

TOWN & COUNTRY

NOVEMBER 1991/\$3.00



CAN YOU TRUST YOUR
MAMMOGRAM?

THE LURE OF THE MOJAVE

LE CORDON BLEU:
COMEBACK OF THE LEGENDARY
COOKING SCHOOL

PLUS:
T&C'S GUIDE TO
AMERICA'S TOP MEN'S TAILORS



CHRIS DOYLE
HIGHFLYING SKIWEAR

*Suiting the American Gent:
T&C's Guide to*

America's Top Tailors

BY G. BRUCE BOYER

It has long been the accepted belief in this country that the fine men's tailors are all but gone, dinosaurs tottering on the very edge of extinction. Even the tailors themselves have been known to complain that their sons are more interested in computers, real estate or dentistry than in the time-honored trade; that there are no apprentices in the ranks; and that their cutters and sewers are growing decrepit at their workbenches. With the arrival in the 1960s of the men's-clothing designers and their high-quality ready-to-wear, well-dressed men began to turn to the racks for their wardrobes. It seemed that the curtain had fallen on the days when a gentleman and his tailor would, together, design the gentleman's clothes, the days when the maker's label was worn on the *inside* of the garment.

Yet reports of the death of the grand old tradition are greatly exaggerated. For today, "individualized" tailoring—a term for both true custom-made garments (those made from an individually constructed and designed pattern for the exclusive use of a single customer) and made-to-measure garments (those made from a standard pattern that has been modified to suit an individual's measurements)—is enjoying a re-

surgence. Just four years ago, the *Wall Street Journal* conducted a survey of the personal styles of big-company chief executive officers and found that fully a quarter of America's ceos have their suits tailor made. And these ceos themselves represent just a percentage of well-dressed men from various professions who are turning toward tailor-made attire.

"The continually escalating prices of designer clothes have actually been a great help to the custom tailor these past several seasons," explains Dougal Munro, president of Holland & Sherry, one of the great cloth suppliers to the world's finest tailors. "The tailors' prices no longer seem so stratospheric when you consider what some of these designer togs cost off the rack."

"Exactly the point," affirms Kenneth Bates, president and ceo of Roger LaViale Ltd., another of the famous cloth merchants to the elite of bespoke garb. "Not to mention the fact that, in all ready-made clothes, the cloth selection and styling are narrowly limited. Men are realizing that for about the same money as a high-wattage designer-name suit, they can have their own tailor made—with a perfect fit and in the precise cloth they want. We've found that our sales to the trade have been up 105 percent in

the last three-and-a-half years."

"These days, most executives don't have the time to shop," adds Michael Renzi, a successful tailor from Lakeside, California. "They don't want to spend their few precious leisure hours dealing with a salesclerk who, in some cases, is a complete stranger and doesn't know any more about clothing than the customer. Tailors understand these time constraints, and many are happy to come to the customer's office."

Such a degree of personalized service is nothing new in the tailor's trade, but a rediscovered appreciation of it is rejuvenating the business. So is the fact that many tailors' sons, disillusioned with the fast tracks of yuppie-dom, have returned to the fold with new ideas, youthful enthusiasm and a renewed dedication to quality and service. Working side by side with their fathers, they talk both of contemporary concepts and of continuing the old tradition of dedication that is the hallmark of the true craftsman.

"Just look at this shoulder," beams Anthony Zanghi Jr., holding up a beautiful tweed hacking jacket for inspection and admiration. "You won't see a better shoulder than this one on Savile Row, I guarantee it." His father stands by, also beaming with pride, and thinking of the day

*Henry Stewart is a legend in the tailoring business, a "couturier of men's clothing." He started at the age of 10 in his father's London shop, and has been going strong for the last seventy-seven years. Besides designing and making elegant clothes for his customers, Stewart is often called upon to produce the onscreen wardrobes for Hollywood's leading actors—among them Robert De Niro and Joe Pesci in *Goodfellas* and Harrison Ford in *Regarding Henry*.*

when he will turn over his firm, New York's venerable Zanghi-Weatherill, to his talented son.

