

People

Labels of love

Dave Moreton,
UK commercial
director, Lee
Jeans



I have a lot of affinity with Barbour. It's a brand that in recent seasons has been rejuvenated by trend, but it has stayed very loyal to the product values and, while it has popped up in different distribution of late, it still hasn't forgotten its core market. Over the years I've had a couple of its waxed jackets and they just get better with age. And, of course, the obligatory Liddesdale Sport lightweight padded jacket (a uniform in South London). I have the khaki option, which is a little rarer than the other colours.

I also have a lot of affection for the early days of Duffer of St George. At the time, its store in Covent Garden was ground breaking with the mix of dry denims – imported from Japan – and original Levi's products. I also think that Duffer started the



trend back in the late 1990s for T-shirts with funky prints, which were then made really mainstream by the likes of Ringspun, and more recently maximised by brands like Superdry. The quality of fabrics Duffer used was excellent and the choice of colours was always bang on the money. I have a couple of its old tees that I still wear today.

Maybe because of the history of the brand, maybe because of the fact it's located in Derbyshire (my home county now), or maybe because it produces some of the best quality knitwear around, but John Smedley is the knitwear brand. You may get strong own-label knitwear from certain stores, but Smedley has not compromised on quality. Okay, it's not cheap, but I have three cardigans, and a wardrobe full of its jumpers. I can't actually remember where I got my first Smedley piece, but wherever it was, thanks!

I have frequently travelled to the States over the years and I bought my first pair of Converse there. At that stage they were a little more underground than today, but the brand is great, and I have got five pairs – all differing versions of Chuck Taylor's. I have tried other footwear since, but have failed to find any that are a match for my Converse. I still wear my first pair, even though the soles are splitting and the canvas is ripped.

A pint with...

Roger Wade

CEO of Brands Incorporated



We started up Boxfresh in 1989 and at the time there wasn't anything like a "streetwear" industry. There was only really Mau Mau, Duffer of St. George and us. I don't think at that time people even really knew what streetwear was, but we literally got our inspiration from the streets and what we saw around.

We didn't have a clue about the business back then, but we were all young and we had no fear and nothing to lose. We made a lot of mistakes at our own expense. But sometimes they're the best mistakes to make – when you're learning about credit control and stock control. And when it's actually you not getting paid, you learn very quickly!

We met a few people that were influential at the time. I remember going to see Paul Smith once and sitting having a cup of tea with him. And I was thinking what am I, Roger Wade from Greenwich Market, doing here having a cup of tea with Paul Smith!

We had loads of highs and lows along the way. And there's many a time when I thought we'd had a knock-out punch and we would never survive. But I had tenacity and I always got back up. By 1994 we'd kind of gone round in a full circle. We'd be turning over money, but we'd be looking at what we had and there'd be nothing there! We all got frustrated and we closed the business, which was really hard because you put your life and blood into something and really there was nothing to show for it.

We went over to the States and licensed Boxfresh. We were one of the first British brands of our ilk to be over there. French Connection maybe had a \$10m business and Diesel maybe had a \$10m business, and at one stage we had a \$5m business – so that was a high.

Another high was when we came back from America and started the whole "urbanwear" phenomenon. It just went ballistic. I remember going to one 40 Degrees show at Earls Court, and literally 50 per cent of the people at the show were coming to our stand. I was standing at the entrance of our stand actually turning people away. It was incredible. I took an order from a Swedish chain for £1m, and they wrote it on the stand at the show. We couldn't do any wrong.

Something I preach now with brands that we work with is don't change too quickly. You've got to build up what your brand stands for and once you've done that, stick to it. If you keep changing you're attracting new customers but losing old customers. What you want to do is slowly evolve. We say evolution, not revolution! This is from experience.

The Bureau, 46-50 Howard Street,
Belfast BT1 6PG.

My love for product stems from finding gems that aren't everywhere and buying them from cool shops for prices that I couldn't really afford.

My job allows me to travel, which means I get to see more product and more stores than ever before, though the buzz of finding a real gem in a store that offers something unique is becoming harder to come by. However, The Bureau on Howard Street in Belfast is something else. First opened 20 years ago on a smaller street, the owners set about creating an environment where guys could go to find product that wasn't widely available anywhere in town. Their friendly manner and great eye for both heritage brands and newly-founded companies gained it a great following and in 2005 it opened what I would name "a gentlemen's emporium for really special kit."

