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PUMPED-UP KICKS

High-tops just got a high-style makeover
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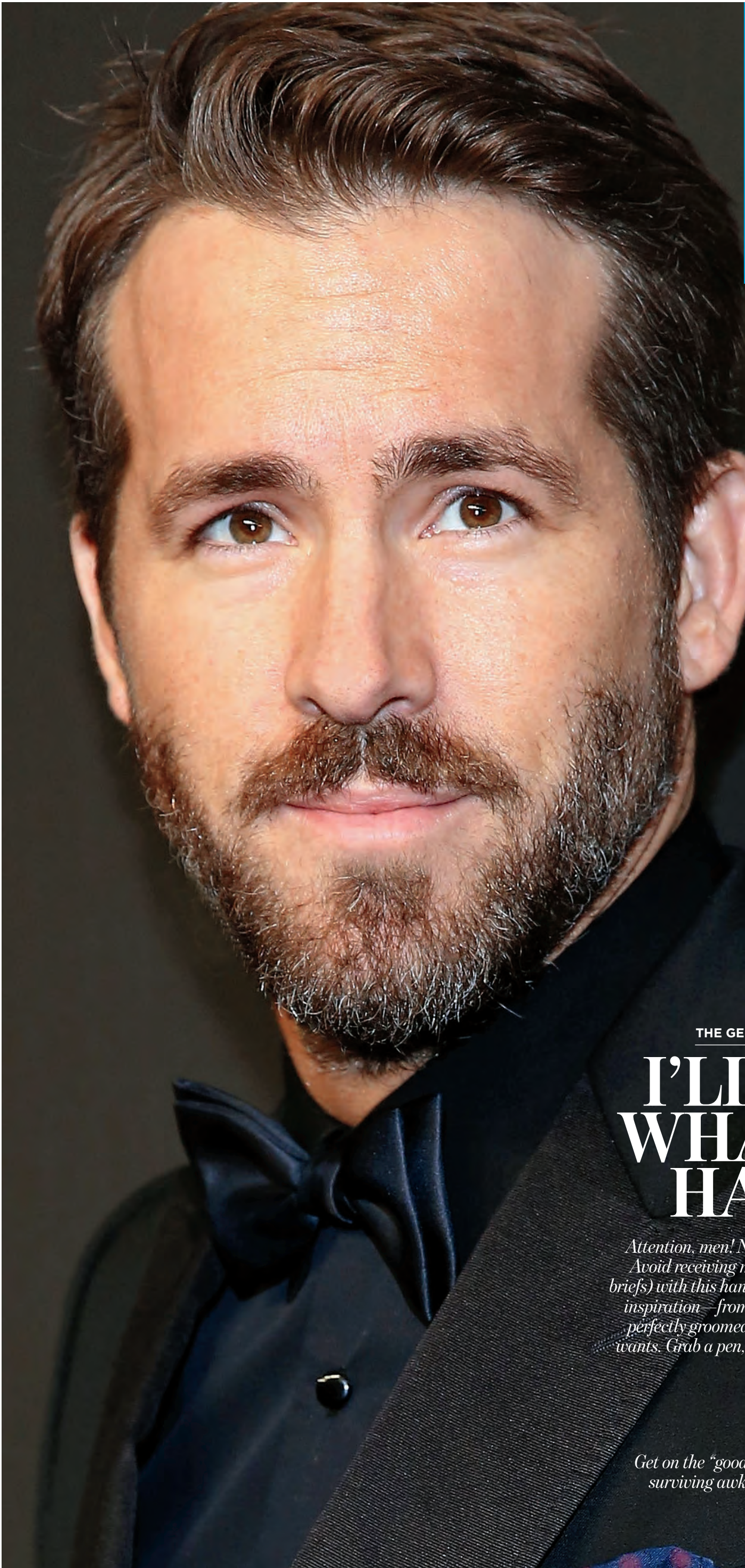


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MR.
Kit
STYLE & GROOMING

THE GENTLEMAN'S GIFT GUIDE

I'LL HAVE WHAT HE'S HAVING

Attention, men! Not sure what to ask for this year? Avoid receiving multiple staples (socks and boxer briefs) with this handy holiday gift guide. It's filled with inspiration—from products to get Ryan Reynolds's perfectly groomed beard, to the five gifts every guy wants. Grab a pen, put your feet up and circle away...



