

Strong fundamentals win games. Every coach, from Vince Lombardi to Pat Riley to your five-year-old's soccer gura, will tell you that. The same holds true in your closet.

Solid blocking and tackling will ultimately win the day. The Hail Mary bobble in the end zone may make ESPN's SportsCenter, but the team loses the game, just as the trendy silhouette will fade by the end of the season. It's tempting to be swayed by the flash and sizzle, but resist the urge. For fall, build a foundational wardrobe of quality basics. It's OK to indulge in the hot colour of the season, to swim in the current of the zeitgeist. Make a big impact with bold colour. Dress up a great pair of jeans with a bright striped business shirt. Add some personality to a serious suit. Pair the shirt with a more businesslike two-button, gray pinstriped suit—always classic.

Eventually, a shirt with broad citrus stripes or accessories in white gold will slowly winnow out of the closet on their own. They're like trick plays you pull out when you're way behind or playing for the cameras. They're probably not your sure-fire yardage plays.

That's where the basics come in. The essence of genuine, lasting style is often the most luxurious items. They're not intended to be pretentious but rather to be appreciated for their artisanal qualities and the way they lend an air of élan.

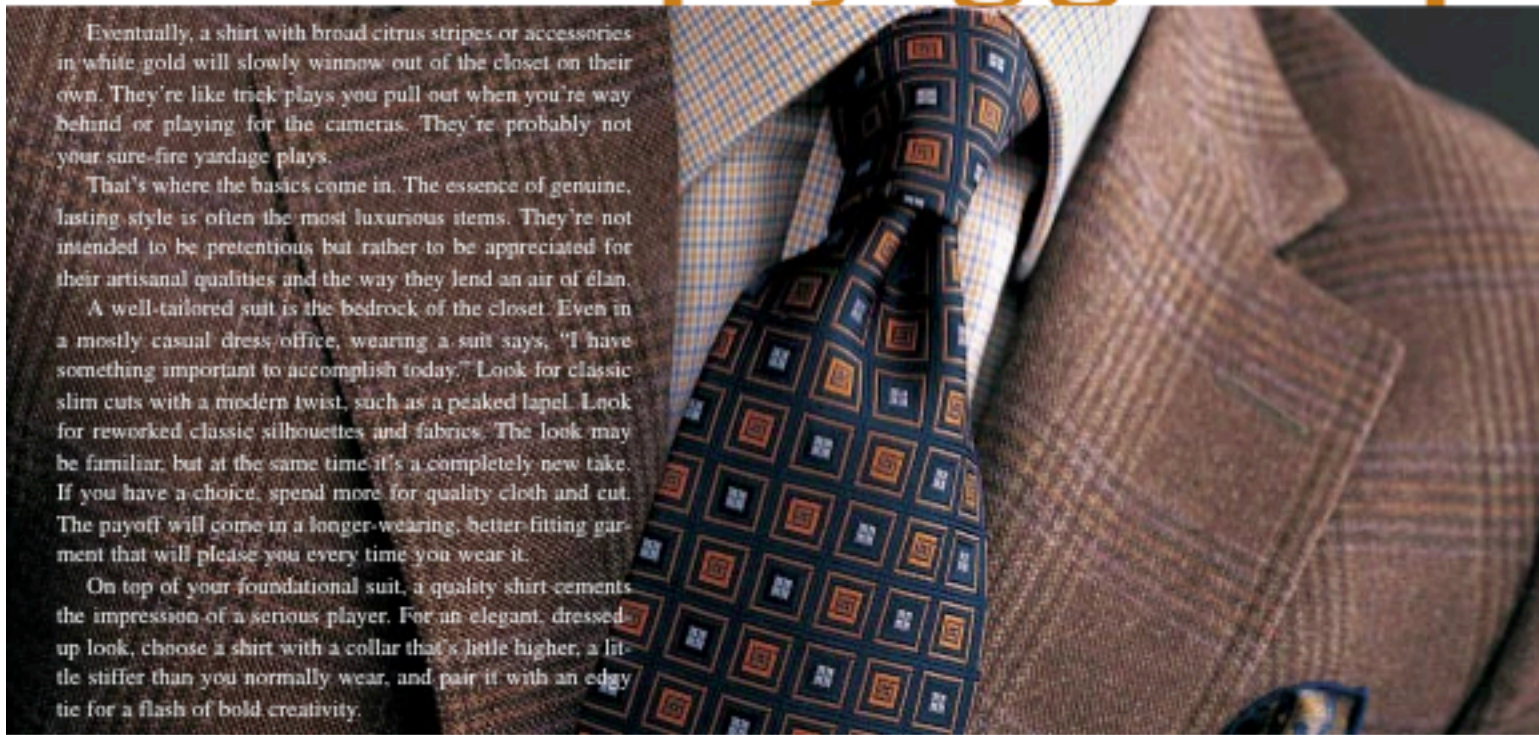
A well-tailored suit is the bedrock of the closet. Even in a mostly casual dress office, wearing a suit says, "I have something important to accomplish today." Look for classic slim cuts with a modern twist, such as a peaked lapel. Look for reworked classic silhouettes and fabrics. The look may be familiar, but at the same time it's a completely new take. If you have a choice, spend more for quality cloth and cut. The payoff will come in a longer-wearing, better-fitting garment that will please you every time you wear it.

On top of your foundational suit, a quality shirt cements the impression of a serious player. For an elegant, dressed-up look, choose a shirt with a collar that's little higher, a little stiffer than you normally wear, and pair it with an edgy tie for a flash of bold creativity.

Other modern twists are, like so many worthwhile things, so old they're new again. Count pocket squares among those venerable accoutrements undergoing a new appreciation. A well-chosen pocket square can function with or without the complementary neckwear. The coolest, confident choice is a plain but luxurious linen square precisely folded, standing at attention. Such a classic look was never absent from the breast pocket of a certain British spy's gray suit. The linen square stands ramrod straight with unapologetic style, a welcome confidence in uncertain times.

For fall, embrace the explosion of colour in shirts and neckwear with a foundation of timeless, quality garments. There's no easier way to feel like the MVP at work or at play.

## playing grownup



Let fashion fundamentals guide your look