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## Industry Secret - Article 5



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### An Introduction to Italian Suit Quality

#### Italian Suit Components, Fabrics, Colors and Patterns

So you're looking for an Italian suit. This primer in dress suit quality will introduce you to components, fabrics, colors and patterns you will find in a high grade Italian suit.

**Suit Components**

Strictly speaking, an Italian suit consists of two or three parts: the jacket, the trousers, and the optional vest. The jacket of a dress suit may be single-breasted or double-breasted, and may have one or two vents. Some men's suits have no vent at all.

The trousers of an Italian suit may be pleated or flat front, depending on your preference, and the pant leg may or may not have a cuff. Contrary to a common misconception, the cuff is not a requirement of a double-breasted business suit.

In Italian suits as in other dress suits, the vest is a holdover from an earlier era. For most men, a vest would be too warm to wear at the office. Today's standard business suit has two pieces.

**Suit fabric**

When an Italian suit is made, all pieces are cut from the same fabric. Wool is the preferred material for a man's suit because the natural fibers allow ventilation, wear well and resist wrinkling. Wool is graded for fineness; a higher number indicates a finer wool fiber. Examples are Super 100, 110, 120 and 150. The higher the number, the less likely the wool is to wrinkle thanks to the tighter weave.

Another ideal fabric for a man's suit is silk, especially in luxurious summer Italian suits. Cotton would be a possibility but for its extreme susceptibility to wrinkling that will mar the appearance of a business suit.

**Suit color**

Subdued colors are traditional for a man's dress suit, and Italian suits are no exception: black suits, navy blue suits, and all shades of gray suits are the appropriate business suit colors for the typical MBA graduate. Other colors of dress suits are more appropriate for casual occasions, weekend wear, and the like. Leading patterns in US business suits are Prince of Wales check, dark gray or blue flannel, and a fine gray herringbone pattern in flannel, all available in Italian suits.

You have now finished your primer on Italian suits, including the components, fabrics, colors and patterns common to designer men's suits. One last tip: as with any man's suit, Italian suit jacket and trousers should always be dry cleaned together. Why? Dry cleaning the entire business suit maintains the same shade of color over time.

**Got it?** If you have an Italian suit or men's fashion question you'd like answered, contact us to have it added to our Ask the Expert section.

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