Get on the "good" list with the etiquette guide to surviving awkward holiday-party moments
pages 3 to 7



DRESSING UP

STOP, DROP & ROLL

What happens when an inhabitant of the slim-fit world makes room for drop-crotch pants?

BY DOUG WALLACE

From the kids you see on the street with their jeans hanging off their behinds to the dandies propping up all the cool bars, the drop-crotch trouser movement appears to be big—bigger than you, in fact: Gentlemen, these pants were made for boxer shorts, hands down.

And while this look isn't for everyone, it is quickly trickling down, down—into mainstream consciousness, just like the super-slim jeans that we all thought would never catch on but then actually did. I had to think twice about trying this trend when faced with the knowledge that celebrity fans include Will.i.am, Chris Brown and Justin Bieber.

My first crotch encounter was with a pair of Pull and Bear grey denim jeans, which I wore to brunch. I resisted and then caved to the urge to pull the waistband up around my armpits. Anything for a laugh. Brunch was at the new Drake Devonshire Hotel in Wellington, Prince Edward County, Ont., which has a very high hip quotient, so I fit right in with all the dads and their beards. It helped that I was sitting down most of the time, too.

Later on, while picking up a few groceries, I twigged that with the right underwear—extra large—I could shoplift an entire dinner for two in these jeans. (For such a lot of crotch, there was very little pocket, which I found bewildering.) Down the street in a trinket shop, I saw a guy wearing a sassy red pair, and thought, Whoa, two trends in one. That guy is bold as brass. Next up was a more snug pair of Cotte D'Armes dark denim; casual with a tighter-fitting leg, more Justin Timberlake than Justin Bieber. I tried them on with a shirt, tie and blazer—and looked ridiculous. To correct this, I simply replaced the jacket with a fitted nylon zip-up.

I wore all this first to a business meeting, then on to a book launch. The two women at my meeting, though they understood harem pants, didn't quite "get" this men's version. "It makes me stare," said one. "Yes," said the other, "the proportions are skewed so it makes one wonder..." Her voice trailed off. "Turn around," said the first one. I think I blushed.

At the book event, with my drop-crotch jeans and camouflage-patterned knit tie, I must admit I felt quite good. A younger, cooler version of myself.

The results? This look gets tricky when there are other sizable items: a bulky bomber jacket or too-big boots. The trimmer the rest of your clothes, the better.

In both of my attempts, the jeans looked better with a turned-up cuff.

The cons? Absolutely forget about running for the bus in low-crotch pants. You may require assistance getting into an SUV. My inseam looked like it was 20 inches long, which I didn't really get used to. Bottom line: If you're young at heart—and particularly if you're over five foot 10—go for it. They're not just for MC Hammer anymore.



INSPIRATION: LOW HANGING PANTS AT MEN'S FASHION WEEK FALL 2014



TOP TO BOTTOM: RICK OWENS TROUSERS, \$915, MRPORTER.COM; ZANEROBE DYNAMO CHINO, \$149, GOTSTYLE; ZARA JEANS, \$80, ZARA.COM



ONE-MINUTE MIRACLE

Dear Malin + Goetz Rum Hand + Body Wash:

I was tipsy off a San Fran microbrew and patio sunshine when I met you in the lobby restroom of the Hotel San Jose in Austin, Tex. Your foaming gel smelled of citrus and plum with a dry-down of amber; though you called rum your poison. With your amino acid blend, you softened my hands until they felt young again. Now every time I touch a germmy subway pole, all I want to do is rush home to you.

