

## Monday with Mikey: March 27, 2017

### *Gentlemen's Fashion Tips for Spring and Summer*

**Premise:** These are the gentlemen's fashion "rules" (they're actually more like guidelines...) that I follow. Please feel free to disagree (in complete silence) with my opinion. I'm not telling y'all how **TO** dress, I'm telling y'all how **I** dress. As a middle-aged, slightly portly, professional of international experience who has a *decidedly* Southern/Gulf Coast/Low Country/New Orleans penchant for men's clothing, herewith are my suggestions:

#### The Basics

- Work diligently to develop YOUR style for the spring and summer. It will define your public image. Mine is somewhere between "dapper, preppie, and natty." Don't get me wrong: You'll never catch me "poppin' a colla," and I won't wear two golf shirts at the same time – but neither would I judge if a dude wants to lay down his own style signature.
- *Seersucker* - ancient Sanskrit for "milk and sugar" (you can look it up) – is quite different from *Pincord*. (You can look that up, too.)
- A pastel-colored or white shirt with a button-down collar is the thing to wear with a bow tie – and bow tie is the best neckwear between the Vernal and Autumnal Equinoxes, which are the actual lines of demarcation for the seasons. The Summer Solstice is the midpoint – and officially divides spring from summer.
- If you wear solid colors, pick lightweight fabrics and preferably light colors. Olive is about as dark as I like to go when it's warm, although there *may be* a need to put on the "navy blue power suit" once in a while. These are also available in summer weight fabrics.
- Short-sleeved, button down shirts are fine with khakis or chinos. One can even wear a sport coat to "crisp up" the look.

#### At the Beach or on the Boat

- It's America in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century, guys. Bathing suits should be comfortably loose and their legs should generally fall somewhere between mid-thigh and just above the knee. You can draw your own conclusions without me mentioning Euro-Speedos or what my dad calls "Alfalfa Drawers."
- Naturally, if you are participating in a sporting activity like fishing, competitive swimming & diving, or surfing/water skiing/wakeboarding – or (the greatest sport of all) - sailing, wear the attire appropriate to the traditions and safety requirements of that activity.

#### Golf

- I don't play golf anymore. I'm so bad a golfer that I bought a sailboat.
- But IF I played golf, I would wear really well-tailored golf shorts, a comfortable but fitted golf shirt, saddle-oxford golf shoes with a matching/complimentary belt, and those little socks that don't show above your shoe line. But that's just me.

#### Gentlemen's Accessories

- Ties: please see my thoughts on shirts and ties in summer (above). If you **MUST** wear a dress shirt with a long necktie, try for a pastel-colored shirt with French cuffs and matching (preferably white) collar and cuffs that contrast with the shirt's body material. And for Goodness' Sake – *please* tie your knot well. A "fore in hand" or "single Windsor" will do nicely.
- Belts should ALWAYS match a gentleman's shoes.
- Pocket Squares: now there's a tricky one. You can identify the fashion orientation and sophistication/'give a dang' level of a man by his pocket square.
  - No pocket square: Not his thing.
  - Plain white handkerchief showing a single line at the top of the breast pocket: Beginner.
  - Pocket square that is made from the same patterned material as the tie: Trying to branch out. Advanced beginner.
  - Solid colored pocket square that either matches or contrasts with the base color of the tie: Intermediate.
  - Patterned pocket square that "kind of" coordinates with the tie: Advanced Intermediate.
  - Pocket square – any solid color or pattern – that has NO connection WHATSOEVER to the tie: Expert/Sophisticate/forgot that pocket square was still in that jacket pocket but doesn't care.
  - Then there's the "Morley Safer/Tom Brokaw" Look: These guys are the *high priests of pocket squares*. Both of them wear shirt/tie/jacket/pocket square combinations whose elements have *nothing* to do with one another – because they *can*.
  - Special tip: It's okay to wear a pocket square in a jacket pocket when you're not wearing a tie. But – *child, please* – never wear an ascot in spring or summer in the South, especially in Florida.

## Headwear

Hats are great if you wear them right. There are lots of styles. The ones I like for wear during the spring and summer are:

- Baseball Cap: for sporting and outdoor events. Never with a suit.
- Boater or 'skimmer' – traditional summer headgear from the days of Rotary's nascence
- Darby Bowler – often seen at Churchill Downs
- Cowboy Hat – Mine is made of straw since it's mostly for shade, not warmth
- Fedora – the classic, especially in straw for spring and summer – and if your fedora matches your shite shoes and belt, Wow. Dapper!!
- Trilby – kind of a "mini-fedora." This chapeau has had a renaissance in recent years. Very stylish and yet classic.
- Other spring/summer hats include the Pork Pie, Greek Fisherman's cap, the Cabbie ( or Flat) Hat – not to be confused with the Eight Point or "Gatsby," the Skimmer or "boater," and the Balmoral.

## Footwear

- Please see my note about belts above.
- Penny loafers, especially "weejuns," are appropriate with those light-colored fabrics.
- This is the time of year to wear "buck" of either tan or white suede. Red soles are a must.
- For dress shoes (brogue, oxford, derby, and monk styles) stick with lighter colors like tan. Oxblood works, too.
- Saddles, or "saddle oxfords," are always acceptable in spring and summer – plus most give one a choice of belt color!
- Flip flops are good when you're being very casual. So are sandals. I especially like huaraches. They are "hybrid" shoe and sandal.

