – a handkerchief can be hidden in the sash. Anything else indispensable can be put in a separate bag. The straw hat was acquired in a traditional shop in Venice and has been worn for over 40 years. The shoes : a HORSCH creation (pumps) in a ladies' plus size (44; 9.5 UK). Such shoes are hard to top in elegance and ease. And if you consider this too effeminate, you are mistaken : pump-like court shoes with heels or buckles were worn by men in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and even the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Bleu royal (2)** : The waistcoat was once an important component of menswear in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was worn under a long jacket (justaucorps), which was often left open. This fashionable decorative piece for men has mainly survived in traditional costumes in Bavaria and Austria, as well as in the gentleman's outfit in England. Typical for Bavaria is the long row of metal buttons (Hammerschmid model). It can be found in Munich in great varieties and in different colours. The frilled shirt is intended to emphasise the festive character of the attire, which in itself, is relatively simple. The cotton ladies' trousers with rococo pattern (Japanese), evoke the fabrics of the Marché Saint-Pierre in Paris. The dark-blue velvet sash unifies the trousers (ladies), the shirt, and the waistcoat. The blue velvet ribbon on the ponytail (not visible), adds the finishing touch.

**Monseigneur (3)** : A noble velvet jacket (ladies, Gaisberger) that should really belong on a menswear rack. The masculinization in ladies' fashion allows us to find this kind of wear in the wrong spot. The original buttons were replaced with antique, gilded buttons because the Gaisberger ones are totally unpractical. This top half requires an appropriate pair of trousers. I found these in the Galeries Lafayette (Paris). These dark-green ladies' trousers with Japanese blossoms and gold appliqués are a luxury model. Only a gold sash is suited to this. The simple white stand-up collar shirt suggests pure simplicity. The Dolce-Gabbana shoes, on the other hand, provide some more frivolity : a pattern with crowns and bees, embroidered with diamonds. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, real diamonds would have been used for this. The inevitable accessory : the black velvet ribbon tied around the ponytail. Dressed in this outfit (in full feather), I calmly set foot on any floor.

**Maysore (4)** : India once consisted of many local kingdoms. What is left of those today, is looking for new activities. The former Queen of Maysore is a fashion designer and owns a sewing atelier in the palace of Bangalor (Bangalor). The tightly fitted black velvet trousers (ladies) move away from any reference to a uniform, and so do the pumps and the gold sash. The ideal outfit for visiting exhibitions, castles, gardens, etc.

**Olé (5)** : When I am in Spain, most people associate me with a flamenco dancer. But I have not done that for a long time. The jacket (ladies' wear, Nicowa) has an interesting design because of the velvet fringe and the slit sleeves. The dress definitely evokes something Spanish. Bullfighters wear the same kind of jacket. The sash with embroidered flowers comes from a flamenco shop (Bern) and is the only coloured object in the outfit. Black as such is not wrong, it should just never always be black ! The hat, from Granada, evokes the same theme.

**Ecossais (6)** : A ladies' coat from Vero Moda in shades of green. A model made from a material that inclines to Scottish fabrics, but not quite. It requires cotton trousers with a matt surface, as well as a waistcoat in a matching colour. To my entire surprise, this coat is particularly well received, and considered elegant. That is certainly due to the cut, which distinguishes the ladies' wear from the men's wear. In men's fashion, there is a tendency to evoke "strength", but strength should only be displayed by the person and not by the clothes they are wearing.

**Desigual (7)** : The Spanish producer Desigual (since 1984) has enriched the world of fashion over the last 15 years with successful and sometimes very colourful creations This ladies' jacket is a mixture of bold and classical elements. At most, it can be completed with a gold sash, but the trousers should be neutral. These tightly fitted velvet trousers can be found in the ladies' stockings department, but they too were originally an item of men's fashion : during the Middle Ages, i.e. at the Burgundy Court, such tightfitting (and definitely colourful) leggings were worn by courtiers and princes.

**Mystery (8)** : There are many small ateliers in Paris, which often create and produce clothes as unique pieces for just a limited period. The present dark-coloured gown comes from a boutique in the Quartier du Marais (Paris) and the name of the couturière was unknown to me. The effect of the black is slightly reduced by the red velvet sash. This creation, which evokes characters from "Lord of the Rings", is not at all intended for an official event. Highly fitting for a décor of a

medieval city, a historic market or a festivity in a similar setting. The shoes from HARR are modelled on an 18<sup>th</sup> century example. Photo shot at Schloss Schadau, Hotel Restaurant, Thun.