Love, Ryan Porter

MALIN + GOETZ RUM HAND + BODY WASH, \$24, ETIKET.CA



1 KANYE WEST



2 PHARRELL WILLIAMS



3 USHER



4 ROBERT DOWNEY JR.



5 JOE MANGANIELLO



6 SWIZZ BEATS



MAN STYLE

GET INSPIRED BY CANADIAN MENSWEAR DESIGNERS THEKIT.CA/FASHION/TORONTO-MENS-FASHION-WEEK/

WEEKEND UPDATE

THE LUXE SNEAKER

While sneakers have always been popular with dudes, the luxury levels we're seeing today (a.k.a. the same price point as your lady's Manolos) are unprecedented. No wonder runners are no longer just casual attire

BY VANESSA TAYLOR

1) Jacket & tee

The ideal balance of pulled-together and relaxed works well with high-top sneakers—especially if you're going to go with a bright colour like red. Even if leather trousers are more Kanye West's wardrobe than they are yours, a black chino or denim would work just as well to achieve a similar look.

2) Jean-ius

With a recently launched collaboration with Adidas, Pharrell Williams is considered to be at the forefront of fashion when it comes to setting the street-style trends. While the overall look is laid-back, these slim-fitting jeans are key to pulling off the high-top. The goal is to have a little slouch around the ankle, but not massive amounts of fabric, which can happen with looser pants.

3) The basics

While this outfit on Usher might appear quite straightforward—the basic button-up, dress pants and sneakers—there are a few reasons why it looks so sharp. His sneakers are impeccable (I'm sure his assistant was Magic Erasing any scuffs off the night before) as well as his freshly pressed shirt. To pull this off, the whole look has to appear luxe (pristine) and well thought out, not just thrown together.

4) Red-carpet royalty

As someone in Hollywood you rarely see out of sneakers, Robert Downey Jr. works them into just about every occasion—including many of his red-carpet appearances. Since the runners are the statement with this outfit, we love how he's kept the suit all black with just a pop of metallic on his tie.

5) Sports fan

While I'm not always crazy about team jerseys, they are without a doubt an essential for casual wear among men. Joe Manganiello rocks this outfit by sticking with slim-cut jeans and neutral high-tops (read: not old gym runners) that play up this sporty look.

6) Black-tie affair

When sneakers were spotted on Swizz Beats at the Chanel show in Paris, paired with his perfectly tailored tuxedo—we knew this trend was going to explode. This look seems effortless because of the streamlined style he's sporting—no contrasting colour, hardware or detailing to speak of.

The It item

Maximize the wear of these high-tops by opting for a relatively sleek silhouette—pass on any trendy detail that can quickly lose its appeal. A dark palette will work with dress pants, denim and of course joggers.

TOD'S SNEAKERS \$660, HARRYROSEN.COM





“Spent an hour in my closet looking for two matching gloves. Gave up. Spent another hour at Gap buying a pair that I’ll lose by 5 p.m. #winter.”

@DerekBlasberg, Nov. 19, 2014

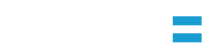
BEAUTY MATH

A textured tapered hairstyle and thick salt-and-pepper beard add up to a dapper look we love

A SHAPING POMADE LIKE **JOHN MASTERS ORGANICS HAIR POMADE**, \$28, BEAUTYMARK.CA



A MOISTURIZING BEARD CONDITIONER LIKE **BLUEBEARDS ORIGINAL FRESH MINT BEARD CONDITIONER**, \$26, MENESENTIALS.CA



Actor and dad-to-be Ryan Reynolds looked rugged but suave at the 2014 Angel Ball in New York City in October. Get soft, short waves by rubbing a fingertip-sized dab of pomade through clean hair, then comb up and over to one side. For a full but tidy beard, wash whiskers with a softening conditioner for more manageable facial fuzz before combing your beard (following hair’s natural growth) to eliminate tangles and keep strays under control. —*Natasha Bruno*

