

The Moscow Times

Moscow Guide

Winter 2007

AMAZING GIFTS *8* THE PERFECT SUIT *14* MOLECULAR CUISINE *22* SENSATIONAL SPAS *32*



The Imperial Tailoring Co.

Individuality and Perfection

Presidents and heads of state, ministers, top politicians, businessmen, artists and professional athletes have found an ideal and unique tailor. The Imperial Tailoring Co. uses an English classical system of tailoring for suits, shirts, trousers and overcoats, which emphasize a client's individuality and compliment his figure.

The Imperial Tailoring Co. offers an incredible selection of more than 10,000 fabrics from famous global manufacturers such as Scabal (England), Holland & Sherry (Scotland), Dormeuil (France), Ermenegildo Zegna, Loro Piana, Piacensa (Italy), including exclusive collections such as Diamond Chip (Super 150s), Gold Treasure (Super 150s with gold thread), Lapis Lazuli (Super 150s), Temptation (Super 150s with Vicuna), Inspiration (Super 200s), Exceptional (Super 200s), Masterpiece Gold (Super 220s) and Summit (Super 250s).

During a client's first visit, The Imperial Tailoring Co. takes 36 measurements that are used to make an individual pattern for the client. This pattern is then saved on a computer and can be used for future orders. In case of any changes to a client's figure, adjustments can be made easily at any time.

The whole process takes place in the center of Moscow in close proximity to Red Square, under the 17th century arches of Gostiniy Dvor. The Imperial Tailoring Co. awaits you with high quality service, skilled tailors and an imperial atmosphere where you can enjoy the best grades of Scottish whiskey, French cognac and Cuban cigars whilst taking a break on one of our comfortable leather couches.

www.mytailor.ru
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Russia

Moscow, Ribniy Pereulok, 2
 Gostiniy Dvor, Entrance 17
 Tel: + 7 495 232-1441

St. Petersburg, Vedenskogo Kanala Str., 7
 Business Center "Farvater", office 203
 Tel: + 7 812 907-4141

Ukraine

Kiev, Bolshaiya Zhitomirskaya str., 34, office 6
 Tel: + 38 039 247-1122

Kazakhstan

Astana, Abaya str., 41
 Tel: + 7 3172 326-161, 326-464

Almatiy, Panfilova str., 113/56, corner of Gogol str.
 Tel: + 7 3272 588-220, 587-617

Seeking the



Photo: Alexander Anisov

By IRA IOSEBASHVILI

There's a certain suit I picked up on my last trip to New York, a recent model from a well-known European designer that I never had a chance to get tailored. Now Sammy Kotwani, the mild-mannered founder of Imperial Tailoring Company, is standing behind me, measuring tape in hand, and he doesn't look happy.

"Let me ask you a personal question," he says, frowning as he marks one of my sleeves with a piece of chalk. "What made you buy this suit, exactly?"

I offer a brief list of reasons. Being six-four, with wide shoulders and a narrow waist, there are only a few brands that fit me reasonably well, and this is one of them. Through a series of fortunate circumstances involving a college buddy who is now a buyer for Barneys New York, I managed to get the suit at a discount.

"And anyway," I add, a bit defensively, "This guy makes pretty damn good suits. Doesn't he?"



Perfect Suit

Kotwani looks at me, starts saying something, then stops, his natural politeness taking over. I prod him.

"Well, maybe it's good for New York," he says. "But you know who wears this brand in Moscow? *Okhraniki*, that's who."

Yes, folks, welcome to Moscow, where the *okhraniki*, or bodyguards, wear \$600 designer suits, and their employers wear...what? Well, if you're a client of Sammy Kotwani, personal tailor to such notables as Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and a host of other powerful politicians, oligarchs and showbiz personalities, you might go in for a suit woven out of Super 250s, a fabric so smooth that a swath of it feels like running water on your hand. Or maybe a cloth whose pinstripes are shot through with

RUSSIAN PASSION FOR FASHION

Originality is what Imperial's clients value the most, according to Kotwani. But fashion consciousness wasn't always a predominant trait of the Russian buyer. In fact, when Kotwani first came to Moscow in 1990, there were no Russian buyers.

