

## The Tuxedo Shirt

Few are the wardrobes that include more than one tuxedo suit, but many are the events this time of year that might require you to dress formally. Short of a major cash outlay for new tailored clothing and better than showing up time after time in the same tired outfit, we suggest differentiating your dinner wear ensembles from night to night with a selection of shirts and different accessories that match the tenor of the event.

While it's called formalwear, festivity—and not formality—is sometimes the point of dressing, and the trick is to figure out what measure of each best respects the event.

The shirt collar is the first consideration, since the choices are so different: turndown or wing-tip collar. As the wing collar (pictured at far left below by Pink, [www.thomaspink.co.uk](http://www.thomaspink.co.uk)) comes to us from the time when men wore tailcoats, and by virtue of their being heavily starched, they usually confer more formality on an ensemble. However, they also may be the best choice if you are straying toward unusual tie choices (e.g. one of those sawed-off bolos) or choose, darest I say, no tie at all. The jaunty collar itself will announce the fact that you are dressed for festivity and not just some lout who forgot his bowtie. (Of course, we abhor strict style

rules of any kind, but we also can't conceive a circumstance under which you would wear the tips of the collar over your bowtie.)

Unpretentious and less starched, turndown collars are the more casual choice for a tuxedo shirt and therefore call for more interesting shirt-front treatments. Marcella, or cotton pique (pictured at right by Charles Tyrwhitt, [www.ctshirts.co.uk](http://www.ctshirts.co.uk)), cloths bespeak elegance as well without being quite so regimented. (While we applaud fitted shirts, in formalwear and especially with a turndown collar, the cut should be generous to distinguish your shirt from something you just wore to work.)

Of course, the term “black tie” is only an expression and nowadays you can safely accessorize with a spectrum of colored bows (those pictured are from Pink). And that said, why limit your shirt choice to white? Liste Rouge (pictured at center, [www.listerouge-paris.com](http://www.listerouge-paris.com)) doesn't think you need to and created the yellow blouse shown to prove it. It's an addition of color that is subtle, yet fun. While it won't detract from the tone of most formal occasions, neither does it ooze solemnity. When you can achieve that balance, you've mastered formalwear.

—Jack Bettridge