"You should come to Seattle," says another tailor's son, Gian deCaro, of Gian deCaro Sartoria. "We can handsew a suit to make an Armani turn pea green with envy." The earnest and affable Chris Despos (not yet out of his 30s), of Despos Custom Tailoring, in Dallas, comes to New York to spend his two-week vacation studying patternmaking with the great master tailor Henry Stewart. And Frank Ventresca, of Ventresca Clothiers, outside Philadelphia, will tell you he's looked carefully at dozens of films from the 1940s because he is very interested in the draped cut of the sleeves of that period.

Whether all this means that there will be a true renaissance of individually made clothing remains to be seen. In the end, one supposes, we will get the craftsmen we deserve. But it is heartening to report that the state of the art is healthier now than it has been in a quarter century.

And so it seems timely for *Town & Country* to present its selection of the top men's tailors in America today. They have several things in common. To begin with, they only use the finest English and Italian cloth—such names as Holland & Sherry, Wain Shiell, Carlo Barbera, Zegna, Dormeuil, Roger LaViale, Isles and Artexil will be noted on swatch book and bolt. Any good tailor knows there isn't much sense in wasting hours of meticulous handiwork on inferior materials: would Chippendale have worked in plywood?

Since these firms are interested in building long-term relationships with clients ("until one of us dies," as it is often put) as well as superior suits, some patience, honest communication and settling in is needed on both sides. Tailors will usually want three fittings over a six-to-eight-week period the first time around. Then, after satisfaction has been achieved, subsequent orders can be expedited much more quickly, and with only a final fitting.

Then, there is an expression tailors use to define the silhouette and detailing with which they are most conversant and confident: the "house style." One tailor's house style might be an Ivy League sack suit à la Brooks Brothers; another's might be a terribly British upholstered look; a third, the most current Milanese creation. Many tailors, being the

amiable men they are, will attempt anything the customer requests, but the results are often not good when they are asked to stray too far afield. Better to find the tailor whose conception agrees with your own, rather than try to convert him.

One final word on the difference between custom made and made to measure. Because it takes additional time and skill to make an individual pattern, true custom tailoring is usually more expensive than made to measure. But it should be noted that custom doesn't necessarily mean bet-

ter. There is extremely fine made to measure, as well as extremely crude custom tailoring. The firms listed below are those we consider exemplary in either custom or made-to-measure work—or both.

Despos Custom Tailoring, 500 Crescent Court, Suite 152, Dallas, TX 75201; (214) 871-3707. Chris Despos has been the master tailor of his own shop for the past decade now, and has developed a feel for working with lightweight cloth (his most popular topcoat is a 10-ounce serge). His house style falls between a high-fashion look and Brooks Brothers: classically

executive who favors a conservatively fashionable European silhouette.

Nathan's Custom Tailors, 828 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23219; (804) 649-0508. Michael Zell's father started the business fifty-seven years ago, and the firm prides itself on having many third-generation customers. The house style is updated traditional: jackets are of soft construction with some waist shaping and natural shoulders. Made-to-measure suits are \$600–\$1,200; sports jackets start at \$500; cashmere topcoats, \$2,200.

THE MIDWEST

Paul Cicchini, 251 Merrill Street, Birmingham, MI 48009; (313) 646-0535. A tailor for more than forty years, Cicchini considers the proven, old-fashioned ways the best. "I tell my tailors to slow down; we're interested in doing it better, not faster." As one might expect, the house style here is conservative, a medium American silhouette with everything in moderation. Cicchini finds himself making quite a few double-breasted suits these days. Custom suits are \$1,500–\$3,200; sports jackets from \$1,100; tuxedos, \$2,200.

Mazzei Custom Tailors, 625 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 642-1221. Fred Mazzei says that his customers' biggest complaint is that his suits never wear out, proving that those who work at something for more than forty years learn a thing or two about doing it well. His house style is a lean, square-shouldered classic shape—but with a concern for the telling and just-that-bit-different detail: a unique angle to the lapel gorge, a certain thrust to the shoulder, a particular way of setting the sleeve buttons. Suits, \$1,500; sports jackets, \$1,200; tuxedos, \$2,000–\$4,000.