**Broderie (9)** : Parisian Haute Couture traditionally uses embroideries. These are very often intricate applications, involving small parts of glass or metal and other materials, which are sewn onto the garment piece by piece. This often requires several hundreds of hours of work. This traditional handcraft is still cultivated at the highest level in Paris<sup>14</sup>. The example here comes from the ladies' wear and is not of such great value. However, the effect is very similar to the one described above. To go with this, a classic pair of trousers in white and a blue velvet sash. To preserve the nonchalance of the whole, I chose to wear pump-like shoes.

**Sissi (10)** : The Meindl company produces exquisitely designed leather jackets. A trial fitting revealed that the ladies' variant showed a lot more flair than the rather more conventional gentleman's model. The elegant trousers by Mos Mosh (ladies) and the gold sash (precious material from Florence) highlight the perfect fit of the jacket and the elegance of the model.

**Monochrome1 (11)** : The woollen brocade jacket (Zara, ladies), the floral print trousers, and the velvet sash constitute a unity in blue (with a dark-blue ribbon in the ponytail, Karin Eugster, Tausendschön, Zofingen). Sometimes, one must compromise : for this model, I have exceptionally resorted to trousers in a jeans-like design. The sash is meant to hide this flaw. This artistically successful pair of trousers (fabric) is a good example to illustrate that one really does not need the 501 model : no pockets and a closure on the side would make this pair of trousers in this fabric much more attractive !

**Baron (12)** : Austrian fashion houses, such as Habsburg, Gaisberger and Motwurf, make FASHION that is rich in tradition but also slightly modernised. The present coat (ladies, Motwurf) is a particularly elegant model. It is combined with a greyish sash and brown suede boots. The ribbon is kept in yellow decorated with (fake) gold threads. Brown or brownish is not really my favourite colour, but here it appears to be the right choice.

**Monochrome2 (13)** : A jacket (ladies, Z. Silvano), decorated in a floral art nouveau pattern. Combined with dark-red velvet trousers and a sash in the same colour. Split sleeves always create lightness and elegance. The jacket is worn open, just like the justaucorps. The ribbon is made of red velvet (Tausendschön, Zofingen). This creation can only be completed with light shoes, such as pumps or something similar. The outfit is ideal for an artful environment (gallery, museum, concert, ...). Photo shot at : Dobiaschofsky Auktionen AG, exhibition A129, Bern.

**Oiseaux (14)** : This is another example (see Broderie (9)) of a creation with embroidery. A ladies' coat with a bird pattern (Anja Roch), combined with plain white cotton trousers, a white neutral shirt, a sash, and velvet ribbon in blue. An elegant ensemble, fit for entering any salon. An example that demonstrates what is aesthetically possible without bells and whistles. The price of this ensemble is far beneath the price of a top quality men's suit with matching shoes.

**Grande parure (15)** : Vienna yearly hosts an innumerable amount of dances, where Viennese people show up in suitable attire. With us, we are more reserved, but an opportunity presents itself from time to time. This outfit, essentially a velvet coat, comes from a theatre-sale (Bern). To highlight the festive impression, we added a collar made from an old leopard skin and two antique gilded buttons at the back. It is worn with a sash, equally made out of leopard skin. In this case, the shirt can be embellished a little. The velvet Dolce & Gabbana shoes (house slippers) complete the outfit. The ribbon for the ponytail is made of black velvet. This outfit, which I wear to New Year's Eve dances, frequently incites admiration from women, and especially from men.

**Azure (16)** : A turquoise velvet coat from Les Boutiques Donna (Zurich). A true item of Haute Couture, worn with white cotton trousers (Zara, women), a white frilled shirt, and completed with a wide belt with gold buckle and black pumps. Depending on the weather, a grey felt hat is added. The coat is light as a feather and very soft. It has a strong colour, without hurting the

eyes. It is almost as if one was going out in a luxury bathrobe. I can perfectly understand that some men would say, "I couldn't do that." It is all a matter of trying out under the right circumstances. You can be assured that you will reap many positive comments, especially when you are in a mixed company. Of course, this is not suitable for a board meeting or such like !