"My first clients were diplomats, and then, as more people started coming to Moscow, I began to work with the expat community," he says. "The few Russians that did come usually had the same request - they wanted suits made from very heavy fabrics, because the offices they worked in were so poorly heated."

Things are different today. Not only do Russians make up the majority of Kotwani's

"YOU WILL HAVE A SUIT THAT'S NOT ONLY PERFECT FOR YOU, BUT THAT'S OWNED BY NO ONE ELSE IN THE WORLD."

real 14-karat gold, or, if you're really keen on knocking them dead, something with, ahem, diamond chips woven into it.

BRANDS VS. CUSTOM

Kotwani's in the business of providing bespoke service, where a tailor makes clothes exactly to a customer's specifications. In contrast, a made-to-measure suit is made from an existing pattern that is adjusted to the customer's measurements.

It's an art almost as old as the suit itself. Indeed, the term "bespoke" originated on London's Savile Row sometime in the late 19th century, when a swath of fabric from which a customer's suit was to be made was said to be "spoken for." But then again, why go custom in the first place? Isn't there a multibillion-dollar industry out there, specializing in providing men with the best off-the-rack suits money can buy? What's wrong with our old pals Armani, Zegna and Boss?

"There are many great brand-name suits out there," says Kotwani. "But there's the problem. An off-the-rack suit is like a uniform. Every model is exactly the same, but every human being is created differently. The person who designed your brand-name suit doesn't know if you're barrel-chested, or the way your shoulders slope, or the proportions of your arms."

The shape of your chest, the build of your shoulders and the length of your arms are only the most basic factors that figure into designing the perfect suit, says Kotwani. His tailors also take into account such seemingly trivial factors as the shape of a client's face, the color of his hair and eyes, and the general figure that he cuts. The information is then placed into a computer database, which can be adjusted for changes in the client's appearance, such as weight gain.

But a great fit isn't the only reason why Kotwani recommends going custom.

"You will have a suit that's not only perfect for you, but that is owned by no one else in the world. A true original."

clientele, but they are also demonstrating a knowledge of style that rivals that of high-end consumers in London or Paris. In fact, Kotwani's clients often sport the latest styles from the world's fashion capitals many months before everyone else.

"My clients realize that if they see something at a top designer's fashion show, it will be at least half a year before that product is available in stores," he says. "But if they bring me a picture, I could make it for them in a few weeks, and the end result would look much better than anything they could have purchased."

HOW MANY SUITS?

