

STYLE

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Right: Points earned for the length of the socks, which prevents ankle exposure, but not for the pattern.

Left: Turn-ups — nay, nay and thrice nay.

PHOTOS: NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE AND BLOOMBERG



How to be dapper

Fashion tips may be everywhere but men are less frequently the subject of them. Next month, however, the influential *ABC of Men's Fashion* by Hardy Amies, who wrote a column for *Esquire* alongside his duties dressing Queen Elizabeth II, is being reprinted by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. It was first published in 1964 and its reissue coincides with the opening of the designer's archive on Savile Row. Amies's strict male dress code — with commandments on everything from socks to the summer wardrobe — still makes for compelling reading. So we assembled a group of menswear editors to analyze some of his style diktats. Would they still hold fast 45 years on?

DON'T MAKE EVERYTHING MATCH

Hardy says: "To achieve the nonchalance which is absolutely necessary for a man, one article at least must not match. For instance, you can wear a dark blue suit and tie with a pale blue shirt and navy blue socks, but you must then have a patterned silk handkerchief, say in dark red or a paisley design of green and brown; or you could stick to a blue handkerchief and have dark red socks."

A command with staying power. This anti-matchy-matchy advice is so Bruno, who insists that an army camouflage uniform needs a scarf to break it up. Head-to-toe looks do nothing for *GQ's* associate editor, Robert Johnston, either. "If everything is blue-blue, tone-tone, perfect-perfect, it looks dull," he says. "It's really nice to have something that jars the eye." Plus, dandyish touches, says Mansel Fletcher, executive style editor of *Esquire*, are coming back.

BEWARE THE BOW-TIE WEARER

Hardy says: "By day, often in patterned or spotted foulard, it is usually worn by individualists ... On less genial characters, it can have an aggressive air and can arouse some kind of resentment at first meeting of a new acquaintance."

He could be right. Is there anything more deliberately "fashion" right now than the bow tie? From the bookish Doctor Who makeover, to Kanye West and Simon Le Bon, the bow tie is everywhere. Richard Gray, editor of *10 Men*, may not experience the aggression on meeting a bow-tie wearer that Amies describes, but neither is he impressed: "I'm sick to the death of bow ties. It's so forced and self regarding."

AVOID SANDALS AND SHORTS

Hardy says: "Always wear a collar and tie in a town, even if it's by the sea, after six o'clock. Never wear shorts except actually on the beach or on a walking tour. All short sleeve shirts look ghastly. Sandals are hell, except on the beach where you want to take them off: or on a boat. And worn with socks are super hell."

Lighten up. We're on holiday, Hardy. These issues totally divided the panel. Johnston hates sandals in the city. Fletcher describes socks with sandals as a bit "German bible camp," a look Gray likes exactly because it feels a bit "awkward." The short-sleeved shirt, an item I find

Does the fashion advice of legendary designer Hardy Amies still stand up? A panel of menswear experts take on the great man's style commandments

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wholly underrated, is deemed acceptable by Fletcher only if "you're flying a plane." Fellow short-sleeve fan Gray, however, suggests styling them in the "classic American preppy way, with a white T-shirt underneath, top button open and roll back the sleeve. Twice. More Richie Cunningham, less Hoxton Square." Happy days.

MEN CAN WEAR RED

Hardy thinks scarlet is "perhaps the most masculine of all colors," adding the caveat that "its very flamboyancy limits its use."

In catwalk terms, orange is billed as the color to break up the brooding mood this coming season — though Jean Paul Gaultier's bobby-dazzling red suit or Dolce & Gabbana's red quilted dinner jacket probably take things a little far. Our panel, meanwhile, has the following thoughts: Gray likes "a red sock with a chino," Johnston thinks "a scarlet tie with a navy suit looks amazing," and Fletcher can "picture bright red cords, in the country, during the festive season."

DON'T OVERLOOK SLIPPERS

Hardy says: "Grandest of all are velvet slippers, with your monogram or crest embroidered in gold thread. These you can dine in, at home of course."

Fletcher, of *Esquire*, is a self-confessed slipper fan (he thinks they're "very civilized"). And next month the slipper will step in to the limelight when Christian Louboutin launches a studded velvet one as part of a new range of men's shoes. He is calling it the "Hugh Hefner," which may or may not be what Fletcher had in mind.

PAY ATTENTION TO SOCKS

Hardy says: "The matching of socks to the tie I find affected."

He makes no less than 13 points about this unsung wardrobe hero and perennial Christmas gift favorite. Johnston's big sock tip: match them with your trousers. He reckons this makes your legs look longer. Fletcher begs men to wear longer socks, so as not to expose the ankle: an unavoidable sight if trousers continue to shorten, as Gray predicts. This means increased sock scrutiny or, as Gray puts it, "you can't walk around with crap old socks on."

DON'T BE SCARED OF FUR

Hardy says: "The modern young man is now so sure of his virility that I think he will take the risk, in the not too distant future, of wearing a coat made entirely of fur."

We have to beg to differ here. This Hardy prediction has for the most part — save the odd wayward rocker — not come to fruition. But there is still time. The autumn/winter catwalks were full of fur: witness a Rick Owens gilet, a shaggy black Gucci coat and an Emporio Armani yeti-cape. "This autumn, Mrs Prada has designed a new fabric she is calling poly fur," notes Gray. "She coated the benches in it at her catwalk show and the models walked on it. She even lined her coats with it — I'm sure this will influence the high street." Hello H&M's faux-astrakhan number.

NEVER TURN UP YOUR TROUSERS

Hardy is very clear when it comes to turnups: "You can't have any."

Rolled-up chinos is a trend that looks set to carry over into next spring, so contrary to Hardy's view, the idea of something at the bottom of your trouser, beyond an invisible hem, seems rather fashionable. Designer and tailor Oliver Spencer says: "A gentleman should wear turnups on casual slacks, it gives the trousers better long-term wear. Dresswear or dinner suits should never have turnups though."

SPEND MONEY ON A BELT

Hardy says: "You should always try and buy, or get given, the most expensive belt possible ... It should preferably be the same color as your shoes; and, if you are very natty, it could be in the same leather as your wrist strap."

Reiss does a fine line in affordable classic-style belts. Meanwhile, Johnston and Fletcher are both scarily adamant about not wearing a brown belt with black shoes, or vice versa.

ABC of Men's Fashion, by Hardy Amies, will be published next month by the Victoria and Albert Museum.



Right: When it comes to belts, money talks. PHOTOS: NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE AND BLOOMBERG

Left: Red, the most masculine of colors. PHOTO: NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE

