

STYLE & FASHION

By JAMIE WATERS

YOU hear plenty about the cashmere caps, slip-on sneakers and limited-edition dive watches beloved by deep-pocketed men. Fancy pants? Not so much. Victoria Hitchcock, a personal stylist to tech execs in Silicon Valley, calls trousers the “worker bees” of men’s wardrobes, reliable yet rarely buzzed about.

In recent years, however, moneyed men are pouncing on a certain breed of pants, and one \$1,000 cashmere specimen in particular, as if it’s a portal to a new tax haven, according to stylists and stores serving the 1%. These new status pants—basic five-pocket designs, but rendered in luxe wool flannels—are pajama-comfy yet polished enough for hosting client luncheons, clinking Negronis at members’ clubs or deploying seasons as verbs.

Five-pocket pants, typically a tidy style that hangs on the hips, with a front coin slot, famously come in denim and other casual cottons. While these elite, fresh takes retain that familiar cut, the wool ups the formality, says Alex Gushner, men’s buyer at luxury Philadelphia retailer Boyds. “After Covid,” said Will Arvanites, a buyer at Marc Allen Fine Clothiers, a men’s store in Providence, R.I., “these are as dressy as most guys need to get in an office.”

Italian brands Zegna and PT Torino offer popular takes, but insiders hail a design by a little-known Neapolitan label—Marco Pescarolo’s pants in Magnifico cashmere—as the platinum standard. Introduced in 2019, they’re distinguished by their cloth, a soft and light-but-not-flimsy blend of 96% Mongolian cashmere and 4% elastane. That’s an unusually high cashmere percentage for pants, typically cut from harder materials.



The Pants Rich Men Love

Comfy yet sufficiently dressy, these luxe wool takes on five-pocket pants have affluent men reaching for their Black Cards. Why a little-known Italian brand’s \$1,000 cashmere specimen is the most sought-after of all.

Unlike fashionably wide pants, these slim styles appeal to regular men who do regular things like law, medicine or buying islands.

Think of them as Levi’s 501s that traded ranch life for the royal court. Their princely price: \$995 to \$1,095, depending on the retailer.

Slim as a caviar spoon’s handle, the tapered pants come in (yes) 45-plus shades, most of them subdued like charcoal and chocolate. They play nice with sport coats, and demand dry-cleaning. A key chain of a traditional Neapolitan theater mask—the brand’s logo—dangles dramatically from their belt loop (most men remove it). Call them “Magnifico!” Don’t you dare utter “worker bee.”

Bart Trigg, senior men’s buyer and manager at historic luxury Dallas retailer Stanley Korshak, called the pants “a

phenomenon” and “a magic item.” Not only are they currently his store’s bestselling pants “by far,” he reckons they might be its bestselling pants ever. Stanley Korshak has upped its orders by at least 20% annually for the past few years, he added.

For pants at such a high price, they’re “unusually popular,” said Gushner. Bob Mitchell, co-CEO of Mitchell Stores, which owns luxury retailers across the U.S., described them as “a treat” for affluent guys.

For many highfliers, one measly treat is not enough: Arvanites finds lots of customers initially bristle at the price, but after pulling on a pair, “are like, ‘Holy s—, that feels amazing. What other colors does it come in?’”

The wintry pants have put Pescarolo on the map in the U.S., notes Gushner. The family-owned brand, a pant specialist that in recent years diversified into other garments, was founded in 1999 by husband and wife Marco Pescarolo and Anna De Matteis. (De Matteis’ brother,

Antonio De Matteis, is CEO of uber-pricey brand Kiton.) Today its annual revenue totals about \$20 million. It has grown by about 35% in each of the past four years, says marketing manager Benedetta Pescarolo, the founders’ daughter. The customers, most of whom are 35 to 65, can swipe their Amexes at about 300 third-party stores globally.

Benedetta says De Matteis spent more than a year developing Magnifico with an Italian mill. “We did a lot of tests” to pinpoint a cashmere-elastane composition that wouldn’t pill or stretch out, she said, before settling on “the perfect” mix. (The brand cuts Magnifico into other styles; Europeans favor a drawstring version.)

Unlike the fashionably wide trousers dominating runways, these pants’ lean lines appeal to regular men who do regular things like law or medicine or buying and selling islands. Mario Esposito, who co-manages Pescarolo’s European and U.S. markets, says “a lot of CEOs” wear them, as do members of European royal families. “They want a nice, clean fit—to look young and good.”

Hitchcock, the stylist, says the trim cut can constrict men with bigger legs. But Arvanites finds the stretch

FIVE-POCKETS FOR DEEP POCKETS / THE IN-DEMAND ‘MAGNIFICO’ STYLE



George Mayer, the global director of sales at watch retailer the 1916 Company, in his cashmere Pescarolo pants and Zegna Triple Stitch sneakers.

Marco Pescarolo Magnifico Five-Pocket Pants, \$995 at Boyds Philadelphia



cloth forgiving, especially on post-lunch paunches.

What fans really want to discuss is how these pants feel. “They’re so comfortable I could go running in them,” said George Mayer, 39, who bought two pairs just over a year ago. The global director of sales at luxury watch retailer the 1916 Company, Mayer has worn them “tens of times” and said they still look new. “They did strike me as expensive when I bought them, but I think they’re worth [the price].”

In his Philadelphia office,

he pairs them with Zegna Triple Stitch sneakers, the slippers that have conquered C-suites. In that cozy-yet-rarefied combo, “I feel like I’m wearing slippers and pajamas, but I’m business casual.”

Michael Calore, 39, also likes his Magnificos very much. “I wear the s— out of them,” said the Boston-based partner at a biotech investment firm. More than a year in, he says his show no signs of wear.

Calore says men fairly often inquire about his pants during New York business

lunches; about one in three or four recognize the Pescarolo name. Far fewer know it at the medical conferences or Congress hearings that Dr. Foluso Fakorede, 43, attends. Still, the cardiologist in Cleveland, Miss., regularly receives compliments on his Magnificos—a step up from his “routine suits.”

Shoes and watches can make powerful statements, but Fakorede considers his bold red glasses and cashmere pants more surprising. “Those,” he said, “are my conversation pieces.”



VIVE LE WEEK-END!
Vintage French workwear inspired this double-pocketed wool number. 18 East Wes Straight Hem Work Shirt, \$218



ON THE LOOSE
Cut like a bowling shirt, this cotton-linen one is dyed using pomegranate and bark. Story Mfg. Greetings Shirt LS, about \$284



OFFICE-READY
An oversized take on a cotton dress-shirt, complete with razor-straight hem. Uniqlo Broadcloth Oversized Shirt, \$50



NO MERE SHIRT
In substantial wool cashmere, this luxe cream version can double as a jacket. Todd Snyder Italian Wool Cashmere Field Shirt, \$428

Never Miss A Tuck

Cooler than Untuckit’s offerings, these truly straight-hemmed shirts do their level best

IN TRADITIONAL shirting, a curved hem is a functional design detail that allows for efficient tucking. But for the legions of men who have forsaken tucking, those “tails” droop down, messily covering their rear-ends. Untuckit took steps to tidy things up with its popular cropped designs meant to hang loose, the hems only slightly curved. Now a newer, chicer breed of shirts with truly stick-straight hems has arrived to further the retreat from old-school propriety.

“A straight hem is inherently more casual because it’s meant to be worn untucked,” explains Antonio Ciongoli, creative director and founder of New York apparel brand 18 East. Such shirts, he added, “can both dress down a suit or add a bit of polish to a T-shirt and sweatpants.” Saeed Al-Rubeyi, co-founder of Story Mfg., a London clothing label, also appreciates these designs’ versatility. “They’re not too sloppy, not too formal...maybe a bit workwear but not in an overly rugged way.” At left, four of our favorites. —Caitie Kelly