

New tuxedo styles give grooms fashionable choices

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Copley News Service

Tuxedos styles have taken dramatic turns in the past decade as suit makers have endeavored to impress grooms under 30, a fashion-conscious group tuned into the resurgence of elegance in menswear.

Getting married is, for the most part, a young man's business and designers want to give them new options — frock coats (a longer-length jacket), four- and five-button fitted coats that recall Edwardian styles and new lapel treatments. And what's old is new again, as the traditional notch-lapelled tux, by far the most popular tuxedo choice, is updated in more-fitted styles and new fabrics.

As the story goes, the first tuxedo was worn at the Autumn Ball of the Tuxedo Club in end of the 1880s. Griswold Lorillard, a tobacco heir whose family developed New York's Tuxedo Park as a resort for the very wealthy, shocked the other guests, all in white tie and tails, by attending the ball wearing a dinner jacket with satin lapels.

The ability to rent a tux brought the elegant garment into the American mainstream. Times have changed and the rules of etiquette have too. Ultra-formal white tie and tails have given way to contemporary tuxes worn with ties and vests. The choices are vast, but should be guided by knowledge of tradition.

A "traditional" wedding refers simply to a wedding that models those of previous generations. In many people's minds, the more traditional a wedding, the more formal it will be with increasingly strict guidelines of etiquette and attire. Day and night have their

own dictates.

For a formal daytime wedding, for example, the groom wears a "morning suit" (a gray cutaway jacket and gray vest, gray striped trousers, a white wing-collar shirt and an ascot or four-in-hand tie), and his attendants wear matching stroller coats with striped or matching trousers. Formal evening requires a tuxedo (black being the most formal) or a white dinner jacket with black trousers. At a "contemporary" wedding, a modern take on tux traditions is often the choice of today's couples.

More than 90 percent of grooms will choose to wear a tux, regardless of the time of day, and accessories are often used to distinguish the groom from the rest of his party. Formalwear should still be appropriate for the time of year (fabric weight and color, for example) and complement the style of bride's and bridesmaids' dresses.

The formalwear industry has turned to more cutting-edge styles and accessories.

After Six claims the credit for starting the trend of colorful formal vests, bow ties and cummerbunds.

"To create excitement with tuxedos, we do a huge variety of lapel treatments and fabric designs," said Ted Mayer, vice president of After Six accessories. "The notch-lapel tuxedo is still by far the most popular style."

Other fashionable trends throughout the tuxedo industry include peak lapels. Grooms may want to look for a style like the Diamante, a single-breasted black tux that has a small peak lapel with a diamond-shaped shape, one-button set slightly high at the waist and a "High Luster" satin lapel.

But grooms can also be assured that the classic tuxedo remains very fashionable.

"The look is a return to the romantic era of black and white movies, very classy," Mayer said.

Among other the tuxedo trends spotted by Mayer are a modern single-breasted two- or three-button classic

black tux with a dimensional satin-layer notch lapel and a high-style four-button with a longer coat length, which is a popular look with younger men.

The news in accessories for spring is matching satin vests in black, white or ivory as well as an array of colors.

"It was time for the industry to come out with a solid look for the vest that's not

bright and shiny," says Mayer.

Brides may want their grooms to choose a vest color that complements her attendants' dresses.

"Pastels are coming on strong for spring. Of our six new colors, five are pastels — baby blue, pinks, yellow, and soft green. With so much color selection, the bride can create a color story."



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