**Maharadscha (17)** : India is an entirely different world of fashion. There, men traditionally wear richly decorated clothes for festive occasions and especially for their own wedding ceremony. If a man gets married in India, it is as if everyone becomes a maharaja for a few days. This coat with rich (fake) gold decoration is really a key piece. The Indians wear lofty pantaloons with it, but I prefer not to. Is there really ever an occasion to wear those in our part of the world ? Good question. We do not have the right setting for this, and so I have only worn this coat so far in my own private circle, or in luxury hotels, which is a pity, really. Because it is truly beautiful !

**Léopard (18)** : This is a bit of a minefield : the relation to fur has changed dramatically over the last 70 years. At one time, fur was synonymous with winter coats, as the materials of our modern times (padded and light) were not yet available. Depending on money or status, people wore sheepskin, Persian lamb coat or mink, and later, particularly furs from feline predators (leopard, ocelot, a rare cheetah or jaguar) because of the coats worn by film stars. At first, these furs were not considered valuable and therefore supplemented with really expensive furs, such as beaver. With the anti-fur campaigns and the CITES agreement in Washington, (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora – in force since 1975), feline predator fur was *rightly* eliminated from legitimate production. Since these fur coats were tremendously expensive in the days of the divas (10.000 euros or more), they have at least been well preserved, even if they have not been worn for a long time. And it is, therefore, possible to find perfectly preserved specimens today.

But what do you do with them ? The official instructions, issued by the Swiss Veterinary Office (section Protection of species) are : wearing old fur clothes is legitimate. Anyone who wants to is perfectly allowed to wear these old coats. It would be of no use to anyone if we let these once so valuable pieces go to waste. It would mean "killing" the animal a second time. If anyone takes offence, one can explain the situation, and more specifically, point out that the coat is vintage. For that reason, I always carry notes with relevant information, to reassure people if necessary.

Isn't it beautiful ? I love (living !) feline predators : wearing leopard skin gives me a very special feeling.

**Haute Couture (19)** : Although the fashion trade has lost a lot of its former charm, some small studios are still working according to the traditions set by Chanel, Dior, and others. This red and black jacket (ladies) was shown during a fashion show from Stettler & Co (Bern, Grandhotel Bellevue), and it immediately caught my eye. In combination with several elements described manifold times earlier, it becomes a composition du genre grande parure.

**Garde (20)** : Les Galeries Lafayette (Paris) are always a treasure trove. This jacket is hardly fit for a lady : the cut and decorative features are definitely masculine. In order to soften the 19<sup>th</sup> century military character, it is combined with leopard print trousers. The epaulettes on the shoulders have been removed. I always remove epaulettes from jackets or coats. Since the fabric contains a lot of wool, the jacket can be worn without a coat in the winter season, if only because the collar is tight and closed high up. I have strolled for hours through Paris in this outfit ...

**Ornat (21, fashion doll)** : A red velvet coat (cloak) combined with a brocade-like fabric. The dress comes from a boutique for ladies' plus sizes (Paris). Exceptionally, this model needs a dresser to adjust everything. An outfit for a very special occasion : a fashion show, a cultural event. During a visit to the exhibition (Munich 2016) of Jean Paul Gaultier, someone said to me that I should take place on one of the pedestals. It was astonishing to note that Gaultier had created only a few and also rather modest gentlemen's outfits for this fantastic presentation.

**Boutique (22)** : This jacket (Denny Rose) was once displayed in the shop window of a ladies' boutique. At first, I thought : why not - but in the end, I didn't buy it. Months later, I saw it again, this time on a rack. That was the moment for me to deem it suitable. It is important to consider carefully if a certain model is not too effeminate. This sometimes needs a bit of time. What bothered me from the first moment was the zipper (at the front). Zippers are fatal for elegance ! When we realised that we could take it out without much effort, we bought the jacket. The red velvet sash provides the necessary touch of colour. The tassels are not unusual in the history of fashion : uniform jackets and sashes frequently had them.

**Homme (23)** : The red ladies' coat made of sheepskin (inside), was slightly modified after we bought it, to get rid of the most feminine items. The jacket is one of my favourite garments and comes from H & M's ladies department. The shoes are embellished with decorative metal buckles. In winter, I combine this with an ocelot hat (old !) and long leather ladies' gloves. Why ladies' wear again ? Quite simply because today's men's gloves are cut so short that the most sensitive part (the transition from hand to arm) remains in the cold ! Long gloves for gentlemen are not new either, by the way. Take fencing gloves : the Three Musketeers. The shoes reveal another speciality : the heels are red. What that means will be explained in the chapter on shoes. This outfit invariably elicits enthusiastic reactions. The coat alone was the reason that a man said to me on the street : "I do so like your coat ! But I would never dare walking around in red like that." Picture taken at Schloss Schadau, Hotel Restaurant, Thun.

