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LUSTRE FOR LIFE



THE SHARPENER

tie flyers

Recent innovations may seem subtle, says Tom Stubbs, but to aficionados, tie design is moving up a notch

So what's the story?" demanded my editor, whose appetite for the new is unsurpassed. I have some remarkable ties to talk about, I tell her, involving refined use of colour, creative embellishments and inventive weaving and printing. It might not be world-shaking news, but men who still value the tie as a personal style signifier will appreciate its subtle significance.

"The tie is a simple object, yet so revealing of one's personality," says Greg Lellouche, founder of online retailer No Man Walks Alone. We are talking about Tie Your Tie, the cult Florentine brand bought by Japanese style maven Kenji Kaga (main picture) in 2011. Kaga has revisited the label's archive through the prism of Japanese refinement, resulting in more muted colours than was typical of the brand's style. There are silk club stripes in faded sepia (€200, pictured right) and jacquard silks with insect or peacock-feather motifs (€200). Asymmetric patterns adorn some ties, while others have hand-embroidered edges. Even more impressive is the Kenji Kaga Three Fold Tie collection (€200 each), a semi-bespoke expression of the Tie Your Tie ethos. The fabrics are more akin to those used for fine sports jackets: hopsack wool/cotton blends and slubby wool/silk/linen mixes (examples pictured top left) and well-suited to their hand embellishments. Some have rows of bold cross-stitching, others are embroidered

with chain-stitching. Stores that carry Kaga's designs host events at which individual embroidery can be ordered along with various linings, initials, crests – whatever clients wish.

How does Charvet director Jean-Claude Colban describe the ethos of its new ties? In a word, denim. "The new elegant-yet-casual dressing styles led us to the idea of denim and indigo-inspired ties [£165]," he says. A schappe silk yarn is combined with organzine silk to produce a matte mélange effect (pictured third and fourth from top far right), while a mouline twist of two shades results in a mid-indigo blue tie, referencing denim's dressed-down

diagonal twill grain (also in silver, both pictured top far right). For the gentleman looking to subvert convention a bit, there are new shades of red and purple achieved using the same mouline technique, which find their way into both checked and solid-colour ties.

Technique is also paramount at Uman, the luxury men's atelier established by Caruso chief executive Umberto Angeloni. Uman ties fuse oriental and western floral designs; tonal silk prints depicting plum blossom, sweet orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum are scattered with western flower motifs, the small repeats popping in contrast to the subtler oriental background, as on a bamboo print with a bright white Rose of York pattern (in brown or navy, £150, pictured far left), or representations of chrysanthemums (£150, pictured fifth from top far right). They're special compositions, made versatile

From far left: Uman silk tie, £150. Jupe by Jackie silk Clooney for Hockney tie, £250. Drake's silk/cotton/nylon houndstooth bouclé tie, £125, and silk/linen tie, £125. Right: Rubinacci silk tie, £150. Turnbull & Asser silk London Ripped tie, £125

New weaving techniques create "self" checked silk



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From top far left: **Tie Your Tie** silk tie, €200. **Kenji Kaga** wool/silk/linen Orlo Margherita tie and wool/cotton Sashiko Becco tie, both from the **Three Fold Tie** collection, €200 each. **Kenji Kaga** wearing a wool Tie Your Tie tie, €200. **Uman** silk tie, £150. **Charvet** schappe silk/organzine silk ties, £165 each

by the fact that all Uman ties are reverse-printed, with one side showcasing a monochrome version of the design. Also dabbling in the doppio-sided tie game is Rubinacci, which has recently altered its printing technique to feature contrasting patterns. The Mary Quant-esque flower-print silks (£150, pictured left) are charming, but it is Rubinacci's bold, bashing, old-school checks (£150) that really work for me.

Material invention seems to be a trend in itself; witness new weaving techniques at Drake's, where silk is "self" checked (whereby a pattern is achieved with textures instead of colour tones). It's as if the fabric is cross-hatched with a scratchy pen nib, with polka dots then applied freehand across the contrasting pattern (£125). There are also jacquards in bold houndstooth and polka-dot motifs (£125, both pictured far left), the fabric a hefty silk/linen mix with a bouclé feel to it.

Over on Jermyn Street, Turnbull & Asser is turning out some surprisingly edgy designs, including a silk series called

London Ripped, featuring prints that simulate one pattern being ripped away to reveal another beneath, such as a Prince of Wales check "torn" in strips atop line drawings of London monuments (£125, pictured below left). There is also a new seven-fold tie in black lace/silk with polka dots (£225), an unusual style statement made with an exceptional level of construction.