**Remember, campers, these are my guidelines. You need to "find your own Zen and Chi" when it comes to your summer attire.**

### **Ladies' Fashion Tips for Spring and Summer**

**Since I am obviously not a woman,** I consulted with several Rotarian Women in our District about Spring and Summer fashions. I have made an effort to keep all of them anonymous – with one notable exception. *Please note that there may be differing opinions in this portion of the column.* Here are their suggestions:

#### The Basics:

- Keep it simple - dressing should be fun and not a chore
- Wear styles and colors that complement your body type
- For women with bigger arms: go for ¾ length sleeves, off the shoulder sleeve caps, or "cut out" sleeves giving a peek of skin
- Think Solids and add accessories (scarves, hats, jewelry) to boost your wardrobe
- Accentuate your waistline with a simple belt: thin or wide based on the dress/shirt style to provide shape and a polished look
- Find complementary pieces and add just a few that are interchangeable with casual, business, and dinner attire.
- Forget the dark -colored, layered, close-to-the-body separates you've been wearing for the past 6 months and go with light-colored, loosely -fitted dresses, slacks, shorts and shirts made of natural fibers. (At the Rotary International Convention in Korea last summer the best-selling garments in the House of Friendship were loosely-fitted and made of natural fibers.) Clothing bought at a Rotary convention make for great souvenirs.
- Use light, bright colors and patterns. Light colors give a cheerful and fresh look to spring fashion. Pastels are always a plus for spring fashion (sea foam green, lilacs and pale yellows). Use white and dress it up with sweater and accessories. Wear floral patterns. They are always in style in the Spring and Summer no matter where you live.
- Since spring may have quickly changing temperatures always bring a sweater, cardigan (whites, creams and pastel colors) or a light jacket. It's always easy to take off layers if it gets hot.
- Start wearing skirts in floral patterns and Capri pants when the weather may feel too warm to wear long pants and too cold for shorts.

#### Accessories (Angelica Huston said, "The ability to accessorize separates us from the animals!")

- Find that perfect straw hat (accessorized with scarves to vary the look) that you can grab as you run out the door. Not only will you save time on a bad hair day, but you'll protect your face from the Florida sun. Women are lucky in that they can leave their hats on indoors, while men (with good manners) must remove theirs.
- Leave the clunky jewelry at home- it's too hot. But every southern girl knows that you can't even run to the mailbox without wearing your earrings. This is a solid rule (for Convention) in Atlanta.

- Carry a cover-up when you head out to dinner, a movie, or convention hall. In Florida, we manage to reverse the seasons with frigid air conditioning, wherever the venue. Some of those big scarves we've been wearing around our necks on our few cool days this winter make great wraps.
- Wear a pair of trendy sunglasses and cute caps or hats with a wide brim that blocks the sun. Wear colorful jewelry (i.e. necklaces, bracelets, earrings and rings) to add color for blander outfits.
- Also invest in a light raincoat and nice umbrella by choosing one with a fun print.

#### Casual suggestions:

- Flip flops and Capri pants are for summer...ahhhh!
- Comfort... it's all about comfort!
- Bright colors are great!
- Be Bold!!
- No matter what you wear, SMILE. If you smile they will see your eyes and may not notice that you have one black shoe and one blue on! (DG' note: I did NOT make this up!)

#### Special Trends for Spring/Summer 2017

- The color is nude
- Flower prints
- Jumpsuits and rompers (not the best for short-waisted ladies)
- Bell sleeves (flow and wide)
- Lace up shoes, even heels
- Oversized sunglasses (they're baa-ack!))
- Braids (yes, the braid is back, down the back, or on the side)
- Probably another season for the "cold shoulder" look (that's the shirts, where the shoulder is cut out)
- The ring finger in manicures are now matching your toes, the rest "French" (one off color on your manicure)
- The Fashion Guru Ken Downing says that this spring everything is colorful, and if you can make it pink. Every shade baby to fuchsia, pink is the color this spring.

#### Let's not forget SHOES!

- Trendy shoes will be the shoe booty, ankle-strap pumps, and graphic sparklers.
- Other styles will include '80s Redux and florals, plus mixing and the exact opposite of post-minimalism fashion.
- Go for comfort and wear sandals, but remember to give your feet special attention. This is not only a fashion tip, but also a health tip. You can shop for sandals in many colors and styles (even for men) by going to [zappos.com](http://zappos.com). This great web site can save many hours shopping for the right shoes.
- Invest in flats that work well with casual and semi-dressy outfits. For nice occasions, you can wear dressy sandals.

#### The "non-anonymous" comment

*From First Mate Jocelyn: I prefer to have Mikey help me purchase my clothes; I HATE to shop!*

#### One last thought:

- "Chuck Taylors" – Converse All-Star sneakers – especially in RED – and D6950 sunglasses are ABSOLUTELY in style (at least until July 1<sup>st</sup>)!

**Until next week let's all keep on "Doing Good, Having Fun!"**

*Mikey*

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PS – Check out the "My Rotary Show" on You Tube!