

SUMMER '06 // SHIRT & TIE UPDATE

the guide

what to wear and
how to wear it

The Five Fundamentals of the New Dress Shirt

The continuing casualization of the workplace has hit an obstacle: the inescapable fact that American men feel like dressing up for work again. Central to the new mood of get-ahead power dressing is the choice of dress shirts. Enthusiasm for classic shapes and details is banishing flimsy-collared shirts from the American office. So what does a man look for in the new breed of power dress shirt? The most obvious feature is the prevalence of **strong graphic stripes** **1**, à la Wall Street. And there has also been a renewed focus on **nonmatching shirt-and-tie combinations** **2**, in which one is bold and busy with pattern and the other is more restrained. At the wrist of the new dress shirt is an old standby: **substantial, bold cuffs** **3**, on which you'll find **thicker, chunkier mother-of-pearl buttons** **4**. Topping it all off are **ever higher and stiffer collars** **5** in the best Roger Moore tradition. The secret of the new, bolder dress shirt lies in proportion and fit and how you put shirt, collar, cuff, and finishing tie knot together.

Cotton shirt (\$310) by Truzzi; silk tie (\$140) by Ermenegildo Zegna.

“It makes me sad because I’ve never seen such—such beautiful shirts before. —F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*”

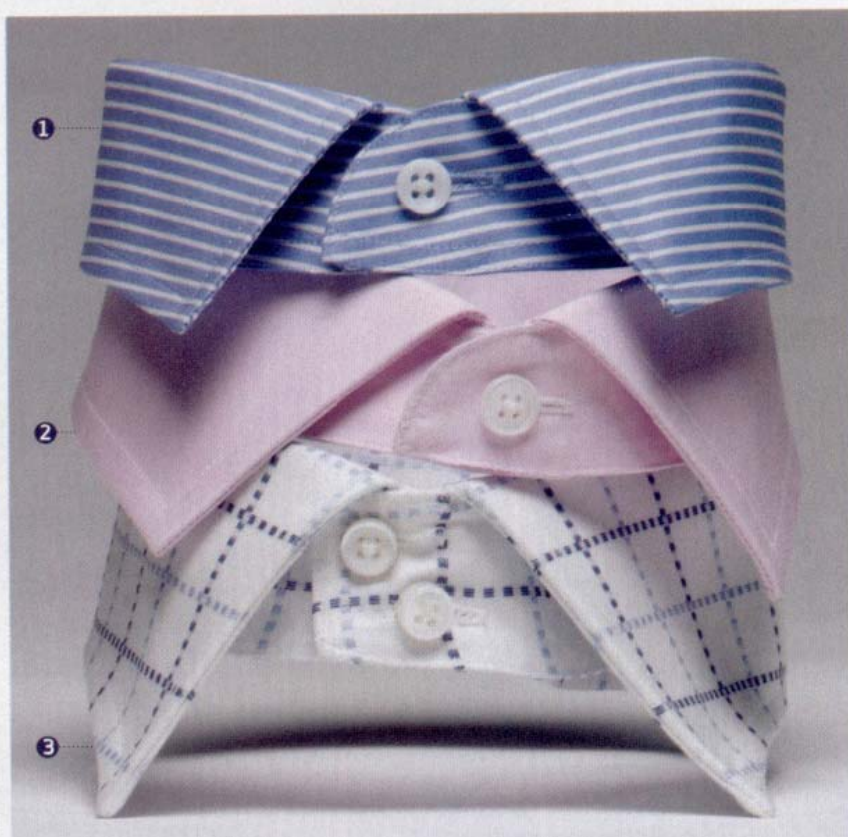


CUFFS, COLLARS, AND KNOTS: A PRIMER

Choosing your ideal dress shirt is an individual decision. Only you know what feels best. But before you drop coin on one, know your options. Because there are many.

■ **TIE KNOTS:** **The Windsor (1):** Popularized by the Duke of Windsor, this knot creates a perfectly symmetrical shape, suitable to fill wide spread collars. **The half Windsor (2):** The Windsor knot only less so, the half Windsor has one less loop and a slimmer shape, with the same symmetry as its big brother. **The four-in-hand (3):** The simplest knot of all. Suitable for smaller and softer collars like button-downs.

(1) Silk tie (\$160) by Valextra; (2) silk tie (\$140) by Ermenegildo Zegna; (3) silk tie (\$95) by Liste Rouge.



■ **COLLARS:** **The small collar (1):** A low collar redolent of the sixties, it's the sort you should look for if you're into leaner suits and narrower ties. *Its tie knot: the four-in-hand.* **The spread collar (2):** A classic shape that works for all ages and neck shapes. *Its tie knot: the Windsor.* **The tall collar (3):** Set on a wider band with two buttons at the neck, the tall collar can be worn without a tie altogether, since it's substantial enough on its own. *Its tie knot: the half Windsor.*

(1) Cotton shirt (\$225) by Ralph Lauren Black Label; (2) cotton shirt (\$99) by Charles Tyrwhitt; (3) cotton shirt (\$225), Best of Class by Robert Talbott.