THE MONTH'S BEST

Mr. Scruff

Tom Ford has a pretty good handle on what’s desirable. The debonair designer’s immaculate suits and rakish aviators inspire equal admiration in both men and women—but what takes his look to its aesthetic peak is the fact that however smartly turned out, he’s never seen without what seems like five days of scruff. Never short enough to reveal skin and never

long enough to become a fully fledged beard, his is a nine-o’clock shadow that’s face-flattering and perfectly man-tained. Now, evidently, it also smells fantastic, like one of his three new Tom Ford Beard Oils: citrusy Neroli Portofino, spicy Tobacco Vanille or resinous Oud Wood. A fan of the conditioning properties of beard oil, Ford wanted elevated options that would scent his scruff with his own unisex compositions. Made with almond, jojoba and grapeseed, the oils groom and add sheen without greasiness (a little goes a long way) and provide a subtle waft of fragrance just under the wearer’s nose. And someone else’s, if they get really, really close. —*Rani Sheen. Photography by Adrian Armstrong.*

\$55 EACH, COMB, \$38, AT HOLT RENFREW

TALKING POINT



THE RETURN OF THE CHEST RUG

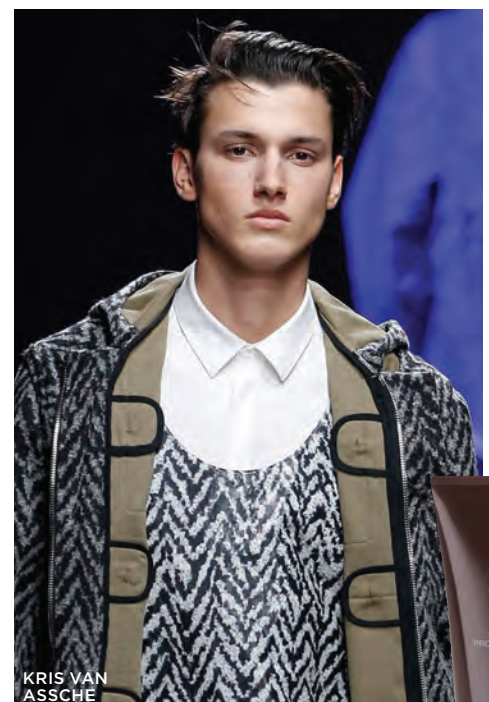
The word “lumbersexual” is a total eye-roller, but there’s no escaping it. Between beards, man buns and flannel, the scruffy, woody dude is out in full force. So it’s no surprise that smooth twink chests are totally out, man: Today’s hero needs a pelt worthy of Burt Reynolds. Celebrity evidence includes Nick Jonas, whose inevitable rejection of his boy-band roots includes a recent declaration that he always hated waxing, and Simon Cowell, whose deep Vs are lately showing off trimmed but noticeable follicles. If any doubt lingered, they’re doing it in Brooklyn—the 2015 “Babes of Bushwick” calendar features coy and sensitive boys from the borough sporting freckles, questionable tattoos and generous chest bush. Next up, the man chest merkin, to disguise the naturally hairless. —*Denise Balkissoon*



CELEBRITY GROOMING
GET A-LIST FACIAL HAIR AT THEKIT.CA/CELEBRITY-FACIAL-HAIR/



MIHARAYASUHIRO



KRIS VAN ASSCHE

ONE TREND, TWO WAYS

THE POMP

Try a dose of fifties rockabilly style with the modern man’s pompadour hairstyle.

1. Old-school and sleek at Miharayasuhiro

Hairstylists kept the look classic and refined by creating a strict side part and combing the hair straight back with a strong-hold gel to help strengthen the overall shape. After forming the signature front swoop by pushing hair forward on top, the sides were slicked back tight for a clean finish.

2. Raked haphazardly at Kris Van Assche

For a more individual spin on the rock’n’roll-inspired hairdo, hairstylists went for tousled texture. After side-parting locks and applying a texturizer, hair was loosely swooped back and combed over to the side, with one edge left slightly dishevelled.

—*Natasha Bruno*



SENSCIENCE PRO PERFORMANCE DESIGN STYLING GEL, \$15, PROFESSIONAL SALONS. **OLD SPICE UNRULY PASTE**, \$9, DRUG STORES

STYLE THERMOSTAT

Frank & Oak

Canadian menswear retailer Frank & Oak not only opened its first store in Toronto, but also teamed up with Etsy to curate a collection of home accessories.