Joseph Morrone & Son, 1 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 372-4668. Located on the same spot since 1929, the firm is now overseen by the "Son," Alex Morrone. He believes that avoidance of extremes is the key to correct business dress for his customers. Thus the house style tends toward a conservative garment and avoids like the plague anything that smacks of high fashion. Custom suits, \$1,500; sports jackets, \$1,200; topcoats, \$1,500; \$2,500 for a camel's-hair polo coat.

Steve Petix Clothiers, 31455 Southfield, Birmingham, MI



JONATHAN BECKER

Paul Becker of Verl Custom Tailoring in Kansas City, Missouri, is one of a number of tailors' sons who are bringing youthful enthusiasm to the time-honored trade. The Verl silhouette combines comfort and ease with an expression to the shoulder and smooth, tailored lines.

ter. There is extremely fine made to measure, as well as extremely crude custom tailoring. The firms listed below are those we consider exemplary in either custom or made-to-measure work—or both.

THE SOUTH

Custom Clothing of Atlanta, 8735 Dunwoody Place, Atlanta, GA 30350; (404) 594-9668. Proprietor and master tailor Al Kleber is a third-generation tailor who opened his own shop six years ago. The firm specializes in lightweight cloths—super 70s worsteds and finer. Seventy percent of its customers are conser-

trim, with a slightly lower button stance, straight-but-soft shoulders and subtle shaping with plenty of comfort. Suits, \$1,800; sports jackets, \$1,350; tuxedos, \$2,000; trousers, \$450.

Mark Dunphy Clothiers, 912 Lakewood Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698; (813) 736-3499. In his shop in this affluent suburb of Clearwater, Mark Dunphy turns out made-to-measure suits (from \$750–\$3,000); sports jackets \$500–\$2,000 and tuxedos (starting at \$750), mainly in tropical worsteds in the 6½–9-ounce range. He caters to the younger

48009; (313) 645-5560. Phillip Formaro is the master tailor at Petix, and he is a great believer in making his customers look as trim, slim, plumb straight and square shouldered as possible. And anything but the finest silk lining, he is quick to tell you, is the mark of an inferior garment. Custom suits start at \$1,275; sports jackets, \$875; topcoats start at \$1,500.

Savile Row Custom Clothier & Shirtmaker, 9773 Clayton Road, St. Louis, MO 63124; (314) 567-8500. About 65 percent of proprietor David Shockley's customers prefer an Anglo-American silhouette with a square, clean shoulder line, a high armhole and definite waist. Made-to-measure suits, \$750-\$1,400; sports jackets, \$650-\$1,250; tuxedos, \$950.

Verl Custom Tailor, 424 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, MO 64112; (816) 531-6200. Paul Becker's father, Verl, started the business thirty-three years ago, so Paul grew up around swatch books and cutting shears. He favors a crisp-looking garment with some shaping and medium-square shoulders (rather than the soft-shouldered, looser look). Custom sports jackets in 8-11-ounce wools and silk-and-wool blends, with prices starting at \$800, are very popular here. Suits from \$1,100; trousers, \$275; topcoats from \$1,000.

THE WEST

Carroll & Co., 466 North Rodeo Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; (213) 273-9060. Looking at the vast selection of ready-made suits that line the walls of Beverly Hills' most gentlemanly shop, one might not realize that "made to measure" constitutes a large part of Carroll & Co.'s business. "We have about 3,000 swatches to choose from," says the young John Carroll, who works alongside his father, Richard. Of the five or six best-selling styles here, a favorite is the crisp, square-shouldered and well-flaired Anglo-American. Another is a contemporary adaptation of the traditional American—made with a fuller shoulder, broader chest and lower button stance. Suits are \$950-\$2,500 (the latter for cashmere); sports jackets from \$700; tuxedos from \$1,150.

Gian deCaro Sartoria, 2025 First Avenue, Seattle, WA 98121; (206) 448-2812. As a child, Gian deCaro used to nap under his father Silvio's cutting table; today he helps his father run one of the most elegant custom shops on the

West Coast. The deCaros will produce perfectly traditional clothing if asked, but their interest lies in more contemporary Milanese and Florentine styling. Suits are \$800-\$2,000; sports jackets start at \$700; topcoats start at \$1,000.