But it's the ties designed by Dutch embroidery specialist Jackie Villevoye, who works for Rei Kawakubo's Comme des Garçons, that are the real thrill. At Jupe by Jackie, Villevoye has enlisted a collective of embroiderers in India to make ties that show off appliqué and metallic threading techniques. Blades that are 3½in wide amplify the raised hand-embroidered stripes on navy or charcoal silk (from €90). And I'm knocked out by the even bolder 4in ones: some boast embroidered circles or amoebic forms, called Clooney for Hockney (€250, pictured second from bottom far left), on chocolate or navy silk; others feature silver-thread motorcars or hippy-motif flowers (€170). And should this not be enough, Jupe by Jackie now offers a customisation service, and makes bow ties and pocket squares – all using the same ethical production processes in India. ♦

AHEAD BY A NECK

The Army Gym, 28 Henrietta St, London WC2 (020-7240 1005; www.cabournlondonstore.com).

Charvet, 28 Place Vendôme, 75001 Paris (+331-4260 3070) and see Mr Porter and Selfridges.

Drake's, 3 Clifford St, London W1 (020-7734 2367; www.drakes.com) and see Selfridges and other stockists. **Jupe by Jackie**, www.jupe-by-jackie.com and see The Army Gym and other stockists. **Mr Porter**, www.mrporter.com. **No Man Walks Alone**, www.nomanwalksalone.com.

Rubinacci, 96 Mount St, London W1 (020-7499 2299; www.mariorubinacci.net). **Selfridges**, 400 Oxford St, London W1 (0800-123 400; www.selfridges.com).

Tie Your Tie, www.tieyourtie.com and see No Man Walks Alone, Selfridges and other stockists. **Turnbull & Asser**, 71-72 Jermyn St, London SW1 (020-7808 3000; www.turnbullandasser.co.uk) and branches. **Uman**, by appt, Via Gesù 10, 20121 Milan (+3902-778 7741; www.umanconcept.com).

Tom Stubbs OUT AND ABOUT

● The new Lui ("him") bag from **Fendi** is an extremely urbane briefcase that echoes the Lei ("her") women's bag from the brand's Selleria heritage line. Cut from ultra-soft calf leather, with a distinctive stippled texture, the black Lui model (£2,290, pictured) bears the spaced hand-topstitched edge that's a hallmark of early Fendi bags. Unusually, this is executed in metallic thread – Fendi's way of marrying the past and present. A front zip closure creates two foldable tails at the sides, and plunging a hand into either reveals a sumptuous suede lining. The Lui comes in teal and tan too (£2,210), but these lack the bold topstitching of the black version. 141 New Bond Street, London W1 (020-7927 4172; www.fendi.com).



● I'm impressed by the new roll call of Italian menswear at **Fenwick's** Bond Street store. A trim pair of rust cords (£190) from Boglioli lured me in, and I also found a smashing burgundy poloneck (£210, pictured) and a navy floral-print shirt (£290). Boglioli typifies the lesser-known yet quietly sophisticated Italian labels specialising in refined smart-casual that Fenwick now sells. Another, Massimo Alba, pioneered modern garment-washing techniques; the brand has produced some exclusive pieces for Fenwick, including a double-breasted black-red mohair suit (£1,055) and a Nehru-collar jacket with trousers (£985), hand-painted in a subtle claret hue with deliberate unevenness, for a new casual take on eveningwear. Lardini is more firmly established than the other two, yet it's ahead of the curve with its knitted outerwear, embodied in a handsome camel cardigan coat (£330). 63 New Bond Street, London W1 (020-7629 9161; www.fenwick.co.uk).

● Good-looking, sporty and substantial; the new field kit from **Purdey** impresses right down to the quilted, thermal hi-tech sleeves. There is a quilted thermal jacket (£475) in an eye-catching bronze-khaki hue, as well as a new gilet (£425, pictured) with robust Kevlar lining. Proper shooting-wear style is evidenced by lambswool jumpers (£240) crowned with suede patches for an impeccably trad look; and I found myself rather taken with the Turkish walnut and horn position finder (£675) – a beautifully authentic shooting curio made with wood from Purdey gun-stock blanks. Audley House, 57-58 South Audley Street, London W1 (020-7499 1801; www.purdey.com).

