

Italian style: now

Meet the tailors reinventing the signature Neapolitan look while keeping traditional skills alive

WORDS by Alicia Kirby
PHOTOGRAPHY by Rocco Ronandelli

Naples may well be the Mediterranean capital of men's tailoring and its citizens take pride in their dress code, which they parade around the city's yacht clubs. The Neapolitan look? A lightweight, deconstructed jacket, shirts with armhole seams high on the shoulder and with subtly ruffled pleats, and a button trouser-fly (never zipped).

The number of independent tailors dwindled from 3,000 in the 19th century to 600 in the 1970s as tastes changed. And now? "Today, there are only about 35 tailors I know of in the city," says Luca Rubinacci, of leading tailor Mariano Rubinacci. However, Isaia and Kiton employ hundreds of tailors and have set up schools and apprenticeships – something Rubinacci and the smaller companies also embrace. Monocle took a road trip around the city and region to visit some of the best firms. — (M)



02 Mariano Rubinacci Neapolitan flair

The style advice of Mariano's natively dressed father was so sought-after by Neapolitan nobility that he decided to impart his impeccable taste by starting this family business. In 1941 his firm earned the right to use the crest of the then king of Italy. Rubinacci was one of the first tailors to deconstruct the traditional jacket and use lining and padding sparingly to create the lightweight look that the Neapolitan jacket is known for today. Rubinacci's 42 tailors create bespoke suits, shirts and ties (as shown by head of men's sales, Gianni Natale, left). The knitted silk ties are in high demand and the jackets are identified by their curved breast pocket and soft, natural shoulder. marianorubinacci.it



01 Isaia Signature style

Isaia started life as a purveyor of luxury fabrics and is run today by the third-generation of the Isaia family from Casaliuovo – a town renowned for its tailors. Master tailor Gianluca Rubino (far right) gives the brand a "youthful" twist to the traditional Neapolitan style with a slim-fit and shorter jacket length. "There are about 400 steps involved in making an Isaia suit," says product manager Alessandra Isaia. isaia.it



03 Finamore A family affair

"We have all been wearing Finamore shirts ever since we can remember," says Simone Finamore, who runs the firm – founded by his grandma, with his sister, two brothers and father (right). They offer a made-to-measure service with a choice of over 1,000 fabric patterns and a variety of font types for monograms. Customers, including Nicolas Sarkozy, favour the narrower shoulders of the Finamore shirt. finamore.it



04 Kiton The fabric king

At the Kiton factory in Arzano there isn't a machine in sight. Instead, there are 350 tailors who hand cut and sew each suit, shirt and tie. There's even a centre dedicated to fabric research. "Kiton buyers go for the lightness of our jackets. One of our most exclusive fabrics is a 14 micron fabric – a very light wool that is even more expensive than cashmere," says vice-president Maria Giovanna Paone. kiton.it



06 Mario Muscariello Linen jacket go-to

Mario Muscariello (left) has shirt making in his DNA, having learnt from his mother, Chiara. Exquisitely hand-sewn shirts come with matching handkerchiefs and feature collar pockets for mother-of-pearl stays. Linen jackets without lining allow for freedom of arm movement due to their shirt-like construction. Muscariello was also one of the first tailors to introduce a cashmere shirt. mariomuscariello.com



05 Salvatore Piccolo For perfect shirts

In 1994, at the tender age of 16, Salvatore Piccolo founded this bespoke shirt-maker together with his mother. From a cosy top-floor atelier, seamstresses hand-cut patterns that are tailor-made for each customer. The result is a flattering yet traditional fit, using both classic and modern fabrics such as Japanese cotton and Aertex. Opt for a looser look or with for a tailored shape. salvatorepiccolo.it



07 Ciriello Stickler for detail

From design to cut, second-generation Neapolitan shirtmaker Ciriello still prefers people to machines to sew his dapper pieces. Started in the 1980s by Nicola Ciriello's parents, the label's shirts feature hand-stitched gussets and embroidered buttonholes made by a dozen artisans working in the family's (above) workshop at the base of Vesuvius. Cotton, silk and linen are sourced from premium fabric makers, including the Grandi & Rubinelli mill in northern Italy. — ciriellofocacceria.it



Italian style: next year

From Pitti in Florence, Monocle selects some of the best stands and looks at the growing markets around the world

WORDS by Jonathan Openshaw
PHOTOGRAPHY by Federica Di Giovanni

Links between Tuscany and Tokyo run deep: browse the cobbled backstreets of Florence and you'll find Japanese apprentices and assistants aplenty. No wonder then that all eyes were on the Japanese buyers at the world's largest menswear tradeshow, Pitti Uomo, this season – nervously looking for signs of post-crisis recovery, or decline.

"Our Japanese market has remained incredibly robust following the 11 March tragedy," explains Pitti CEO Raffaello Napoleone. "National apparel consumption has grown by 4.5 per cent, which, if you compare to a drop in almost 40 per cent in the automotive sector or 10 per cent in electronics, is a miracle really." Japanese buyers certainly still have a strong showing at Pitti, but the real market change has been the growth in comparatively tiny but booming markets such as South Korea (buyers up 16.7 per cent on last season) and Turkey (up 26.6 per cent).

