



WHITE IS RIGHT

If you are not white, you are not right. This simple statement, racist connotations aside, can be used to explain men's affinity with white shirts. A white shirt, stand alone, or under your suit or paired with a blue jeans is an enduring fashion statement all by itself. Think of Marlon Brando, the man who popularised white tees and blue jeans, a revolutionary dress code that changed the fashion scene forever; now extract the white tee and add a shirt and you have a much more refined take on a classic look.

There is not a man alive who does not or has not at some point, owned a white shirt. A white shirt is the height of class and this is not a new development. In the Victorian era, white shirts were seen as a status symbol, a sign of class and stature. However, the white shirt was not the jewel in the crown; it was rather covered by other garments, hidden underneath more fashionable things. But a rolled up sleeve, a loosened tie, juxtaposed with a crisp white-shirt came to epitomise the "hard-working" white-collar man. The term white collar, many believe, originated from here.

The reason white came to so much popularity has less to do with purity and more to do with commercial reasons. White coloured T-shirts were expensive to maintain and they always needed to be clean, crisp and so those who were not as affluent chose different colours instead. Hence, white came to symbolise class.

Besides, another very important factor that led to popularity of the plain white shirt was one of severity. In the 19th century, in a much less "open-minded" world, a T-shirt with too much colour or decoration was instantly considered "non-masculine" and frowned upon. Men were then

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supposed to be "MEN", austere and sombre, and all business-like. A man in too many colours could not be trusted and this led to the donning of the quintessential white T-shirt.

The Prince of Wales (Edward VIII) began to move away from white, preferring others, as white T-shirts became easy to make. However, a revival was in the

offing and it came from an unexpected quarter, namely the literary scene. Over the years, the plain white shirt has been the garment of choice for litterateurs such as the savvy Lord Byron and the sophisticated F Scott Fitzgerald, along with the ever romantic Ernest Hemingway.

Brands like Armani, Gucci and especially Hugo Boss brought back the white-shirt to its rightful place, in the top echelons of power-dressing. The white shirt, till today, continues to be associated with concepts of power, prestige and status, all notions that feed into men's easy-to-stroke egos. Of course, the best part about the white shirt is that it can be worn anywhere and anytime. Whether you go for a casual look, a formal look, a semi-formal look or hit up the famous All-White party at the Nordic club, white shirts are here to stay and thankfully so. Thus, given the context, you can without a second glance say 'white is right.'

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