**Willy (24)** : This suede coat is a variation on Homme (23) and comes from the studio of Trudi Jost (Lederboutique Solothurn). It is combined with the same jacket as for Homme (23), red velvet trousers, and shoes from HARR. The coat once belonged to the rock musician Willy Deville, who wore it on stage. An exquisitely chic ensemble. Rock musicians claim that Mrs. Jost is the Jimmy Hendrix of the sewing machine !

**Été (25)** : A white frilled shirt (men) and versatile cotton trousers (ladies), together with a matching sash result in a light summer outfit. It was typical for men in the Middle Ages to wear a shirt or a cowl, which reached over the trousers and was held together with a belt or a sash.

**Fleures (26)** : An exquisite ladies' jacket (Monte Cervino), which looks even better in combination with black trousers from a light fabric and a silver-grey velvet sash. If you think, this must surely come from an expensive boutique, you are wrong : an example that you can buy an exquisite outfit for a mere 70 euros.

**Justaucorps (27, fashion doll)** : A new kind of justaucorps, the typical French courtly coat from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It needs a frilled shirt and velvet trousers. The outfit is deliberately not historically correct or complete. It is not my intention to look like a member of a costume club. The mere aim is to use design elements from aesthetically time-tested models.

**Beauté1 (28)** : A ladies' coat produced by Love Beauty, decorated with flowers on the front and the back. This model could well have been worn by a man in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, just before all-black clothing became popular. You will inspire nothing but admiration in this outfit. I found this jacket at a flea market (Aarberg).

**Beauté2 (29)** : Compared to Beauté1 (28) , this is an even more elaborate item (NOANOA) as far as the all-round flower decoration is concerned. Although decorated with embellishments of the past, this long coat looks modernistic because of its straight fit. This model will defy the omnipresent monotony, although most onlookers will insist on qualifying this outfit as "historical," or reserved for a special occasion. It is therefore quite difficult to argue in public, that the only goal is to appear well dressed and to fit into an environment that once needed this sort of clothes. This outfit is ideal for a stroll around the Petit Trianon. The model is a fresh interpretation of the outfit of the statesman Antoine François, Comte de Nantes (see above).

**Gucci (30, fashion doll)** : My only really expensive men's jacket (Gucci). This can only be combined with completely neutral clothes. The attention should be focused on the flowery jacket.



Gucci presented this model in combination with similar trousers. In my opinion a total no go : I would rather not look like Papageno, the bird-seller.

**Modeste (31)** : A ladies' jacket with gold buttons (Zara Women). One of the many jackets I wear at home or for everyday errands, together with a waistcoat and velvet trousers. If even I sometimes do not know what to wear, I choose one of these outfits. Although it is a perfect fit, it is for once a rather modest outfit and yet is still perceived as special by passers-by.

**Oré (32)** : An open velvet ladies' jacket (The Kooples) I often wear. It is richly decorated with "gold embellishments." If worn with red or black velvet trousers and matching sash, it easily becomes a real gem, though it is very basic. Ideal for wearing at home.

**Milano (33)** : A silk ladies' jacket that is light as a feather. Here combined with black velvet trousers and a wide belt with gold buckle, and fine shoes. The shirt with an open collar is an Italian touch. An outfit to wear when strolling along the Via Napoleone, keeping an eye on the numerous ladies' boutiques to see if they offer anything you might like. Or : something completely different for the business world ! Picture taken at Schloss Schadau, Hotel Restaurant, Thun.

**Hiver (34)** : A simple and yet very elegant ladies' sheepskin coat (Sandro). For once, an outfit that most female observers will qualify as made for men only, even if it buttons up on the wrong side. An everyday outfit suitable for winter. It is combined here with a grey felt hat (men, Nizza). We owe this sort of clothing solely to the fact that ladies' fashion is becoming more masculine. This model would look different if it were tailored for men and be much less charming and elegant.

