

Spring & Summer Men's Fashion Trends

Written by Lauren Grifol

Monday, 07 May 2018 10:31 - Last Updated Tuesday, 08 May 2018 13:55



Known as the menswear powerhouse of Arizona, The Clothier, has been providing the men of our Valley with a carefully curated collection for almost 50 years. Opened in 1969, and housed at the eminent Biltmore Fashion Park, the Clothier is the destination for a man who desires a level of quality and international sophistication recognizable anywhere in the world. From traditional cuts and patterns to modern fits and cutting-edge colors, men of all ages can find their complete look at this one-stop-wardrobe-shop that sells anything from knickers to knockouts. As a major component of their business make-up, The Clothier continues to evolve with time; and since in high demand, they have incorporated an expanded selection of luxury sportswear clothing. The assortment of their collection now ranges from top-selling dress wear clothing labels such as Canali, Ermenegildo Zegna, Samuelson, Eton and Zanella, to the latest in luxury sportswear by L.B.M., AG, Eton, Green Ribbon, Circle of Gentleman, and Sand.

Beneath all of the recognition and awards are the people who make it all possible; and after having a conversation with the Sportswear Director Tom Simon, we understand the level of specific tailoring The Clothier exhibits for its clientele.

Here, Simon, gives *AZ Foothills* readers an inside into the latest Spring/Summer trends and his expert opinion of popular pieces seen on the runway.



AFM: What does it mean to be the sportswear Director?

TS: As the sportswear director, I buy the categories other than the traditional suits and sportcoats. I buy the denim and more casual stuff. Then I keep the stock levels where they need to be and try to stay on point with what's coming and what's happening trend-wise.

AFM: Where do you find and purchase your pieces?

TS: Usually it's New York, Las Vegas and Chicago. There is a big show in Las Vegas. It started off as one big show called Magic, but now there are a million shows that spiraled off of it so we usually go to the ones that are more contemporary.

AFM: What are key sportswear pieces?

TS: There are a lot of trends that are just starting to happen. There is a lot of linen coming back, especially linen in shirts. It is something we are getting a pretty good return of. A lot of men like to travel with it because wrinkles are just part of the look of it. A lot more color, everything is not quite so monochromatic like we have been used to seeing, and then, in general, there has been a shift of more formal pieces drifting into sportswear because of the new construction. Sports coats are being made much more lightweight and soft, so it has become a more casual look.

AFM: What are your three go-to, pieces of sportswear?

TS: I would say a soft jacket, probably just a white linen shirt in any form and then either a super-lightweight denim or cotton pants. There's a lot

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going on in cotton pants in general right now. They are cleaner and slimmer-looking. They do not look like Docker's or khaki pants we've seen in the past so much. They just are cool cut pants.

AFM: What general vibe do you strive to go for during your time choosing the pieces to put in your store?

TS: European-influenced, for sure. It's a tricky store because we have a lot of older clients but those older guys are still very current. So what we have been working on is opening up our clientele to a larger age group. So we are trying to get the younger guys in here without scaring off the older guys who have been shopping here for 30 to 40 years. So I would say the vibe is updated European style. We just want our guys to stay current; the last thing our customers want is to feel like they are being involved in a fad or a trend. They just want to know that they are up to date, period, and the European influence has been around forever, and it changes but it doesn't have to be extreme it is just a matter of being current.

AFM: How does sportswear relate to athleisure?

TS: Well, they are starting to overlap for sure. This is more on the more formal side of the clothing we carry, but we just received all wool suits that are machine washable. A lot of the overlap stems from the development of all of these tech fabrics and a lot of it has come from the athleisure world. They are calling the fabric TECHMerino, and it is basically all of the moisture wicking and thermal qualities the fabrics have that is all coming from the research put into athleisure. So, the fabric is what is starting to bleed over into everyday wear. It helps get away from that 'I'm going to yoga' or 'I am going to the gym' look. You may have that same fabric on but you don't have to look like you are headed to sweat. And believe me, nothing against athleisure because it has been a huge success but it is nice to make yourself look like you are wearing street style as opposed to making it look like you are going to go exercise every moment of the day.

AFM: How do you feel about the athleisure trend?

TS: I like the way that it is bleeding in. Being in this for so long, you get to be a purist about fabrics and you might want all cotton or all wool but some of the things that they have developed you really can hardly tell the difference. So yeah, I mean, I'm game. I am not going to look like I am going to yoga every day, but I might wear a cool tech fabric pant with a sneaker or something like that so it doesn't look super athletic but it can look modern. I think it is definitely here to stay in one form or another, for sure. In the store, we have two athleisure brands that we carry because it is a very small portion of what we do, and I don't know if that will expand or not. I'm not sure if people come to us for that, but if they want it we do buy a few brands that I like that can convey that look without looking too athletic.

AFM: What are big trends for the Spring and Summer of 2018?

TS: I am a huge fan of the softer jackets, and there is a lot now of what they call the 'open patch pocket' which is a casual looking coat that is unlined. I like that look with pretty much anything, and I think that that look can apply to just about any guy who's 20 or a guy who's 75. I don't think that look has any sort of age restriction. So that soft sports coat is a solid piece. They are starting to see a little tiny return in pleats in pants, but a really modified pleat. In the 80's, there was this big full pleat in pants, and now it is trimmer with these short 'scissor pleats,' but it is going to be a while before full pleats really make a comeback. A lot of older men have never let it go and severely dislike the flat-front look, but I spent all the 90's getting guys out of pleats and into flat-fronts, so I hope I don't have to get them back into pleats again.

AFM: Do you base your purchases for The Clothierie on the runway shows?

TS: No, there's that period of time I call 'from runway to reality.' Just because there is something on the runway, does not mean it is going to be flying off the shelves. It might be about five years before it starts to work its way into the general public. Runways are influences. Younger customers will come in with a picture and say 'I want this,' and I tell them that we can try to achieve that look but they need to understand that runway is done for impact and that it is not a daily wear sort of thing. I mean, it depends on the line of course, but some of them are really crazy and extreme. Which is fun to see but they can't take it quite so literal.

For more information on The Clothierie, click [here](#).