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## Why the scramble for luxury menswear?

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At one point taking a backseat to the much-more-hyped women's apparel, luxury menswear is now the most quickly-rising and lucrative segments of the industry, causing female-centric designers to pay more attention to the other half of the population.

Notable companies and brands such as PPR, Christian Lacroix and Net-A-Porter have been honing in on menswear, bespoke goods and tailors. Why the sudden interest in luxury menswear?

"Men are becoming more fashion-conscious as the media shows how celebrities are exhibiting different fashion styles," said Ron Kurtz, president of [American Affluence Research Center](#), Atlanta.

"Participation in menswear can add value to a brand by extending its product line and base of customers, both of which can contribute to increased sales," he said. "Menswear can enhance a brand's relations with the channels of distribution that feature both women's and men's fashions."

Mad for fashion

The reason why menswear is booming is still out for verdict, but experts have a few

hypotheses.

“Brands are getting into luxury menswear because of the perception that it is an underserved area,” said Paula Rosenblum, managing partner at RSR, Miami. “Men are generally not as price-sensitive as women and they just want something that works for them.”

Another possibility is media influence.

Indeed, fashion-savvy men on television, in movies and on the red carpet could get consumers’ creative juices flowing.

For example, retailer Banana Republic based an entire collection off of the popular TV show *Mad Men*.

Well-tailored suits, ties and an overall “done up” look was brought back when men realized they could look like Don Draper and let go of grunge.



*Courtesy of Mad Men*

Another fashion guru could likely be Chuck Bass from *Gossip Girl* who has a penchant for velvet blazers, bowties and pocket squares.



*Courtesy of the CW network*

Of course, the ever-growing infatuation with celebrities' apparel and accessories on the red carpet is broadcast across the Internet and on TV, burning images of well-coifed gentlemen into watchers' minds.

Further possibilities for the sudden surge in menswear could include the end of casual Friday and the rise of the metrosexual, according to Ms. Rosenblum.

Mr. Tailored

Luxury brands are definitely noticing this trend and are using menswear as leverage to entice affluent consumers.

For example, early last week, luxury conglomerate PPR announced its intent to acquire men's fashion label and tailor Brioni.

On Wednesday Nov. 9, PPR chairman/CEO François-Henri Pinault said that Brioni's acquisition makes a lot of sense for the conglomerate, especially since the growth in menswear is significantly stronger than in women's fashion.

Since PPR has a multitude of either women-focused brands such as Alexander McQueen, Stella McCartney and Boucheron, or men-and-women-split brands such as Gucci and Bottega Veneta, its planned acquisition of Brioni makes it clear that the conglomerate is aiming to get into menswear.

In addition, label Christian Lacroix announced intent create tailored men's clothing including suits retailing \$1,000 and up, according to a report from Women's Wear Daily.

Other brands that have primarily focused on women's clothing are also focusing on menswear as of late.

Gilt Groupe ditched flash-sale sites in June to launch its first full-priced mens retailer Park and Bond in a partnership with Conde Nast's GQ magazine ([see story](#)).

Furthermore, online retailer Net-A-Porter launched a men's ecommerce destination Mr. Porter earlier this year that has seen momentous success ([see story](#)).



### *Brioni on Mr. Porter*

Even department store Bergdorf Goodman is using social media as a way to connect with males with its “What I’m Wearing” feature on Facebook that chooses one employee to take a picture of and describe each outfit of the work week once a month.

“The luxury shopping is [changing],” Ms. Rosenblum said. “I think dress styles among the population shift over time and luxury is no exception.

“We’ve come out of a 25-year period of ever-more casual dressing back to a point where dressing well is considered appropriate,” she said. “Men are bored with the plain suit and traditional tux.”

### Final Take

*Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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