

<p>Paul Smith</p>	<p>Paul smith presents “the suit (but different)” for paris ss24 men’s show</p>
<p>11.30AM</p>	<p>23 June 2023</p>

Taking the suit as both its starting and ending point – much like menswear itself – Paul Smith’s men’s presentation explores tailoring in all its forms for SS24. The collection nods to Paul Smith pieces from the archive, subverts classic menswear tropes and references workwear and military uniforms.

Examining where tailoring ends and workwear begins, the show presents “The Suit (But Different)”, offering Paul’s look-by-look redefinition of smart dressing. The Paul Smith archive – which is held in Nottingham and spans the designer’s storied career – was a rich source of inspiration this season, with tailoring references drawn from the 1970s up to the present day.

Overall, the silhouette is fluid, spanning a spectrum of precise, trim cuts in classic suiting fabrics and billowy, exaggerated shapes in lighter weight casual materials. A military-meets-mod mood dominates the collection, with workwear and utility-inspired shapes and detailing such as tab waists and wider lapels seen on suit jackets, stitched carpenter-style trousers, and six-button double-breasted jackets.

While it takes the art, craft, and expertise of tailoring seriously, the collection doesn’t shy away from Paul’s signature sense of playfulness: boxer shorts – both tailored and classic striped – are paired with both traditional suiting and workwear jackets to form a ‘Breakfast Suit’ while relaxed, pyjama-inspired looks are styled with matching ties. Equally, a ‘Canadian Tuxedo’ of a denim trucker jacket and barrel-fit jeans offer a confident take on archetypal menswear tropes.

Other references to traditional menswear codes come in the form of pinstripes, herringbone suede, polka dots, waistcoats, and the three-piece suit – a recurring theme in Paul Smith collections in recent seasons. The footwear, too, subverts traditional styles. Derby shoes and sneakers are constructed with perforations to mimic the sort seen on vintage cycling shoes – a subtle nod to Paul’s lifelong love of cycling.

The confident palette is inspired by a single frame from Lawrence of Arabia with pops of red serving as punctuation marks of colour amongst sandy neutrals, cool charcoals, rich blacks, and soft blues. Fabrics offer lightweight interpretations of classic suiting in puppytooth and pinstriped cloths as well as slub satin, cotton canvas, and textured knits.

The prints this season are elevated, but not without a touch of Paul’s trademark sense of humour. The ‘Life Drawing’ print – a hazy collage of archival tailoring, suit patterns and neoclassical references – provides a touch of colour. Meanwhile, a trompe l’oeil print of archival suiting imposed on silken shirts offers a refined interpretation of a tongue-in-cheek trope and ‘Morning Light’ mimics rays streaming through Venetian blinds.

Paul’s notes:

“Tailoring is so often thought of as such a serious business, but I’ve always been keen to show people how much fun you can have with it – especially now. So, while this show is an homage to suits and tailoring as an art and form of craft – one that requires a huge amount of skill and expertise – it’s also about putting humour and joy back into smart dressing. You see that in the military-inspired uniform looks, as much as you do those that nod to traditional business wear. I’ve always been interested in the question of ‘what exactly is a suit?’, and I hope this show serves as something of an answer.”