

TRENDSPOTTING

The Power Image

Secrets to assertive styling *by* FELISSA ALLARD

AS THE SAYING GOES, the clothes make the man. This is especially true when it comes to conveying a commanding demeanor. Trends come and go, but a classic, confident look synonymous with the power suit is timeless. From fabric to cuff size to facial hair, there's more to cultivating a Don Draper-worthy aesthetic than purchasing an Armani suit or a Bertoni briefcase. Money is merely an object when it comes to achieving boss style.

Suit Up

"There are three chief components of a power suit," said Victor T. Scognamiglio, founder and CEO of Greenvale-based Victor Talbots. "A power suit has a distinct fabrication, which is the actual drape of the suit. The material is nice and crisp and finally, the biggest thing is the fit... blended perfectly."

After traveling to Italy to view the latest in menswear, Scognamiglio noted a trend toward suits that are trim, yet comfortable. "When the jacket is too short and the pants hit around the ankles, that's more of a Williamsburg hipster look and not for a power suit." Buying off the rack is acceptable, but tailoring is a must. "It's important to have the right fit through the shoulder and chest area, which will enable the rest of the suit to drape and balance well," said Dan Maguire, vice president of tailored clothing for Joseph A. Bank.

Ben Youdin, owner of Beltrami in Woodbury, suggests navy followed by charcoal when it comes to color, adding that brown should be avoided. The shirt underneath is just as important—white and gray work the best. Youdin also recommended that the suit jacket end 3 1/2 inches from the tip of the thumb and the shirt

stick out a half-inch past the jacket sleeve. Hot tip #492: The best place for the suit sleeve to end is at the wrist bone, though a good tailor measures up from the thumb tips because everyone is asymmetrical.

Bending Boardroom Rubrics

There are a lot of traditionalist rules concerning the style and cut of a power suit, but personal preference is still crucial for a defining style. Blending in is no way to make an impression in a sea of other suits, even if it is perfectly tailored. A tie can be the point of diversion. "The golden rule for choosing a tie is to make sure it matches the lapel size," said Scognamiglio. The trend for skinny ties is past its prime. A savvy gent will opt for a wider tie. Men in leadership positions often choose a reddish hued tie, but the current fancy in Europe leans toward greens and yellows. Azure or cobalt blue ties go with any color suit, Scognamiglio added.

Men also have discretion when it comes to cuffing their pants. Some designers, such as Brioni, offer an inverted pleat that looks like a flat front pant but presents more room in the thigh area. If a pleated pant is preferred, look for a standard cuff size of 1-1/4 inches, Scognamiglio said, adding that single-pleat pants are the favored style at the moment.

About Face

Consider hair more than a finishing touch. Grooming has changed with the times, but there's still an expectation of remaining kempt. "There's still (unfortunately) a stigma that looking professional means looking sleek and un-tousled," said Roz Murray, professional stylist at Bumble and Bumble. "This can mean parted hair and pushed more directionally to one side. Professional means groomed or trimmed around the ears and nape." Avoid the greasy look by using styling products that have a more matte finish.

Facial hair is one area of grooming that allows for more personal expression—within reason. "It doesn't carry the stigma that it used to of letting yourself go or laziness of not shaving," Murray said. "You can keep it maintained by cleaning up the area below your jaw or the neck. Sideburns can be kept tighter as well for a more groomed appearance." ☺

Power and style are equally matched. Learn the Dress Code on page 55.

