

# Fashion – Marks and Spencer launch new British clothing range at Princes Street store



M&S has launched its Best of British range of clothing for men and women, marking the start of a three year partnership between M&S and the British Fashion Council. The new collection will be available online and in just six selected stores across the country – one of which is Edinburgh Princes Street. And it's there now!

To explain the thinking behind the womenswear range the Head of Womenswear Design answered these questions:-

Q: What is the Best of British Collection?

A: It's a 34 piece collection celebrating the best in British design and manufacture. It's made up of an edited selection of premium wardrobe classics and investment pieces inspired by our heritage but modern in both design and cut.

The clothing is complemented by a select edit of key accessories including brogues and Chelsea boots handcrafted by traditional British shoemakers, and oversized wool wraps made in soft, warm lambswool and finished in heritage checks.

Q: What were the inspirations behind the designs?

A: British heritage is very evident throughout the womenswear collection from the cloths used down to the pieces themselves. There's also a distinct androgynous feel, with several pieces very much influenced by masculine styling. We were also inspired by quintessentially British pieces like the Peacoat,

the Trenchcoat and the Chelsea boot and have created new takes on these wardrobe classics.

✘ Q: How does this range differ in style and composition to M&S' other ranges?

A: This collection is at the more premium end of our offering which has enabled us to use luxury fabrics and trims on our garments. The collection also has a very defined colour palette of neutral tones, monochrome with pops of hot pink which sets it apart from our other M&S collections.

Q: Tell me a bit about the manufacturers you used?

A: As we have so much home grown talent in Britain, we feel strongly about continuing to support and champion these manufacturers to ensure they will still be creating great clothing in the years to come. We have worked 6 British companies for the womenswear collection including Manchester based Cooper & Stollbrand, known for their quality of their hand crafted outerwear and painstaking attention to detail and NPS Shoes Ltd who have manufactured the brogues and Chelsea boots in the Best of British collection.

Q: Which are your favourite pieces and why?

A: Particular favourites of mine include the iconic tweed suit as I love the contrast between the rich, heritage fabric and the super slim, modern cut and the pink check cocoon coat which is the perfect statement winter coat.

Q: What's the price range of the collection?

A: Prices range from £45 for a wool wrap and £349 for the pea coat and sizes range from 8 – 18.

Q: When is the collection available to buy?

A: It will be available in selected stores and online at [marksandspencer.com](http://marksandspencer.com) from October 2013.



## ***Now time for the guys!***

Q&A with Head of Menswear Design, Tony O'Connor, Head of Design Menswear

Q: In your words, describe the collection?

A: The Best of British menswear collection is an edit of iconic pieces, with an emphasis on traditional British craftsmanship and quality. I would describe the menswear as confident and masculine, constructed in contemporary shapes.

Q: What was the inspiration for it?

A: The idea for the collection was born from the M&S archive, based in Leeds. With hundreds of pieces kept there from throughout the decades, it was the perfect starting point for a collection synonymous with British design.

Q: What are the key pieces in it?

A: The double breasted suits, classic coats and Scottish cashmere in bright colour pops are key stand out pieces in this season's collection

Q: Which suppliers are you working with?

A: For menswear we are working with 15 British suppliers from across the UK. We looked for specialists that have a long standing heritage in British manufacturing, and found unique companies such as Cheshire Bespoke, who have a renowned reputation in premium British tailoring, and Hawick knitwear based in the Scottish borders, who are known for luxury wools and cashmere, all finished to the highest level. In addition, we have long standing relationships with Yorkshire based manufacturers Alfred Brown and Abraham Moon, who we have also worked with on the collection.

Q: Is the collection an exclusive collection?

A: The Best of British collection is an exclusive, capsule collection constructed from premium fabrics and with a high level of detail to finishes, a standard synonymous with British design. We have chosen to work with manufacturers who are specialists in their areas, taking pride in attention to detail and hand-finishing many of the garments. Increasingly, we have found that the customer has a keen interest in the provenance of garments, and this collection is the perfect opportunity to celebrate the Best in British design and manufacture.