SAT Students

Studying got more interesting for SAT students, when Catalyst Prep used Kim Kardashian’s famous *Paper* magazine cover for their prep class math questions.

Rob Kardashian

He may not have scored an international modelling campaign or broken the Internet, but Rob K is launching a loungewear line in time for the holidays.

Gap

Newly appointed CEO Art Peck is shaking things up at Gap Inc., but the company is continuing to see sales decline under creative director Rebekka Bay.

Valentino Garavani

During an interview with Fern Mallis, Garavani admitted to having doubts about what he called his “terrible, terrible!” 1980s designs.

PRESENTED BY

THE **BOLD NEW CAMRY**

STATEMENT MAKERS

Do you dare? Let your unexpected side shine. Like these fashion forward pieces, the new Camry is your best and boldest accessory!

KICK IT
Comfort and style are key with on-trend sneakers that can take you anywhere.
COAT, \$370, BANANA REPUBLIC (BANANAREPUBLIC.COM). **SHIRT**, \$175, FRED PERRY (SPORTINGLIFE.COM). **POCKET SQUARE**, \$28, POMPE & CEREMONY (POMPANDCEREMONY.COM). **JEANS**, \$125, TRISTAN (TRISTANSTYLE.COM). **SHOES**, \$115, CONVERSE CHUCK TAYLOR (HUDSON'S BAY, GRAVITY POPE).



PUNCH IT UP
The classic navy suit gets a style update thanks to a bright pop of colour in the pocket square and the socks.
BLAZER, \$495, **SHIRT**, \$95, AND **PANT**, \$215, BANANA REPUBLIC (BANANAREPUBLIC.COM). **POCKET SQUARE**, \$28, POMPE & CEREMONY (POMPANDCEREMONY.COM). **SOCKS**, \$10.95, YOSON (YOSON.COM). **SHOES**, \$210, ECCO (CA.SHOPECCO.COM).



OH-SO-DAPPER
The quintessential peacoat deserves something unexpected. Enter the lapel pin.
COAT, \$345, BANANA REPUBLIC (BANANAREPUBLIC.COM). **SWEATER**, \$225, AIGLE (WWW.AIGLE.COM). **LAPEL PIN**, \$26, POMPE & CEREMONY (POMPANDCEREMONY.COM). **JEANS**, \$69.95, GAP (GAPCANADA.COM).



TAKE ME AWAY
Travel in fine fashion with a stand-out plaid weekender bag at your side.
BLAZER, \$450, VICTORINOX (VICTORINOX.COM). **SWISS ARMY**, TORONTO. **DENIM JACKET**, \$108, LEVI'S (LEVI'S STORES). **T-SHIRT**, \$12.94, AND **SOCKS**, \$10, OLD NAVY (OLDNAVY.COM). **PANTS**, \$73.95, GAP (GAPCANADA.COM). **BOOTS**, \$230, ECCO (CA.SHOPECCO.COM). **DUFFLE BAG**, \$699, TOMMY HILF (TOMMY.COM).



WIN/WIN
There is no doubt this wood tie is an automatic conversation starter. Wear only when you want to be the centre of attention.
BOW TIE, \$65, BO BY MANSOURI (GETYOURBO.COM). **JOSEPH HANAN**, CONN. **SHIRT**, \$145, MICHAEL KORS (HARRY ROSEN). **JEANS**, \$88, EXPRESS (EXPRESS.COM).



2015 CAMRY XSE IN RUBY FLARE PEARL



The gentleman's wish list

Secret Santa: great in theory, awkward as hell in real life. We asked 12 Canadian tastemakers what they would buy if they drew their own names

BY RYAN PORTER



JOHN TONG

Architectural designer, Toronto

Tong is renowned for his show-stopping modern revamps, such as his work on Toronto's iconic Drake Hotel.