Albert Mariani Inc., 321 S. Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212; (213) 276-5972. This shop, which has been making elegant suits for sixty-five years, prides itself on a very smooth shoulder and chest, subtle waist shaping and a trim hipline. Custom suits, \$1,850; sports jackets,

balza was trained in his craft in Milan and started his own firm in Los Angeles in 1953. He prefers a decidedly slim line, with square shoulders, high lapel gorge, narrow sleeves and a slightly higher waistline, which, he argues, is more flattering. Ten-to-twelve-ounce super-worsted are a specialty here. Custom suits start at \$1,950; sports jackets at \$1,600; tuxedos at \$2,600.

THE NORTHEAST

Garrick Anderson, 108-110 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011; (212) 620-4077. Anderson is both a designer of a highly

father was its president before him. DeConto regards anything other than the absolutely traditional American natural-shouldered suit to be a bit too dramatic. Custom suits are \$1,000-\$3,000; sports jackets are \$800; tuxedos, \$1,500.

The Boston Shop, 234 Clarendon Street, Boston, MA 02116 (617) 247-3344. "A natural-shouldered coat with gentle suppression" is David Marson's description of the silhouette that has brought his shop the constant business he and his father have enjoyed for forty-five years. Made-to-measure suits are \$1,250; sports jackets, \$975; topcoats, \$1,000.

Chipp Clothiers, 342 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10173; (212) 687-0850. Simplicity and tradition are the bywords at the shop owned by Jim and Paul Winston, whose father started the business almost half a century ago. But the simplicity pertains only to the natural-shouldered silhouette: the firm has always had a reputation for its unusual fabric colors and patterns. The Winstons also enjoy doing the unusual garment: the Norfolk jacket, plus fours, mess jacket, Inverness cape and challis dinner jacket, for instance. Suits: \$1,450 (custom) and \$650 (made to measure); sports jackets: \$1,100 (custom) and \$400 (made to measure); custom tuxedos, \$1,100; custom cashmere topcoats, \$3,000.

Frank N. Cicco, 133 West North Street, Butler, PA 16001; (412) 287-5814. In their shop north of Pittsburgh, Cicco and his son Larry favor a business look of some crispness, medium-square shoulders and slight suppression. But they also lean toward traditional cloths with slightly different coloration (white chalk-stripes and pinstripes are, in fact, now rather a minority of their orders), and fancy, pure silk linings. Custom suits from \$850; sports jackets, \$600; topcoats, \$950.

Nino Corvato, 244 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10001; (212) 679-0133. The Italian-born Corvato's first job in this country was with Brooks Brothers, where he eventually became manager of the store's tailoring department. In 1980 he started his own firm (as well as becoming a teacher of design and patternmaking at Parsons School of Design). He prefers a fairly conservative Anglo-
(Continued on page 295)



JONATHAN BECKER

Gian deCaro, right, considers his father, Silvio, his mentor, and today they run Gian deCaro Sartoria, Seattle's most elegant custom shop. While they're happy to produce traditional clothing, their main interest lies in the more current Milanese and Florentine styling.

\$1,500 (in cashmere, \$3,500); tuxedos from \$3,500.

Renzi Imageware, 5505 E. Carson Street, Lakewood, CA 90713; (714) 828-0601. Michael Renzi favors a relaxed Italianate silhouette and soft fabrics that provide maximum comfort and drape. He does both made-to-measure garments (suits from \$600-\$900; sports jackets at \$500); and custom work (suits from \$1,200; sports jackets at \$1,900; trousers, \$550).

Giacomo Trabalba, 723 N. Laciencia Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 652-6396. Tra-

regarded line of ready-to-wear clothes and a custom tailor. His style is reminiscent of 1940s Hollywood—the fabrics come in unusual colors and the silhouette is relaxed—but the shoulders are not as exaggerated. Double-breasted suits are very popular here. Custom suits from \$2,000; sports jackets from \$1,600; trousers, \$450; tuxedos, \$2,600.

