

CLASH OF THE TARTANS

THEY say that in life you will never be further than six metres from a spider, and they also say that in London you will never be more than ten metres from a rat. These days it seems you will never be more than twenty metres from a plaid or tartan shirt. Farmers wearing them to work, teeny-boppers wearing them with belts cinched at the waist teamed with leggings, it is a well known fact that the tartan trend will never go out of style. Author of Tartan: Textiles that Changed the World, Dr Jonathan Faiers claims it is a "cloth of durability". "Its history is in the establishment – in clansmanship, the aristocracy and military forces, but because it's become the uniform of rugged masculinity it's also revisited in an ironic way – by subcultures such as grunge, punk and gay clones".

With the ubiquitous nature of tartan in today's world is a man's answer to the dandy tailored shirt and skinny suit jacket that rocked the menswear departments in the 1990's. With the rise of indie music and help from Kings of Leon, rocking the tartan check has never been more popular. Givenchy and Tom Ford to name a few have also featured tartan in many of their collections. High Street is the new home of tartan. UK powerhouse Topman reported that tartan shirt sales are up a whopping 540% from just two years ago and that the store currently sells on average four every minute. Minimum fashion thought for maximum colour and pattern injections into your wardrobe. Topman design director Gordon Richardson said, "when a guy is happy with an item he sticks with it. Men are more likely to buy an updated version of something they feel comfortable with rather than experiment".

A universal love of tartan has seen a rise in sales in countries like Japan. Co-author of Tartan: Romancing the Plaid, Jeffrey Banks has highlighted that "men who don't wear patterns or colour wear tartan and that's international. The Japanese are crazy about it, all architects have a plaid shirt, and every chic Milanese doctor has a tartan scarf".



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