**Ocelot (35)** : We have already thoroughly discussed and defused the matter of vintage fur (see model Léopard (18)). An example of an ocelot coat, embellished with plucked beaver fur and combined with a hat in similar material and long leather gloves. The ideal outfit to enjoy winter days nobly, at least, if you are willing to carry the heavy weight of the coat.

**Bourgogne (36)** : A velvet pullover, produced by an amateur tailor (Bern), worn here with similar trousers, light shoes, and a velveteen hat. An outfit for a prince, as it was once worn at the Royal Court of Burgundy. Gold jewellery is an essential extra. Picture taken at Schloss Schadau, Hotel Restaurant, Thun.

**Verdure (37)** : Ladies' coat (Pennyblack) with wool, suitable for the autumn. The plant pattern, called verdure, evokes the Aubusson tapestries. A very special garment, which proves that a simple woollen coat need not be dull. Best combined with a velvet vest and black or red velvet trousers. The black hat is in flamenco style and the orange-red bag gives it a touch of colour. The thing that new men's fashion needs most is a complete departure from all the attributes of the business and sports looks. Picture taken at Schloss Schadau, Hotel Restaurant, Thun.

**Cerf (38)** : A Bavarian buckskin jacket for men (original Steindel). The regions of Bavaria, the Vorarlberg and Salzkammergut have preserved a traditional style of men's wear, from which we can choose models, without necessarily having to go for the "Lederhosen with suspenders" look, etc. The hat is a special Bavarian model (Breiter) and has the white feather, worn by the traditional musicians. If you are travelling as a couple, a Dirndl outfit, lately also fashionable outside Bavaria and Austria, would be nice. You can find incredibly chic Dirndl outfits in Munich or Salzburg.

**Marais (39)** : A ladies' velvet jacket, very comfortable and elegant, a unique item made by a couturière previously unknown to me (Marais, Paris). Appliqués are also sewn on the back of the garment. So you can be dressed suitably for a number of occasions. To give it a really special touch, you can combine this with a frilled shirt and the HARR shoes with red heels, as well as with a gold sash in a special fabric (Florence).

**Chic (40)** : A modernistic ladies' jacket (Zara Basic) without buttons. This model might well have its place on the men's rack. In order to maintain the *New Look*, the other elements of the outfit will have to provide a special touch. The bold belt separates it from mainstream men's wear. The shoes are very important: they have to support the lightness of the whole (Repetto). I can well imagine that some men can easily accept this jacket as an introduction to the *New Look*. This model is especially suited for the business world. How would your counterparts react if you suddenly showed up in this outfit ? It's worth a try. In any case, the surprise-effect will make sure that the attention will initially be entirely focused on you. This will be a tactical advantage for the further course of the meeting.

**Perroquet (41)** : A men's velvet jacket (Italo style) with parrots and climbing plants. Italian products always surprise by their frivolity & colourfulness. In combination with the black velvet trousers, the stand-up collar shirt and the pumps (without sash or ribbon) it becomes the anticipated masculine outfit, without turning into a typical suit, because of the trousers & the shoes. Why not try this in a business environment ! Picture : we are in the Casaluci shop in Bern, where I once bought the jacket. Casaluci is always a good place to find the exceptional, as you can see, also in ladies' wear.

**Chameau (42)** : Camel coloured ladies' jacket (Leonardo) in fine sheepskin, worn with white cotton trousers and a frilled shirt. Combined with some accentuating accessories, like a red sash, a red Moroccan-style felt hat (Mayser model), and a red bag with gold appliqué. For colder days a feral cat shawl (vintage) can be wrapped around the neck. If one thing is sure, this is it : this will certainly make you stand out – it will ensure a positive public appearance and fully break with the monotony of the street scene.

**Fleures jaunes (43)** : A woollen ladies' jacket with floral appliqué (also on the back). Combined with white trousers and blue sash in springtime and with black trousers and a red sash in the autumn. An outfit that always goes down well. That is probably because the beholders do not quite know where to categorise it : is it a traditional costume, is it Haute Couture ? They are puzzled and just find it attractive.

**Rouge1 (44)** : An elegant, red ladies' jacket (with wool), in this case combined with a grey felt hat (men, Nizza) and a splendid gold sash (Florence). The ideal outfit for a midseason city trip. As one's hair grows progressively thinner, hats and caps become increasingly interesting.