On his wish list: Clean lines are a signature in both Tong's work and his look. "I shave my head almost every day and can't live without Kiehl's White Eagle Ultimate Brushless Shave Cream." \$13, kiehls.ca

If he had a billion dollars: Tong wants an express route to his cottage near Algonquin Park. "I have always fantasized about having a seaplane and pilot's licence to beat the traffic."

JONATHAN ELIAS

Clothing retailer, Toronto

The head hipster at the well-edited men's casual shops Lost & Found and Working Title practises what he preaches—his work-week uniform consists of a plaid button-down, vintage Levi's, New Balance sneakers and an Ebbets Fields six-panel cap.

On his wish list: Comme Des Garçons Parfum 2, a unisex fragrance with citrus notes for people (like Elias) who don't like fragrance. "It's light and not overpowering," he says. \$90, sephora.com

If he had a billion dollars: Elias would head to the homeland of Comme Des Garçons founder Rei Kawakubo on an "all-expense-paid trip to Japan."

ZAIB SHAIKH

Film commissioner, Toronto

Already known internationally for his role as Amaar on *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, Shaikh is an ideal global ambassador for Toronto in his new role as the city's film commissioner.

On his wish list: A man-about-town's best friend, "A cool pair of shoes." Grenson Tristan Shoe, \$420, clubmonaco.ca

If he had a billion dollars: "I grew up in a Muslim household and was taught to remember your community in times of celebration, so I would make a super donation to the Daily Bread Food Bank."

ARI MILLEN

Actor, Toronto

In *Orphan Black*'s season 2 finale, Millen's Mark was revealed to be a top-secret male clone, meaning we'll be seeing a lot more of him (and him and him and him...) when season 3 arrives next spring.

On his wish list: Millen already treated himself to a custom-made leather jacket by the Toronto-based Himel Bros. "The quality is so good I'll give it to my grandkid one day." Kensington racing shirt, \$2,304, himelbros.com

If he had a billion dollars: "Didn't Daniel Day-Lewis retire from acting at one point and become a cobbler? I'd want a pair of those shoes."

DANIEL TORJMAN

Designer, Ottawa

The designer's rock and roll spirit comes through in both his boho personal style and his menswear label 18 Waits. The Spring/Summer 2015 collection is inspired by the funky, foppish post-hippie look of the Beatles in their final photo shoot—think wide-brimmed hats, skinny suits and statement scarves.



On his wish list: "A really cool briefcase-like hat valise would be amazing. It's hard to travel with hats unless they're on your head, as they get squished in your luggage." Guccissima leather hat case, \$5,845, gucci.com

If he had a billion dollars: "A large yacht to travel to warm destinations."

PAUL MASON

Model and agent, Toronto

The 50-year-old's striking silver hair and full beard, which he began growing out in 2013 when his mother passed away, have been catwalk catnip for designers such as Christopher Bates and Farley Chatto.

On his wish list: "I would love a Tiger of Sweden suit." Event pure wool suit, \$949, tigerofswedenmontreal.ca

If he had a billion dollars: "I would follow the tennis circuit for the whole season with the best seats in the house."

JEREMY CHARLES AND JEREMY BONIA

Chef and sommelier respectively, Raymond's, St. John's, Nfld.

The reason the best buds behind Raymond's, often called the best restaurant in Canada, work well together? "We can be brutally honest with each other," Bonia says.

On his wish list: Charles has his eye on "a nice tweed suit from J.Lindeberg." Classic Topstich Jacket, \$495, pants, \$200, simons.ca. Bonia says, "I'd like a winter coat nice enough that my wife would never let me take it into the woods." Neil Barrett neoprene duffel coat, \$1,625, holtrenfrew.com

If he had a billion dollars: Charles would "chase 50 pound Atlantic salmon on a fly-fishing trip to Norway" while Bonia would "travel around France for a year with my family."

DALE MCKAY

Chef, Saskatoon

Top Chef Canada's original champ moved home to Saskatoon last year to open Ayden's Kitchen, named after his 12-year-old son.

