

THE VINSON VIEW

Quality maniac Nick Vinson on the who, what, when, where and why



SOME DUMB MALE DRESSING RULES

- Wear a shirt
- No collarless shirts
- Wear a tie OR ties are not permitted
- Wear a jacket
- Can't wear leather or suede
- No socks, no lunch
- No trousers, no dinner
- No polo necks
- No polo shirts emblazoned with logos
- No light-coloured or white-rimmed footwear
- No shorts
- No T-shirts
- No hoods on jumpers

01 The ties that bind

Picky Nicky gets hot under the collar about dated dress codes

I hate being told what to do and, even more so, being told what to wear. Of course, I won't object to a helpful 'black tie' written on a formal event invitation – it's good to see people dress up when appropriate, and I am the first one to scowl if someone does not follow such requests.

But dress codes in hotels, restaurants and clubs, directed mainly at men, are painful. They are so dated and hung up on archetypal pieces of clothing. In some places, you must wear a tie, and in others, you can't. I know chic guys who have been handed a tie to wear with a cashmere roll-neck jumper to abide by rigid rules.

Why must a man wear a collared shirt (for example, at London's Harry's Bar or Mark's Club)? What's with the collar fixation, and why can't I wear a cashmere T-shirt or silk sweater, on its own or under a jacket? And talking of jackets, what's with 'Gentlemen are required to wear a jacket for dinner' at The Farm at Cape Kidnappers, an upscale lodge in New Zealand's Hawke's Bay? (It's a hotel on a farm!)

It's the same at many New York venues. At the 21 Club, Matt, a fellow quality maniac, was once asked, while wearing smart \$500 custom-made denim jeans, 'Where are you having lunch today?' by the maître d'. Another time, he was simply told to leave for wearing loafers without socks.

On the subject of shoes, if Frances McDormand can pull off custom-made Birkenstocks with her Valentino Couture gown at the Oscars, following the fuss around the Cannes Film Festival insisting high heels are worn by every woman on the red carpet, then surely anything goes.

I am all for limiting the sea of Havaianas, which I would rather not see in hotels except pool-side. But I don't appreciate staff confusing them with the calf or crocodile sandals that I wear for six months of the year. I will even pair them with a smoking jacket in the evening.

Shorts for men are so frowned upon that we once had to be spirited through the staff entrance at the Villa San Michele in Florence so no one would see the offending calves of one of our party, who was dressed in smart tailored shorts (in August).

I think active sportswear, such as workout clothing, should be limited to the gym, and should never be worn in a hotel, even at breakfast. However, sneakers and trainers, blacklisted and discouraged in so many places, have become a tricky issue, as today they are the biggest selling product category across the board in luxury houses. Which just illustrates that it is time to ditch the silly rules. You can break them all and look chicer, smarter and better than everyone else in the room. ✱



02

Square feat

Tailored from a patchwork of Hermès' signature silk carrés, this blouson is best worn with nothing underneath. Available summer 2020, hermes.com



03

Clean cut

Officine Generale's new pastel sweatshirts have their sleeves cut off and rolled up, which is bound to annoy the sticklers. officinegenerale.com