

Title:

History of the Jermyn Street Shirt

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554

Summary:

An overview of the everchanging fortunes of London's premier shopping area, Jermyn Street. Includes a summary of the key shirt makers to the area including Turnbull & Asser.

Keywords:

bespoke, turnbull, asser, jermyn street, london

Article Body:

The ancient Norman mail shirt, which was made of felt, leather, and iron, was an important part of the Norman horseman's outfit and left its mark on masculine fashion in England and worldwide. Even today, the shirt continues to be an important item in the masculine outfit, and although it is not possible to find a mail shirt (except in a museum), the shirt in its finest evolution can be found on Jermyn Street in the heart of London.

Jermyn Street shirts have the reputation of having been worn by royalty, aristocracy, world leaders, celebrities and other affluent people from around the world. The sale of fine goods for the upper crust in the area started in 1665, when the Earl of St. Albans, Henry Jermyn, was granted a lease to property in the area from King Charles II. Indeed, the Earl developed the St. James Market House and market place, and what became known as Jermyn Street extended eastward from the market. On Jermyn Street, the upper class households were further from the market, whilst those people less fortunate lived closer to the market.

Goods were produced and sold in the St. James Market House and square by shop owners who catered to the range of clientele. These shop owners included sellers such as butchers and produce vendors. There were also fine tailors, perfumers, and makers of other quality objects for their wealthy clients.

The lease for the market area passed into different hands in subsequent years, such as to the Lord Godolphin in 1815 and then the Putteney estate in 1740, and although by this time, the area had lost its polish, it was not demolished until 1818. At the same time, a new market was built to replace the old market, which

was still in use. Business thrived under the attention.

Jermyn Street's reputation as the shopping place for the well-heeled crowd was successfully revived in the 1800s. The business of Turnbull and Asser, Tailor and Shirt Maker was founded in 1885 and the shop moved to Jermyn Street twenty years later. As a part of bespoke outfitting, Turnbull & Asser continue to offer luxury bespoke shirts that are made to measure, hand cut, and hand sewn and of custom quality.

Other fine tailors and shirt makers who offer bespoke shirts have taken up residence on Jermyn Street. Some of these other shops that offer bespoke shirts and tailoring include Harvey & Hudson, Heldritch & Key, Hawes & Curtis, Charles Tyrwhitt as well as Herby Frogg, T. M. Lewin and Sons and Thomas Pink.

Close to Jermyn Street, is the famous intersection known as Piccadilly Circus. This spot is known around the world as the central area for entertainment and shopping in west London. There are many excellent places for shopping for items including the made to measure shirts on Piccadilly Street which brings in many English and international customers.

The shirt in history has always made statements about its wearer and has the power to convey personality, wealth, and power. The English bespoke shirts of Jermyn Street have reached a zenith in shirt design and styling, and their quality makes them the top choice for men of affluence and power. For many customers, only the Jermyn Street bespoke shirts will satisfy their needs in a shirt and it is likely that this will continue for many years to come.