On his wish list: "Beard products from Brooklyn Grooming. I have a lot of friends with beards and they use this stuff religiously." Brooklyn Grooming Pilgrim's Classic Hair and Beard Tonic, \$30, brooklynngrooming.com

If he had a billion dollars: "I would get myself and Ayden a penthouse with a loaded media room."

JOFFREY LUPUL

Toronto Maple Leafs forward, Toronto

Off the ice, the Fort Saskatchewan, Alta.-native has style as sharp as a blade. No wonder he's the face of Toronto menswear man cave Gotstyle.

On his wish list: Lupul mostly leaves the headache-inducing patterns to Don Cherry, though he does dip his toe into prints with funky socks. "They add something to your

outfit without you having to put on something that you're not comfortable with." Happy Socks, \$15, hssweden.ca

If he had a billion dollars: "I would buy a jet! I've done a lot of travelling but I've never been to Asia."

GRANT SCENEY

Bartender, Vancouver

Sceney is more than just the friendly Australian in the bow tie behind the bar at Vancouver's Fairmont Pacific Rim hotel—he might be the best bartender in the country. He placed fourth at the World Class 2014 bartending competition in London, England, last summer—a new Canadian best.

On his wish list: While he has always wanted a straight razor, Sceney says, "I fear I will never trust myself to use it." Dovo Carpe Diem Straight Razor, \$210, menessentials.ca

If he had a billion dollars: Does the Fairmont offer sabbaticals? Sceney says, "I'd take two years off work to backpack, snowboard, surf and hike around the world with my friends."



PAUL ELI

Model, Red Deer, Alta.

Since accidentally falling into modelling, the 24-year-old Red Deer, Alberta native's full bearded look has <30s fluttering on his Instagram account @HipstagramLUL.

On his wish list: "Prairie Boys Supply Co. has developed a killer petroleum-based pomade. Every day I use it, I like it more and more." \$24, prairieboysupplyco.com

If he had a billion dollars: "Airfare around the world while sightseeing and staying in luxurious hotels with my loved one. Do yourself a favour—take a vacation!"

E-TAIL THERAPY

Goodbye, gift gauntlet

Holiday shopping is no longer about lineups and bustling crowds and crying children, if you know how to shop savvy. Here are four great places to shop online for guys' gifts

BY TRAVIS PERSAUD

Frank & Oak

What it is: Known for its super-cool Canadiana style, this Vancouver-based store now has a flagship store in Toronto as well as its highly efficient app. **What you buy:** Begin with an accessory he will use forever: a weekender bag. The Genuine Italian Leather Weekender, in tan or chestnut, is the stand-out, \$335.

How it makes your life easier: Online, shipping is a flat \$6 for all orders. In store, grab a latte in the café and get a trim at the onsite barber-shop. FrankandOak.com

Parrot

What it is: A high-end tech company that specializes in wireless products. **What you buy:** Zik 2.0 the second iteration of Parrot's groundbreaking wireless headphones, designed by Philippe Stark, \$429. They are practically a fashion accessory

and will keep his ears warm. **How it makes your life easier:** This is niche high-style high-tech, sure to score major kudos. Parrot.com

Everlane

What it is: An online-only clothing store that directly sources everything from its fabrics to its factories, cutting out the middleman to provide great prices for ethically produced quality staples. **What you buy:** The new Chunky Knit Raglan, made from extra-fine merino wool is incredibly soft and perfect for any guy this season, \$88. **How it makes your life easier:** Your first shipment is free. Because it's an online-only company, its email response rate is by far one of the fastest. It also has a generous 90-day return policy. Everlane.com

Fluevog

What it is: Eccentric Canadian shoe designer with two Toronto locations: 242 Queen St. W. and 4 Trinity St. **What you buy:** Andrew, a take on the classic wingtip that uses Fluevog's renowned biodegradable Angel sole, \$299. **How it makes your life easier:** A well thought out website with an active community. See what other consumers thought about a product before you purchase, and when you're finished with the shoes, there's a virtual marketplace on the site where you can sell them second hand. (Customers can also submit shoe designs via the site.) Fluevog.com



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GIFTS VISIT [THEKIT.CA/
UNEXPECTED-GIFTS](http://THEKIT.CA/UNEXPECTED-GIFTS)

SHOPPING LIST

DEAR SANTA

Five men's gifts so hot they're roasting on an open fire. (Just circle the one you want and leave this page in a conspicuous place)

BY RYAN PORTER



Go-go gadget

Wearable technology does everything from monitoring your caloric intake to cranking up your thermostat when you roll out of bed.