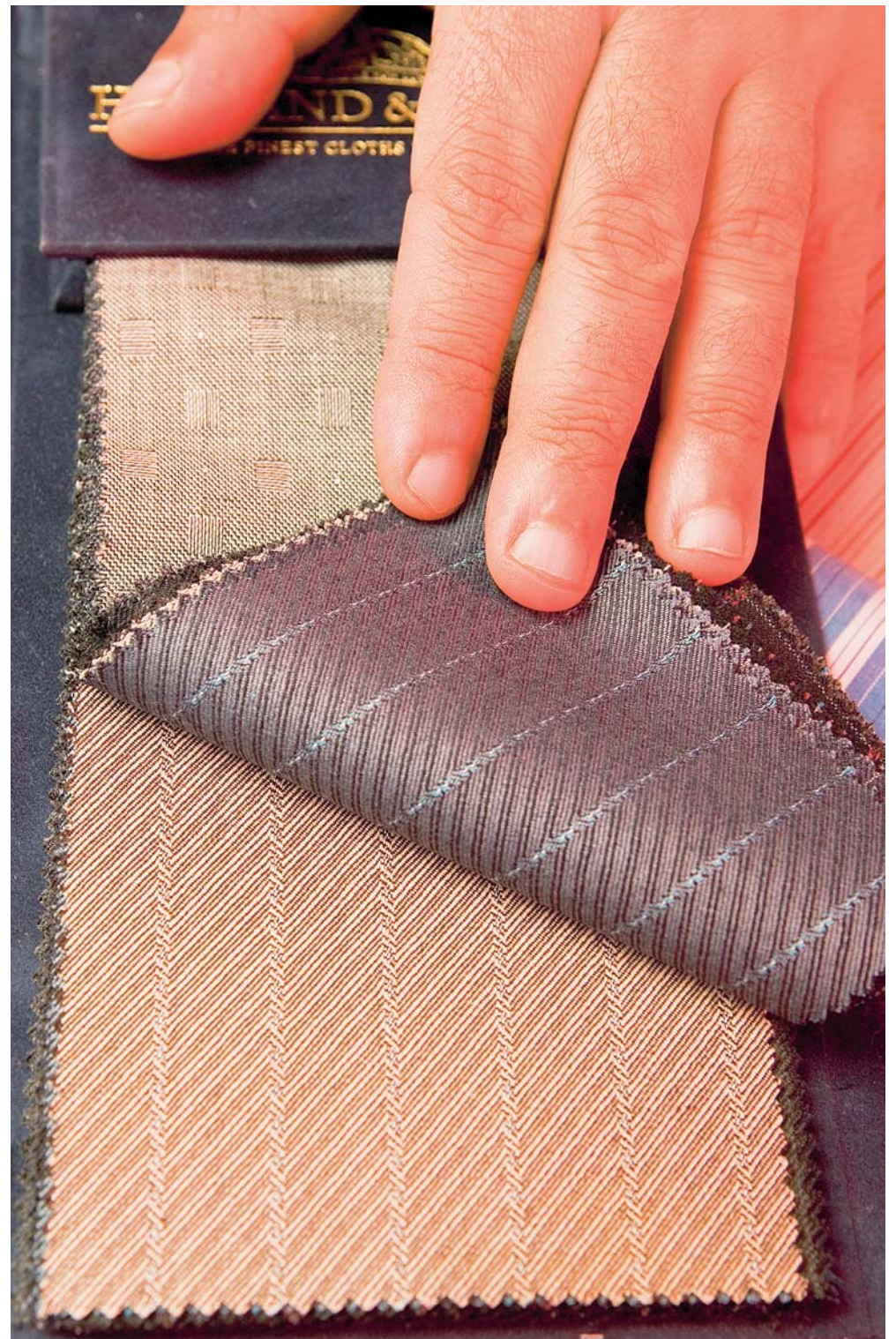
All this talk of suits and fashion brings up a very obvious question: exactly how many suits does a guy need? Kotwani's answer? Twenty-five.

"You need five suits for every season, two jackets, two tuxedos, and one blazer," he says. "Of course, there are people out there who just love suits, and they order much more than that. But to have a complete wardrobe, that's how many you need."

With Kotwani's suits starting at \$1300 a piece and climbing to around \$16,000 for particularly exquisite fabrics, a "complete wardrobe" can be quite a pricey proposition. Fortunately, there's a minimum as well, for those who want the look and feel of an exceptional suit but lack a Roman Abramovich-sized bank account.

"You can do very well with just five all-season items," Kotwani says. "You don't have to be a millionaire to wear custom-made suits."

A persuasive argument. Is it enough to make me part ways with Hugo, Giorgio, Ermenegildo and my other European friends? Not quite. But while designers will always have a place in my heart (and in my wardrobe), the name on the next suit I buy will be my own, stitched onto a small tag right above the inside pocket. I've seen the light. I'm going custom.



WHERE TO GO CUSTOM

IMPERIAL TAILORING COMPANY

Suits: \$1300 and up
Shirts: \$150 and up
Waiting time: 4 weeks for both suits and shirts

Made in: England
Tel.: 232-1441
www.mytailor.ru

EXECUTIVE FASHIONS

Suits: \$1100 and up
Shirts: \$170 and up
Waiting time: 6-8 weeks for both suits and shirts

Made in: Italy
Tel.: 785-2136
www.ef.fitmedia.ru

PATRICK HELLMANN

Suits: \$3900 and up
Shirts: \$650 and up

Waiting time: 4-6 weeks for both suits and shirts

Made in: Italy
Tel.: 290-3816
www.patrick-hellmann.de

PREMIERE SUIT

Suits: \$600 and up
Shirts: \$180 and up
Waiting Time: 20 days

Made in: Russia
Tel.: 739-1337
www.premier-suit.ru

VIP COSTUME

Suits: \$950 and up
Shirts: \$190 and up
Waiting time: Suits - 1 month, shirts - 2 weeks

Made in: Germany, Italy
Tel.: 613-3876
www.vipcostum.ru