**Indien (45, fashion doll)** : A men's jacket (Hyderabad), worn in India, typically by men at wedding ceremonies. Instead of the customary Turkish pants, I have chosen to wear plain white cotton trousers. An exceptionally beautiful velvet jacket with floral print, with which you will unintentionally discard any possible kind of dress code.

**Habit (46, fashion doll)** : A men's jacket, for once (Pat Maseda collection), which was later embellished with brocade. Its shape is that of a shortened (English) tailcoat. Here combined with black velvet trousers, a plain white shirt with a stand-up collar, a colourful sash, and patent-leather shoes from Repetto. With only very little *grande parure* is achieved. Because of the elaborate embellishment, you have to consider carefully where to wear it. I first wore the jacket for a supper in the neo-rococo style room in a grand hotel in Paris and some guests spontaneously gave some positive comments. When I collected my room key, the porter said : "You look just like an Académicien." As it is, the members of the Académie française really did wear this sort of jacket.

**Rouge2 (47)** : Red ladies' jacket (Desigual) with floral print at the bottom fringe. Combined with white cotton trousers or black velvet trousers, without a sash, and with black shoes, it becomes a simple mid-season outfit. The strong colour effect on the jacket is typical for Desigual.

**Surprise (48)** : A black ladies' jacket (imitation Persian lamb, G.N. Couture), here with men's trousers from Dolce-Gabbana and a gold sash. Three wide loops have been removed from the belt because they made it too feminine. The purchase of this jacket illustrates exactly what I wrote earlier : one cannot afford to overlook even the smallest and most inconspicuous of

boutiques : there is a more than a century old ladies boutique in Galatina (Salento), which even we passed by for years without noticing it. How wrong of us, the older lady in the shop told us that diva's from around the world shop in her boutique.

**Velours (49)** : A kind of ladies' doublet (The Kooples) in black velvet with appliqués. A doublet is a typical men's jacket worn from the 14<sup>th</sup> till the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Matching this is a frilled shirt and velvet trousers (red or black), together with a wide belt with gold buckle. As you can see, I am wearing a (ladies') pullover (Liu Jo) with flower print for once, which adds the necessary colour to the whole. An outfit fit for many occasions. Alas, here too, people often see this only within a historical context. The modernistic pullover and the belt should divert attention from this.

**Sylvestre (50)** : Festive men's jacket (ready-to-wear) in a ruby-coloured, velvety fabric. The original black buttons are gold-painted, and the imitation pocket is decorated with golden bands. The fur collar made from a vintage ocelot shawl transcends the jacket to another world. This outfit can be worn with black trousers (skinny) and light patent-leather shoes. Whether you want to or not, this will easily make you the best-dressed man on the New Year's Eve's dance floor.

**Chasse (51)** : Men's hunting jacket (fox hunting) from Pikeur, worn with black velvet trousers and shoes from Repetto. Depending on the time of year, a hat can be added. Because of its cut, this jacket can exceptionally only be worn buttoned up. Here, the jacket's buttoning causes no creases or folds. This is in contrast with normal suits, which often look tight, totally distorted due to a single button. Picture taken with dog Nino shot at Schloss Schadau, Hotel Restaurant, Thun.

**Qualité (52)** : An Haute Couture jacket from Les Boutiques Donna (Zürich), for one occasion combined with cotton trousers with floral pattern (Zara Woman), and a lilac sash as well as a black ribbon. In this outfit, you will amaze any fashion designer, including those who do not just work in the mainstream menswear. It is the ideal outfit for visiting a fashion show, a fashion trade fair, or any such event, where people want to stand out. Of course, you can only do that if you have gathered enough experience with your *New Look* and are one hundred percent sure you feel totally relaxed.

## Bags, ribbons, shoes

**Bags** : Shoulder bags were redesigned by the author and decorated with metal profiles finished with gold paint from the LXV, LXVI furniture decoration. A ready-to-wear object can be turned into a unique piece with very few changes.

**a)** Black leather bag (Italy), **b)** Ladies' bag (Paris) with new strap, **c)** Buckskin bag covered with (vintage leopard skin), **d) - f)** Inexpensive ladies' bags.

**Ribbons** : A selection of ribbons, mostly made of velvet, worn by me in connection with many of the 52 outfits presented in this book.

