

Shortcuts
Men's suits

Ammar Kalia

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The pinstripe suit used to be all about power. It's time to reclaim it

Notorious devotees include Nigel Farage and Gordon Gekko-style bankers, but the fabric is finding a new life as part of the fashionable man's wardrobe



▲ A different strip: Nigel Farage and Donald Glover in pinstripe suits. Composite: Getty Images

Nigel Farage, who is now threatening to make an eighth bid to become an MP, was pictured this week in [Pontefract, West Yorkshire](#), in his usual pinstripe suit. And he's not the only one - the stripe is making a fashion comeback, but with a twist this time. Traditionally a sartorial by-word for power, the pinstripe has its origins in the banking world, worn as a way of distinguishing workers at different Victorian banks based on the distance between the thin white lines on their suits.

"The pinstripe is a very smart look, one really appropriate for business," says Peter Smith, of the Savile Row tailors Richard Anderson. So, in wearing it, Farage is attempting to say that he means business.

But, as with so many other things, Farage is very much out of step. In recent years, the pinstripe has been reclaimed from stuffy devotees such as Jacob Rees-Mogg, Gordon Gekko-style financiers and dictators such as Kim Jong-un. "Pinstripe is the fabric that refuses to die," says Charlie Baker-Collingwood, founder of Henry Herbert tailors. "We used to sell lots of pinstripe in the 80s, then the demand went down in the following decades, but now we're back to selling it again. The cloth has reinvented itself since then, though. People shouldn't be afraid of its business or even rightwing connotations - you can even pair it with trainers. It's a conspicuous fabric, so make sure you don't over accessorise, and let the design work for you. If all else fails, look to David Beckham. He always wears a pinstripe very well."

In addition to the former footballer, recent converts include the actor, writer, musician, activist and general cultural polymath [Donald Glover](#), who was sporting a slick Gucci rendition at the Emmys. The fighter Conor McGregor had a custom pinstripe made for his match against Floyd Mayweather, with the [stripes spelling out "Fuck you"](#) in a very tailored provocation of his opponent.

For politicians, the wearing of a pinstripe is a deliberate separation from the "centrist blue suit" - the navy blue cut so beloved by politicians such as Barack Obama and David Cameron in seemingly simpler, pre-Brexit, pre-Trump times. Pinstripe, in contrast, is an attempt to hark back to an age of haughtiness and tradition. Yet, as Baker-Collingwood says, this is fruitless. "The pinstripe used to be about greed, but you can carry it differently now - and you should. The old assumption that it is a banker's suit has changed - even pop stars are wearing it now. The pinstripe has reinvented itself."

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