■ **CUFFS:** **The turnback cuff (1):** Rare but in the ascendant, the turnback cuff was popularized by the first James Bond, Sean Connery, in *Dr. No*. It combines the elegance of a double cuff with the ease of buttons. **The button cuff (2):** Functional and modern, with none of the fiddliness of cuff links, the button cuff is right for normal office days but not too dressy. **The double cuff (3):** Still the most dressed-up choice, the double cuff, or French cuff, is best for showing a quarter inch of shirt cuff from underneath your jacket sleeve.

(1) Shirt (\$275), Personally Pink by Thomas Pink; (2) shirt (\$250), Turnbull & Asser; (3) shirt (\$99) and gold cuff links (\$125), Charles Tyrwhitt.

Ryan Seacrest

"No. Well, yeah. Someone *has* pitched it. You know who it was, about nine months ago?"

"Who?"

"Stephen Baldwin."

"He pitched *that* show?"

"Yes."

"Shut the fuck up."

She just laughs.

"Dammit," says Seacrest. "Well, there are no new ideas in this town. We just did it on the air, and it was great."

"Was there a celebrity on the air or no?"

"No, just me. *But*, it worked. Actually, it didn't work. The girl almost got fired. Which is great."

"Well, there you go. Where are you right now?"

"I'm on the air. I got ninety seconds, then I gotta go back on."

"All right. Well, call me later."

Crestfallen, Seacrest neglects to mention that he loves her. Could be he doesn't, or maybe he's tired. Unshaved, harrumphing his throat clear, he signs off quickly—"It's 9:53, thank you for havin' us on, Seacrest out"—and bolts the radio station, bowlegged in his boots and jeans.

Billboards, bus signs, pop-up ads: Seacrest is everywhere. His E! deal runs for three years. He has three more years to go on his KIIS contract. *Idol*'s ratings this season—its fifth—are higher than ever. It could go on without Randy, Paula, and Simon—two potted plants and a smug prick—but not without the Dark Lord of Hosts. Not that he's going anywhere.

Problem with Boys

meetings, at parent-teacher conferences, in front of school boards, in classes teaching or just talking about their jobs. Young men, men without children, must take a stake and volunteer to coach, to counsel, to read to kids. You can't wait for fatherhood to hit you in the face. Men whose children are grown must mentor a new generation of children. Select two boys, the ones who need it, the ones you know are hurting. Take a lesson from Joel Klein and convince two more men to do the same. Two more men: That's your assignment.

Go talk to boys. You don't have to use baby talk with them or buy them things. You just have to listen to them. Ask them who they are. The answers they give may not always make sense, but talk to enough of them and you will surely realize that boys themselves are not the problem. And it sure as hell isn't women or girls.

The problem is men. ■

Who's Doing Something?

Not everyone has turned a blind eye to the boys crisis. Here are four organizations devoted to fixing the problem.

»Guys Read

Jon Scieszka, a children's-book author and former elementary-school teacher, wants

"If they said, 'Hey, you're gonna be charged \$10,000 a month to host *American Idol*,' I'd pay \$20,000. This is something that I would pay to be a part of, to drive everything else I'm doing. It fuels everything else. It allows me the exposure and the access to the public and to the executives in our business. But it's not my baby. I'm a hired hand. No equity."

Tonight's *Idol* costume is a black suit-and-shirt combo, which goes nicely with the stubble.

"It's a good suit, right?"

Indeed it is.

In a few minutes, Seacrest will appear on the TV set here in his dressing room and thirty million Americans will hang on his every word.

"These contestants are so close to the finals, they can taste it," he will say. "But there is only room for twelve. The country has voted, and the results are in. The drama is about to unfold, and *anything can happen*. This—is *American Idol*."

His pacing and inflection will be perfect.

I will get gooseflesh sitting here listening to him, and I'll wonder for a moment if I'm getting sick.

Tomorrow morning, at the radio station, I will do something I have never done before as a professional: I'll ask Seacrest to sign a photo for my six-year-old son.

YOU ARE MY IDOL, Seacrest will inscribe it.

Next week, back in New Jersey, we'll sit on the living-room sofa to watch the show, and my boy will see Ryan Seacrest and say, "I bet he's thinking of me."

Get thee behind me, Seacrest.

"Maybe so," I'll tell my son, and silently pray for his mortal soul. ■

to make reading interesting and fun for boys. His engaging Web site recommends guy-friendly books to young readers. guys-read.com.

»The Boys Project

Organized this year by a University of Alaska psychology professor, this consortium of educators and researchers hopes to spur federal- and state-funded initiatives to increase boys' academic skills and increase their ambition. boysproject.net.