Bartels of Boston Custom Clothier, 33 Kingston Street, Boston, MA 02111; (617) 426-5028. The firm, which this year celebrates its 100th birthday, is now guided by Ralph DeConto, whose

(Continued from page 241)

Italian cut, with exceptionally soft construction. Suits, \$1,200–\$2,400; sports jackets, \$800–\$1,800; cashmere topcoats, \$2,500–\$5,000.

Alfred Dunhill of London, 450 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10022; (212) 753-9282. The bestseller at Dunhill's is a silhouette called the Park Avenue: a natural-shouldered coat with a high armhole and button stance on a suppressed waist that is somewhat reflective of the riding-jacket style. Custom suits, \$1,700–\$7,000; sports jackets, \$1,300–\$4,700; tuxedos, \$1,800–\$7,000; topcoats, \$1,600–\$7,000.

William Fioravanti, 45 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019; (212) 355-1540. The firm of Fioravanti, which prides itself on precision and crispness, draws the customer in search of the definitive executive look: square shoulders, trim body, straight trousers, close-fitting chest. Custom suits from \$3,500; sports jackets from \$2,700; tuxedos, \$3,750.

Alan Flusser, 14 East 52nd Street, New York, NY 10022; (212) 888-7100. Flusser has long been an advocate of the softly constructed drape style devised in the 1930s by Savile Row's Anderson & Sheppard: minimum construction of the chest and shoulders, but with a fuller back and upper body, and with full-cut trousers to be worn with braces. Custom suits, \$1,350; sports jackets, \$1,000; cashmere blazers, \$2,000; tuxedos, \$1,500.

Giliberto Designs, 142 West 36th Street, New York, NY 10018; (212) 695-4925. The Giliberto family, who have been in the tailoring business in Manhattan for thirty-five years, produce custom and made-to-measure garments of both American traditional and European high-fashion styling. Custom suits from \$1,200 (\$750 made to measure); custom sports jackets from \$850 (\$500 made to measure); cashmere topcoats, \$2,200 custom (\$900 made to measure).

Adrian Jules Ltd., 1392 East Ridge Road, Rochester, NY 14621; (716) 342-7160. "We're particularly interested in the quality details," say brothers Peter and Arnald Roberti. They will produce some updated fashion garments, but mainly stick to the classic American silhouette and a natural-shouldered, soft-chested coat. Custom and made-to-measure suits, \$745–\$4,200; \$2,100 for custom-made cashmere sports jackets.

Kevin Korban Custom Menswear, 3010 R Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007; (202) 337-5721. "I think of myself as a chameleon," says Korban. "I try to produce whatever style my customer wants." He conducts much of his made-to-measure business by going to the office or home of the businessman who is too busy to shop. Suits are \$650–\$3,500; sports jackets are \$375–\$1,500.

Burstow & Logsdail, 37 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019; (212) 752-5030. Logsdail is new to our shores—he just opened a New York shop this year—but not to fine

tailoring, since he worked in Savile Row for more than twenty years. In fact, the book *Savile Row: An Illustrated History* quotes royal interior designer David Hicks as saying: "Lennie Logsdail is the best tailor in the world." His house style is traditional English: the natural shoulder a bit extended, and waisted. He takes all the measurements and particulars and faxes them to his London workshop, where the garment is made up for a basted fitting. It is then sent back here for the final alterations, personally executed by Logsdail. Voilà! A custom-made Savile Row suit without leaving the States. Custom suits, \$2,000; sports jackets, \$1,200; tuxedos, \$2,500.

Alan Lawrence Clothier, 1 Faneuil Hall, Boston, MA 02109; (617) 227-1144. Although many customers prefer a traditional silhouette, this firm's inclination is toward a more drape-cut garment, with a slightly 1940s feeling. It is also known for handmade shirts and one-of-a-kind accessories. Custom suits from \$1,400; sports jackets from \$800; tuxedos, \$1,500.

