

QUINTESSENTIALLY DISCREET

Our very own Guy Hills knows how to stand out in tweed...

I've always loved the idea of clothes designed to work for a specific purpose. If you look through history, clothing has constantly been adapted to fit definite needs. The tie, for example, has evolved from the riding stock, originally intended to protect one's neck when falling off a horse. The Bowler hat was designed as the original hard hat to protect game keepers on the Holkham Estate. And as everyone knows, jeans were the garment of choice for Californian gold miners.

On weekends away in the country, dressing suitably is easy: the English countryside look is one of the most highly evolved of all sartorial styles. Hundreds of years of experimentation and refinement have gone into creating rubberised boots, waxed jackets, numerous hat styles and the ultimate sporting cloth, tweed. Eminently practical, tweed has it all. It's breathable, hard wearing, shower-proof and woven to blend in with all the colours of the countryside. The cuts of tweed suits are as honed as the cloth itself with flaps and fastenings to keep you protected, pockets of all sorts to store lunch or a lucky find, and breeches cut to enable swift progress through undergrowth.

Getting back to town, deciding what to wear always presents me with a huge dilemma. I work in the media and cycle around town. Most people in a similar situation wear jeans. However I'm not really happy to wear the uniform of gold diggers and disgruntled teenagers of the 1950s. Fortunately a chance meeting with Kirsty McDougall during her degree show at the Royal College of Art gave me the chance to create the ultimate urban outfit for my needs.

What was needed was an Urban Tweed for the 21st century designed to fit in with the colours of town. I set about chipping colour samples from the roads and pavements of London to send to the yarn dyers, and in their weave studio Kirsty worked on exciting new weave structures involving double yellow line and red route motifs. As the designing progressed I talked to my tailor, and with the help of some classic patterns started work on modern day cycle suits and coats with pockets designed to carry iPods and mobile phones. My wife was still trying to make me wear bright visibility jackets on my bike when I had a hugely innovative idea: why not weave my Urban Tweed with reflective yarn? The result is Lumatwill™ a fabric that combines the benefits of tweed with the bonus of shining out at night when lit by a headlight.

The Lumatwill™ Dashing Tweeds come in a variety of designs including the Urban Tweed collection and the more colourful sporting tweeds. The sporting tweeds are great fun and provide the perfect solution to that awful problem of what to wear for a picnic tea party and rounders. 