»Raising and Educating Healthy Boys Project

The Educational Equity Center of the Academy for Educational Development created this program to study gender expectations, raise awareness among educators and parents of how they may be inadvertently limiting boys, and brainstorm solutions. edequity.org.

»Citizen Schools

Though not targeted just to boys, this organization, operating in twenty-two middle schools nationwide, seeks to engage students through the kind of experiential learning, such as apprenticeships with volunteers, that males tend to respond to. citizenschools.org.

Victor Ozols contributed to the reporting of this story and provided invaluable analysis.

Credits

Store Information For the items featured in *Esquire*, consult the Web site or call the phone number provided.

The Guide, p. 55: Truzzi shirt, 212-753-4000. Ermenegildo Zegna tie, zegna.com; 888-880-3462. **P. 56:** Valextra tie, 212-753-4000. Ermenegildo Zegna tie, zegna.com; 888-880-3462.

Liste Rouge tie, listerouge-paris.com. Ralph Lauren Black Label shirt, polo.com; 888-475-7674. Charles Tyrwhitt shirt, ctshirts.co.uk. Best of Class by Robert Talbott shirt, roberttalbott.com. Personally Pink by Thomas Pink shirt, 212-838-1928. Turnbull & Asser shirt, turnbullandasser.com; 877-887-6285. Charles Tyrwhitt shirt and cuff links, ctshirts.co.uk.

Gentlemen, Thank Us Later, p. 82: Armani Collezione suit, giorgioarmani.com. Brioni shirt, 212-376-5777. Joseph Abboud tie, 212-586-9140. J. M. Weston shoes, 212-535-2100. Jaeger-LeCoultre watch, jaeger-lecoultre.com; 800-552-8463. **P. 83:** Etro suit, 212-317-9096. IGN Joseph shirt, ign-joseph.com; 845-781-8185. Hermès tie, hermes.com. A. Testoni shoes, 212-223-0909. Turnbull & Asser pocket square, turnbullandasser.com; 877-887-6285.

P. 84: Hickey Freeman suit, 212-233-2363. Rufus shirt, rufus.com. Borrelli tie, 212-644-9610. Charles Tyrwhitt cuff links, ctshirts.co.uk. Santoni shoes, 212-794-3820. Ermenegildo Zegna pocket square, zegna.com; 888-880-3462. Longines watch, longines.com.

P. 85: Tommy Hilfiger suit and shirt, tommy.com. Dolce & Gabbana tie, 212-486-8920. Tod's shoes, 800-457-8637. Robert Talbott pocket square, roberttalbott.com. Oris chronograph, oris-watch.com. **P. 86:** Ralph Lauren Black Label suit and shirt, polo.com; 888-475-7674. Cesare Paciotti shoes, 212-452-1222. Raymond Weil watch, raymond-weil.com. **P. 87:** Prada jacket and trousers, 888-977-1900. Canali suit, 888-282-6060. Prada shirt, 888-977-1900. Dolce & Gabbana shirt, 877-703-4872. Spencer Hart tie, 212-753-7300. Turnbull & Asser pocket square, turnbullandasser.com; 877-887-6285. Cesare Paciotti shoes, 212-452-1222. Tod's shoes, 800-457-8637.

Photographs & Illustrations

This Way In, p. 20: McGruder: Kyle Christy; **p. 21:** Shirt: David Turner/HDPS. **Man at His Best, p. 24:** Tent: Roman Signer, Phaidon Press, 2006, phaidon.com; *In Flagrate Collecto*: Marilyn Gelfman Karp (Abrams)/photograph by Carl Williamson; **p. 26:** McShane: Roger Erickson/Icon International; **p. 28:** Shortz: Robin Holland/IFC Films; Mazar: Claudette Barius; **p. 32:** Cold War Kids: Matt Wignall; Kate York: Jonny Morgan; González: Jonas Jörneberg; **p. 40:** Spiaggia: Mark Ballogg; **p. 46:** Oz: Svend Lindbaek; corn, broccoli, arugula, cauliflower: Stockdisc/Getty Images; beans: Nicholas Eveleigh/Getty Images; tomato, chicken: Food Collection/Getty Images; turmeric, bread: Digital Vision/Getty Images; vinegar: Comstock Images/Alamy; **p. 48:** Grenrock Woods: Don Flood; **p. 50:** Desert: Chris Welch/Scripps Howard Photo Service/Newscom; car: Index Stock Imagery/Newscom. **The Guide, p. 55:** Redford: Everett Collection. **Chuck Klosterman's America, p. 68:** *Brothers of the Head*: IFC Films. **The Sexiest Woman Alive, pp. 74–75:** Styling by Jonas Hallberg at Montage Agency, L.A.; prop styling by Jaime Dean for Frank; hair by David Babaii, makeup by Matthew Vanleeuwen, both for avantgroupe.com. **The Game, p. 77:** Didrikson: Harry Warnecke/