**Shoes** : **a)** Pumps with ribbons in plus size 44 (9.5 UK) for ladies from HORSCH Schuhe (FRG). **b)** Historic example of wearing pumps in the 19<sup>th</sup> century : the court-master of the Palazzo Borromeo (Isola Madre, Lago Maggiore) wears pumps. The newly appointed consul, Napoleon I, also wore pumps, albeit without ribbons, but with a gilded metal buckle (Portrait, Robert Lefèvre, 1806<sup>27</sup>). Shoe manufacturer Bally produced black lacquered pumps with ribbons for men from 1980 to 1985. Even Bernard Roetzel, the classic men's outfitter,<sup>16</sup> recommended : "He who wears pumps with a dinner jacket ... proves to have style and above all, courage." **c)** Historic reproduction of a typical men's shoe from the 18<sup>th</sup> century (HARR, shoes, FRG) with red heels. **d)** Example of decorated indoor footwear from Dolce-Gabbana. **e)** Moccasins for men from Repetto (France) with red painted heel. **f)** ready-to-wear men's shoe, individually decorated with a metal buckle as well as a red painted heel.

## FASHION, a messenger

„The soul of man is in his clothes.“<sup>28</sup>

William Shakespeare

The message of the 501 jeans in the '60s of the past century was clear : freedom & social criticism. About 60 years later, men & women in jeans are considered casual, sporty, or just cool, but without commitment. Jeans are happily worn at nearly every occasion. If uniforms were once a clear symbol of status and hierarchy, they have now almost vanished from public life, or they have merged with the conventional clothes. Today, professional or status wear is limited to folkloric events. “The rich” and “the poor” can often no longer be distinguished by their clothes.

Of course, they still exist, the perfectly dressed gentleman or lady, who also wears Haute Couture in the streets. But if you counted how many really well-dressed ladies you encounter on a busy street of a metropolis, there would not be many per hour<sup>31</sup>. As for the men, you can largely divide them into those wearing a suit & tie, and those dressed mostly in jeans. Men try to give their outfit a personal touch by wearing a tie. To Oscar Wild, the tie was the “fundamental symbol of taste and culture ...”<sup>15</sup>, to Umberto Eco it is an instrument to convey a message, which he hopes the others will understand.<sup>15</sup> The *New Look* for men pleads *to extend the personal message to the entire outfit*, which will automatically make an end to the special significance of the tie.

Each day is good enough to dress appropriately. The language of clothes allows us to express our relation and connection to those we confront or desire to meet. *Every one of us, therefore, carries a certain responsibility for the clothing culture we display on the street and towards other people.*

Does that mean : do we need a general kind of dress code after all, if only for the business environment ? In that case, the appearance would probably be different, less monotonous, but it would not be a real, individually motivated solution. *The awareness of dealing with one's own aesthetic appearance in public seems to be just as important as a sustainable attitude towards resources in terms of clothing.* Aiming for sustainability means not to be constantly on the lookout for something new, for the seasonal FASHION, but rather for something good, that can be worn over a great number of years. A personal *style* can help here, is always a source of joy and can incite others to dress well and elegantly too – to like yourself, just like those young men in the sixties<sup>18</sup> and to find pleasure in others. I will always cherish those special moments, when someone spontaneously talks to me, wherever I may be. And that is so much more than just vanity. I am not a handsome man. The only thing I can do is to bring out the exceptional by means of my clothes.

Four boys are standing in front of a shop window, talking. When I pass, one of them talks to me spontaneously and says: „Monsieur, vous êtes la personne la mieux habillée que j'ai rencontrée aujourd'hui.“

The 52 outfits (and quite a few more) allow me to wear the right clothes for every occasion. If your personal clothes are in harmony with the environment, you may be overcome with an exhilarating feeling of belonging. Belonging to the culture, and to the people we are meeting at this very moment.

„Elegance is the only beauty that never fades.“<sup>8</sup>

Audrey Hepburn

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31 An experiment : August 27, 2019, Galeries Lafayette (Paris). I have been strolling for more than an hour around the galleries (1 - 3 floors, ladies' wear), observing the ladies in the boutiques with great and less great names. They are many, and a lot of trying out and buying is going on. Look at what they are wearing ! Their clothes are in no way in proportion to what is on offer here and what they will buy. You are lucky to run into one or two really well-dressed ladies these days. For what purpose are people buying ? It remains a mystery. Maybe most female customers consider those sophisticated clothes a little too far removed from their everyday world, and they might only consider them fit for representational functions. What's more, most women have come alone – unaccompanied by their partner.