The service is delivered with the patience and quality of a menswear store from the 1950s, and its selection of items is superb – from hand-crafted shoes to casual clothing for grown-ups.



My favourite shop

Boris Worstock, account manager,
New Balance & PF Flyers UK & Ireland

Trade secrets



Pippa Stephens
store manager,
Globe-Trotter and
Mackintosh,
Burlington Arcade,
London, WI

Why did you get into retail?

It was something that I just fell into initially, but I enjoyed it and decided to make it my career.

What's the strangest moment you have had on the shop floor?

The Burlington arcade has a resident poltergeist, Percy. He seems to enjoy rearranging window displays from time to time.

Tell us about your most memorable customer.

Kylie Minogue visited the store, unannounced. She came in to look at Globe-Totter cases.

What's the biggest faux-pas you have made at work?

A heavily pregnant lady was busy trying Mackintosh coats, and I asked her when she was due and would she need a larger size of coat to accommodate her bump. It soon became apparent that she was not with child at all. Needless to say I was mortified!

What is your favourite memory of your career?

Getting the job as Store Manager for Globe-Trotter and Mackintosh.

Simon says



Overbrewed tea, creaking deck chairs and insincere cries of 'well played'. It can only mean one thing. Croquet.

We all have our ways to relax and release the stress of fighting the recession.

For some it may be drink; for others gambling. But for me it's always been croquet. Like many minority sports, it suffers an image problem. It seems forever associated with Pimms and elderly spinsters on the vicar's lawn and, at one level, it's still true. At the serious competition level, where I spend far too much time, the sport is dominated by a handful of surprisingly young players, some of whom are still at school or University.

Having grown up with a garden set of croquet, I became reacquainted with the game about ten years ago, and joined two South London clubs. (There are many more clubs than you might imagine....) Gradually my game improved culminating in winning the All England Handicap Championship in 2004.

It's easy to become obsessive with sport. There are websites devoted to the technical merits of different mallets. Mine is custom-made by the delightfully-named Professor Pidcock. It's all carbon fibre and balanced weights.

This year I decided to go for it and enter as many of the Opens as I could. These are the big boys' tournaments. There are a hard core of us socially marginalised players who seem to do not much else than meet up at different clubs around the country to be as vicious as we can to each other. This year I've been to Surbiton, Roehampton, Eastbourne and even Woking.

Playing at this level requires mental stamina much more than physical. It's all about your last shot. Other players will sit watching your game, passing comments after each stroke like les sans culottes around the guillotine. It can be nerve wracking and very frustrating, with occasional moments of brilliance and reward. This May I won my first major Open and moved up to number 10 in the UK.

After a particularly grim tournament (Woking) I was driving home wondering why I do it. Why put myself through this torture, I thought. I had a sense of déjà vu at Pitti last week. It was depressingly quiet, with attendance well down. Again, why do I put myself through this torture? Then, on the last day, three regular customers all came within an hour, loved the new collections, and placed very healthy orders.

Sadly, I'd miss it too much to give up. So I just carry on torturing myself...

Simon Carter is the owner of the eponymous accessories and clothing brand.

What item of menswear clothing is a must for the summer months?

Skinny chinos.

Leonard Hamilton, director,
Northernlights Agencies

Tailored shorts... you can wear them with shirt/tie and deck shoes while working, and on a weekend with a polo shirt and trainers for a smart but more casual feel.

Darren Farrell, managing director,
Farrells Neckwear

Our Magic Mushroom tee gives off the perfect summer vibe with vibrant colours and is a must for summer 2009. It even comes with our very own CD promotion.

Dominic McKnight, marketing assistant,
Drunkmunky

It's got to be our Mark Powell short three-button seersucker jacket

Mark Powell, director and designer,
Mark Powell London

Linen Baracuta G9 jacket.

Kevin Stone, marketing director,
BMB Group

For me it's got to be a very smart polo shirt for a sophisticated look.

Chris Dagless, sales, Sachelle Couture/Olga Berg

For that summer Peel I love floral shirts, they look great.

Darren Morris, director, Cast Iron