



CUT FROM A DIFFERENT CLOTH: Fedro Gaudenzi (left) and his eponymous brand won't be pigeonholed – producing bespoke outfits for all, from ball gowns to bomber jackets.

□□□ TAILORING

The new guard

Sure, Savile Row may be where it started. But from Soho to Hackney, London's bespoke tailors are on the march. **NICK HENDRY** reports

LONDON IS ONE of the greatest cities in the world if you're in need of a bespoke tailor. This has been the case for centuries – posited and proven so many times, it is now a simple sartorial fact.

There is, of course, a certain 300-yard strip in Mayfair, which is known the world over as the birthplace of bespoke, and is still seen today as the ultimate location for the trade. This reputation is both hard-won and well-deserved, such is the quality of the garments which are made there and the dedication to artisanship of its residents.

It is not, however, the only place in this great metropolis one can go to find world-class bespoke tailoring. Contrary to what some may have you believe, there is more to London's bespoke scene beyond the Row.

Away from the storied houses of that fabled street, there is a wealth of young,

creative and progressive tailors – many of them who admittedly trained in those very houses – all over the capital.

Number 13 Soho Square is an imposing townhouse in the heart of a neighbourhood known for its energy and diversity. The first floor is home to Fedro Gaudenzi Bespoke, the house founded in 2017 by the tailor whose name it bears. Fedro has been working in tailoring since he was 12 years old. "I used to cut up my mother's clothing to redesign it, so she sent me to work with my father's tailor to put my instincts to good use." He has worked with Timothy Everest, designed shoes for Harry's of London, womenswear at Simona Corsellini and even childrenswear for a while.

At 29, he took the plunge and opened up under his own name. "It took six months just to figure out which direction I wanted to go. Lots of people offered their advice – 'do men's

tailoring, do ready-to-wear, do womenswear' – but eventually, I just decided to do it all."

Looking at the pieces on display around the studio, it's clear these are not just empty words. While many bespoke offerings are, in practice, restricted to business and formalwear, Fedro will create anything the client asks for. From the usual suits and coats through ball gowns and dresses to bomber jackets and tracksuits, the only limit really is your imagination. "The definition of 'bespoke' is 'specifically made for a particular person'. It doesn't say anywhere 'just suits'."

Educating the customer on the true possibilities of bespoke – and the fact that their entire wardrobe can be of the same level of quality as their tailoring – is something Fedro is passionate about. It was also a major factor in choosing his Soho Square premises: which include a beautiful showroom, all bathed in natural light flooding in from the windows to the Square, while to the left is a conspicuously open workshop. →



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luck at having an existing client book that has supported her through every step of her rapid journey. She estimates the split to be roughly 50/50 between UK and overseas customers – the local contingent having been a benefit through periods of travel restriction. But there is another demographic imbalance she wishes to address: that between men (in the majority) and women.

“It’s taking a while, but the women are coming. I think, going forward with Lawton, that I will begin to introduce some house styles specifically for women.”

Like with Fedro Gaudenzi, Lawton is also keen to make whatever garments the customer wants, though the immediate intention is to focus on classic tailoring.

“Our offering is tailoring for men and women, but suits aren’t just for work, they’re for fun, too. They don’t have to be frumpy, boxy or unflattering, and they can be colours other than navy and grey. Suits are sexy.”

As well as a desire to make bespoke more accessible to women, Kimberley wants her clothes to be easier to obtain for the young. To this end, Lawton will offer payment plans for those just starting out not only in the world of style, but the world of work.

“It doesn’t have to be as restrictive as just ‘deposit, then balance’. Some clients would love bespoke, but don’t necessarily have £2,500 right away [for a deposit], so allowing them to contribute each month would put it within the reach of a lot more people. Clothes can make people feel comfortable, or powerful, or however they want to feel. I want to make them have that feeling.”

As the world around us evolves, so do our attitudes to clothing. As dress codes relax in the office, making an effort for the evening comes back into style; as climate change and social conscience cast a cloud on fast-fashion, investing in smaller wardrobes of greater versatility and higher quality becomes more attractive. Thankfully, London’s next generation of tailors are ensuring there is more than just one street from where we can pick up a truly world-class wardrobe. ■

For more information, see LAWTONLTD.CO.UK; and FEDROGAUDENZI.COM

→ The whole team is customer-facing, not just Fedro himself, which gives the customer more of an insight into the making of the garment, and the equal importance of every artisan involved. For this modern, relaxed atmosphere and attitude, Soho is ideal.

“Our clients are a mixture of traditional tailoring customers who would perhaps

feel more at home on The Row, and newer customers who are looking for something a bit different,” he explains. “Soho seemed like the perfect middle ground.”

Having this transparency and collaborative feel to the studio is also of great importance to Kimberley Lawton, whose new house – rather elegantly named just ‘Lawton’ – officially opened at the beginning of this year. “I want my team around me so we can bounce off one another. The best way to keep learning and continue growing is to be surrounded by like-minded individuals who want to make the best suits, the sharpest lapels. Having those people around me is inspiring.”

Despite only recently turning 28, Kimberley has already had plenty of inspiring company in her career: she combined her university studies with placements at Richard Anderson and Timothy Everest, made coats for Davies & Sons after graduating and then landed an apprenticeship at Huntsman. This was followed by three years of partnership in Dobrik & Lawton (with fellow Savile Row alumnus Joshua Dobrik) before beginning 2022 with this fresh new venture.

By her own admission, this has all been a bit of a whirlwind. The new business does not yet have a showroom, but clients can make appointments to be visited at home with garments being made at a studio in Hackney.

Kimberley is quick to acknowledge her



EARNING HER STRIPES: Tailor Kimberley Lawton worked at Richard Anderson, Timothy Everest, Huntsman, and Davies & Sons before launching her own company.