"Turkish guys aren't very daring yet," says Polat Uyal, buyer for Istanbul's Beymen store. "We've carried brands such as E. Zegna from the start, but we're trying to teach our customers. We're introducing Comme des Garçons for the first time this year. I also love Closed and Aspesi." Increasing its digital presence this season, Pitti employed 150 photographers to catalogue around 10,000 items for online access. "We're expanding our presence in BRIC markets, and looking closely at exciting growth from the likes of Israel and South Korea," says Napoleone, of Pitti's future ambitions. — (M)



Monocle musts

Aquarama
"We're spearheading Italian hi-tech couture," says CEO Dr Marco Tofi, referring to the brand's new Pure Jacket. Made from lightweight Mackintosh fabric, the design is unlined, with concealed magnetic buttons and a single slash for a pocket. By treating traditional fabrics with techniques more common in specialist technical clothing, this six-decade-old Assisi-based brand has created a clean-cut jacket that can be stashed in a shoulder-bag without crumpling.

Orcival
Breton stripes have saturated the high street, but if it's quality you're after then there's still only one brand to turn to and that's 1930s French stalwart Orcival. Having started off at the beginning of the Second World War as a manufacturer for the likes of Pierre Cardin, it still uses the original looms and is showing at Pitti for the first time. The brand's 1920s sister company Veira shared its booth, with an equally timeless cotton workwear collection.

Consumers Guide
Twin brothers Alessandro and Alberto Cacciavillani are so

obsessed with vintage shirt design that they have written a book on it – *The Mother Shirts*. This expertise comes across in their latest collection, which combines multiple influences from Swiss folk to Breton to "Colonial cricket". Using patterns from their extensive archive, the duo have used intricate finishing in the spring-summer 2012 collection, including Indian-inspired mirror inlay.

Orian
"Denim has become unloved," says Federico Orian. "There's a forgotten history to American denim production that has been obscured by mass production." Taking designs from a 1930s Los Angeles-based factory and combining them with Okayama artisan tradition, Venice-based Orian has breathed life back into the fabric. The collection ranges from polo shirts to formalwear, and features gingham and camouflage.

All41
Launching at Pitti, this new brand from the Ciro Paone Group unites Marco Pescarolo, Svevo, Sartorio Napoli and Befour under one umbrella. "You can't be a specialist in all things," says general manager Franco Vivaldi, "so we've brought four specialists together into one offering."



Hats

Super Duper
One Florentine brand holding its own in Pitti's Fortezza is Super Duper by a young trio. Twins Ilaria and Veronica Carnacchini and Veronica's boyfriend Matteo Gioli make their hats on wooden blocks in a countryside studio near Galluzzo.

Anthony Peto
Having trained with master milliner Marie Mercia in the late 1980s, Anthony Peto set up his own brand in 1992. This collection ranges from classic boater to straw top hat, with banding from the British mills of Ian Mankin.



Shoes

YOU
Appealing to those who like shoes made of natural materials, the YOU footwear range has only two models – high and low top – but mixes materials and colours to create 24 variations. Produced by a Tuscan manufacturer, the leather is organically dyed and tanned with natural crepe rubber soles.

Gianvito Rossi
The first men's collection from Gianvito (son of Sergio), this pared-down sporty footwear is made in Italy and has design features such as leather-strap lacing (pictured) and zip heel.



Accessories

Ohba
Suppliers to the Japanese Imperial family, Ohba uses the same leather suppliers as Hermès and bags are lined with Kimono silk. The polished leather bags are handmade by artisans in Tokyo.

D'Amico
Producer of quality Italian belts and accessories for 20 years, Andrea D'Amico is launching the D'Amico Flowers range this year, with hand-painted designs on canvas and leather belts. The Bologna-based brand keeps things to scale, employing 13 people.

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Pitti people

Federico Orian
CEO, Orian
Shirt: Orian
Trousers: Incotex

Niccolo Ricci
CEO, Stefano Ricci
Suit: Stefano Ricci
Shirt: Stefano Ricci
Watch: Chopard Mille Miglia

Shintaro Kamiya
Buyer, Tomorrowland
Suit: Studio Ypsilon
Shirt: Tomorrowland
Shoes: J.M. Weston
Bag: Marni

Sinsaku Noda
Director, Baycrew's
Jacket: Edifice
Shirt: Barba
Trousers: Edifice
Glasses: Ray-Ban

Brands to watch

Our Legacy
Since launching in 2007 Our Legacy has championed the workwear trend, but evolved this season into a more tailored look. Using Japanese technical fabrics, lightweight blazers with subtle patterns and textures star in this Stockholm-based brand's collection.

Manastash
This outdoors-inspired brand continues to go from strength to strength, with a collection that combines organic materials such as hemp with Protex and intricately taped seams. Patchwork coats come with paisley bandana-style patterns.

Ma' Ry' Ya
Having been head of knitwear at Giuliano Fujiwara, designer Maria Icho launched her own line in 2008. A play on the Italian word for knit (*maglia*), the brand offers unisex loose-fitting blazers and cardigans.

McRitchie
Scottish by way of Tuscany, the McRitchie brand has its roots in traditional Shetland-wear but was revived last year by Italian entrepreneurs. This second collection is based on the 1950s dolce vita and the beaches of Saint Tropez, including textured jersey cotton polo shirts and double-breasted knitwear.

Ambrosi Napoli
Much is made of the search for the perfect blazer, but great-fitting trousers are often far more elusive. Shunning the sartorial obsession with jackets, the Ambrosi family have been perfecting the art of bespoke trousers since the 18th century, with each pair taking over seven hours of hand-stitching and pressing to complete.

