

EXPO:

FLORENCE

A TRIUMPH
OF STYLE

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For many, Florence embodies the kind of easy-going lifestyle that makes the world dream of Italy. Think of flutes of prosecco at aperitivo hour, sipped beside medieval palazzos; leisurely bike rides, which constitute so much of Florentine transportation; and views of olive groves and hills lined with cypress trees beyond the city walls.

Another joy of Florence is in the appreciation of how well its residents dress. The city's men are the purest exemplars of Italian style, with all of its flourishes and sartorial craft.

"When you come to live in Florence, you can't help but adapt to the style," says Sebastian Cabrices, a Venezuelan *Vogue México* journalist who relocated here two years ago. "It reconfigures how you think about craftsmanship and quality." Part of the reason for this is the menswear industry's big presence in the city. First, the biannual men's fashion trade fair Pitti Immagine Uomo sets an aspirational example that helps to elevate everyday dressing. The event, captured by legions of street-style photographers, underscores the Italian attitude that dressing well is not merely about pleasing yourself; it's also a publicly appreciated effort that boosts the calibre of a city. Second, the presence of Italy's most respected fashion school, Polimoda, and other fashion institutions feeds and diversifies the ecosystem of style here.

"Tourists would be more appreciated if they made an effort to dress up, rather than wearing their cargo shorts and sports gear around town," says Cabrices. Such differences in wardrobe choices delineate them from Florentines as clearly as uniforms. "Here, if you want to show off, instead of a Range Rover you get a tailor-made suit," he adds. This commitment to style is on full view at Cammillo, which is among the city's most cherished trattorias and, according to a patron, "one of the best places to watch Florentines besides the supermarket". You'll see it too at the tables of Procacci, Caffè Gilli, Cibrè Caffè and any number of establishments that service residents' seemingly perpetual consumption of coffee and wine.

In Florence, as in much of Italy, young and old tend to socialise on an equal footing. Here, however, this way of life extends to clothing: dressing well is an expectation and a pleasure extended to people of all ages. Style and extravagance belong to everyone. And good style is not just the preserve of the genetically blessed or the wealthy elites. Every kind of male body looks better in a well-tailored blazer and a jaunty neckerchief; people celebrate this on the streets in their choice of what to wear.

The classic paradigms of the male wardrobe dominate – suits, button-down shirts, Oxford shoes (the best of them custom-made) – uniting young and old in a standard of attire that is always appropriate for a family

dinner. Yet rather than a conformist cage of style, these paradigms act as platforms for personal expression. Individuality is in the details: in hats, cravats, lapel pins and other ornaments that conjure taste beyond the blandness of average suit-wearers.

Gucci, Ferragamo, Pucci and Roberto Cavalli were all founded here, yet daily dressing is not defined by the major labels of Italian fashion but rather the small boutiques and ateliers supplying Florentines with their globally admired craft culture. "In any Florentine endeavour, artisanship is obligatory," says Federico Curradi, a homegrown designer who went international with a stint as creative director of Parisian fashion label Rochas. Curradi is now fully focused on his namesake brand and has a shop and design atelier in the Santo Spirito neighbourhood. Here, in a space filled with finely fabricated clothes and accessories made by the city's skilful weavers, seamstresses, silversmiths and leatherworkers, he speaks of his passion for his home city. "My brand is a mirror of what Florence is," he says. "Instead of using marketing, merchandising and influencers, it's about products and making something special that would be impossible for anyone to create elsewhere."

Contemporary design boutique Bjørk, located near the Ponte Vecchio, stocks pieces by brands such as Cabinet Milano, Our Legacy and A Kind of Guise. Yet it combines its international brand offering with the Florentine passion for longevity. Owner Filippo Anzalone prizes clothes that are "contemporary without following the trend of the moment. They're timeless in the quality of fabric and style, so you'll still be wearing them four years from now."

"We're carrying on the old system," says Antonio Liverano of Atelier Liverano & Liverano, the renowned tailoring shop that opened in Florence in 1948. Suits here are made with about 70 hours of labour, using fabrics from Loro Piana, Vitale Barberis and others. They're tailored by young suit-makers trained in Liverano's school to continue this craft. The business exemplifies the peak of Florentine luxury and what defines a well-dressed man here – and anywhere else in the world. "I don't want the art of suit-making to die," says the 84-year-old Liverano, who has been sewing since he was a teenager. "We don't make fashion. We make something far superior to fashion: we make excellence. It's a way of dressing that Italy has taught the world."



Made to last

Since 1875 milliners at Grevi have been crafting hats using traditional methods. “A hat is a must for a sophisticated person with a certain level of culture,” says owner Giuseppe Grevi (*pictured, below*). The Florentine predilection for timeless quality is contagious. Sebastian Cabrices (*pictured, right*), a *Vogue México* correspondent from Venezuela, has adopted the city’s sartorial customs. “Style is trend-proof here,” he says.



Immortal beloved

At boutique Desii Vintage, just east of the Basilica of Santa Maria Novella, French military chinos (*pictured, below*) and other well-preserved garments help to expand the Florentine wardrobe. Good clothes that have lasted deserve a second life. “A beautiful object shouldn’t die among mothballs,” says owner Carlo Andrea Adriani.



Bright ideas

Florentine style shows that a truly contemporary look is often a timeless one that transcends passing trends. Residents understand that “classic” needn’t mean “conservative”; boldness is encouraged. Here architect Piero Funis accessorises with a *pomodoro*-red Vespa.



The subtle art

A centre of global commerce and culture during the Renaissance, Florence prizes its heritage. Its history as a city of bankers and merchants lingers in the modesty of its dress codes, which often cleave to classic paradigms of men's fashion. Yet residents treat tradition as a vehicle for self-expression: look closely and you'll spot bold collars (*pictured, below*), colourful braces (*pictured, right*) and other personal flourishes. The fun is in the details.





Life and soul

In the shadow of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, residents enjoy the laid-back street life of their city. Crossing the Arno, ambling past family-run hat shops and artists in their smocks, and stopping for lunch at a café or trattoria – Florence’s lifestyle embodies the easy-going dream of Italy.

Keeping it simple

Florentine style is defined by a modest, unfussy attitude to how you wear your clothes. For menswear designer Federico Curradi (*pictured below in his own creations*), what matters is a deep appreciation of quality and craftsmanship. His clothes are made using natural materials and traditional techniques.





Cut above

“Where does taste come from?” asks master tailor Antonio Liverano (*pictured, above*), owner of Liverano & Liverano. “From the heart, of course.” One of the last remaining Florentine tailoring houses, the family-run business has been trading since the late 1940s. Liverano still spends six days a week at his *sartoria*, meticulously cutting patterns and overseeing his team.