House of Maurizio, 18 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022; (212) 759-3230. Tony Maurizio's business card reads, "If you must ask the price, disregard this card." Elegance does not come cheap, and the house style here—a very clean silhouette with definite shaping and either soft or square shoulders—is indeed elegant. The firm likes to do double-breasted that roll to the bottom button, and shawl-collar tuxedos are something of a specialty. Custom suits are \$3,000; sports jackets from \$2,500; tuxedos, \$3,800.

John Orlando Custom Tailor, 17 East 45th Street, New York, NY 10017; (212) 986-0220. In forty years of tailoring, Orlando has become a great believer in the moderate conservatism of the executive business suit: seminatural shoulder, some waist fitting, trim hipline. Custom suits, \$1,500; sports jackets, \$1,000; tuxedos, \$2,000.

Saint Laurie, 897 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 473-0100. While the firm does a large ready-to-wear trade, it is especially known for its made-to-measure clothing. Three house styles predominate: the Gramercy, a classic American, natural-shouldered silhouette; the Mayfair, an English approach, with a wider shoulder, lower button stance and more shape; and the Biella, more of a high-fashion, European style. Then there's the collection of Avery Lucas, a young designer with an eye for the feel and detail of 1940s Hollywood, à la Robert Taylor, John Garfield and Robert Mitchum. Made-to-measure suits, \$850–\$1,400; sports jackets, \$600–\$1,000; topcoats from \$900 (to \$1,500 for cashmere). (Custom clothing is \$200 more.)

Sanitate Tailors, 27 West 55th Street, New York, NY 10019; (212) 755-0937. There is always an extensive inventory of fine English and Italian cloth at this shop, and Vincenzo

Sanitate cuts and stitches every garment on the premises, whether in the traditional silhouette or the more current full-chested British styling. Custom suits from \$3,500; sports jackets, \$2,350; trousers, \$1,150.

Savile Row New York by Raphael, 509 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022; (212) 888-6555. Raphael Raffaelli feels that virtually no one does a traditional Anglo-American lounge suit the way it should be done: with full-bladed back and easy chest, an extended soft shoulder, good waist shaping and gentle flair. "Respectability with style," is how he puts it. Custom suits, \$2,000–\$3,500; sports jackets from \$1,600–\$2,500.

Henry Stewart, 37 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019; (212) 421-3585. Henry Stewart and his brother both learned their artistry in their father's London workshop. The brother stayed in London, but Henry came to the U.S. and started his own firm in 1947. There is little doubt in any of his customers' minds that he understands the male figure and how to improve it. Stewart loves the styling of the mid Thirties and feels that it will be the look of the Nineties. Custom suits are \$3,500; sports jackets, \$3,000.

John Tudor, 22 East 49th Street, New York, NY 10017; (212) 753-1168. The European-trained Tudor is enamored of the elegant style of dress favored by a Clark Gable or a Cary Grant: square and high shoulders, besom pockets, peak lapels on both single- and double-breasted suits and a straight hipline. He does a number of one-button, single-breasted jackets. Custom suits, \$2,000; sports jackets, \$1,500; topcoats, \$2,200.

Ventresca Ltd., 315 Old York Road, Jenkintown, PA 19046; (215) 576-1178. Frank Ventresca worked for his father for six years, then went out on his own, concentrating more on the fashion-oriented suit than on the traditional ones he had been making. Ten years later, Frank's style is very current—broader shoulders, easier fit, more drape—although he is happy to do a more conservative version for his more staid customers. Made-to-measure suits are \$850–\$1,100 (custom, from \$1,000); sports jackets are from \$800 (custom, from \$750); tuxedos are \$1,300 (custom, \$1,600).

Zanghi Weatherill, 22 East 49th Street, New York, NY 10017; (212) 751-3130. The Englishman Bernard Weatherill opened a shop in the U.S. in 1923. In 1950 he was joined by Anthony Zanghi, who became president upon Weatherill's retirement in 1972—the same year Anthony Zanghi Jr. joined the firm. Father and son are intent on maintaining the tradition, and their house style reflects the English hacking silhouette: definite waist suppression and flair, slanted pockets and a three-button front. They are, as it happens, the only remaining hunt-coat makers in the country (price: \$2,000). Suits, \$2,000; sports jackets, \$1,500; topcoats, \$2,000. □