FITBIT FLEX, \$99; NEST LEARNING THERMOSTAT (NOT SHOWN), \$250; BOTH BESTBUY.COM



iUpgrade

It's a mystery why we'll drop \$1,000 at the Apple store but spend only \$20 on a case. Ethan Song, co-owner of Montreal-based e-retailer Frank & Oak, advocates upgrading to a genuine leather style in shades such as chestnut and cognac.

FRANK & OAK IPHONE SLEEVE, \$45. FRANKANDOAK.COM



Brush up

The old-fashioned shaving kit has been enjoying a resurgence. Merker does a set that comes with a badger-bristle brush and a razor handle that is compatible with your favourite disposable head.

MERKER FUTUR GROOMING KIT, \$295. HARRYROSEN.COM



Subtle scarf

A new scarf can make an old coat feel new. "We've had big checks prevalent for a lot of seasons," says Holt Renfrew's director of menswear, Andrew Lepp. "It's nice to do something a little bit more muted."

HOLT RENFREW PRIVATE LABEL SCARF, \$195. HOLTRENFREW.COM

ASK THE EXPERTS

HOLIDAY PARTY SEASON SURVIVAL GUIDE

Had one too many awkward almost-kissed-on-the-lips experiences? Want to know how to (politely) leave a party early? Two pros give advice on tackling the festive social frenzy



HE SAYS:

Mark Addison

Designer and entertainer at markaddison.com

HOW DO I

juggle multiple invites?

The main thing to remember is **make a graceful exit**. Say goodbye to your host as well as anyone else you had a conversation with that evening. It is considered very rude to sneak off without a word and even worse to announce your departure to the entire party!

If it's a dinner invitation, you are either in or you're out. You can't show up late or leave early. If it's a cocktail party, let the host know you would love to stop by later in the evening for a drink or early in the evening and regrettably you have to make an early exit. It's just a little exercise in managing expectations.

be sensitive with my seasonal greeting?

Say "Happy holidays." Don't get offended if someone greets you incorrectly. In the spirit of the holidays, reply, "Thank you, and to you and yours."

It feels so odd to water down our warmth. It's such a Canadian phenomenon to worry about offending someone with saying something nice. **I think you should wish and reciprocate whatever you are celebrating.**

thank the host?

The primary rule of thumb is to **bring something that does not require the host's immediate attention**. Offenders are unarranged flowers or food or drinks that the guest expects the host to serve.

The tacit understanding is that you **don't show up to someone's home empty-handed**. Always stock up on things like scented candles, beautiful tea sets and maybe some bottles of champagne.

make conversation?

Talk about the weather. However, don't be too general. Have an opinion. Don't talk about religion or politics—stick to neutral topics until you know a person better.

Ask people questions. Travel plans is a good one. You should also brush up on the news that day. Do a quick skim of the news. Facebook and Twitter are great for that, and let's not forget the News news.

greet a lady?

If you've never met the person, it is most appropriate to **shake hands on a first meeting**.

If you are going to go in for an air kiss, do it with full conviction. You naturally start with the right side of the cheek.

greet a gentleman?

A gentleman greets another gentleman with a **firm handshake while looking each other in the eye**, whether on a first meeting or between close friends. Quite frankly I am over the bro-hug combo handshake, hug, fist bump, back slap movements.

It depends on your comfort level and if you're a warm person. I would never want to tell someone how to greet their friends, but **if you can't be warm over the holidays, when can you be?**



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