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PUTTING A LID ON IT

The preferred headwear of gangsters, actual *Mad Men* and stars as diverse as Humphrey Bogart and Michael Jackson, fedoras, **Cameron Williamson** reports, are being rediscovered by a new generation of dudes

Tom Hardy sure can wear a hat. As a Depression-era Southern moonshiner in *Lawless*, he sports a beaten-up fedora, worn menacingly low and often paired with an unbuttoned cardigan and wool trousers, that threatens to steal the show. Despite the movie's period setting, he looks, in fact, as if he has stepped off the fall runways of Robert Geller or Jean Paul Gaultier, two of several men's-wear designers who featured toppers that Al Capone and Bugsy Siegel might have appreciated.

Designers have been trying to make hats happen for a few seasons now, citing influences as varied as David Bowie's fedora-wearing extraterrestrial in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (see Lanvin's show from last fall) to the wide-brimmed headwear of Southern Gothic

preachers and Amish men (check out Dior Homme's last spring collection).

But it has only been recently that these styles have actually transitioned from the catwalks to the street, appearing on the heads of not just overly accessorized hipsters and performers like Ne-Yo and Theophilus London but on regular guys too, many of whom are being photographed sporting porkpies, homburgs and trilbys – all types of fedoras – for men's style blogs such as Mister Mort and Dapper Lou.

This past summer, GQ.com posted an image of Dexter Peart, one of the Montreal-based twin brothers behind the label WANT Les Essentiels de la Vie, in an ivory-hued Panama-style fedora by Borsalino, an Italian brand founded in 1857. "Even after 150 years they continue to present the fedora in such a stylish way," says

Peart, who was snapped for the magazine's website while attending Pitti Uomo, the men's trade show in Florence. "Their hats are classic yet modern at the same time."

On these shores and in cooler temperatures, Peart will swap his straw version for a navy flannel traveller's fedora: a foldable style that will be stocked along with other Borsalinos in the brand new WANT Passport boutique in Toronto's Billy Bishop airport, the first retail outlet of any kind at the downtown airfield.

Fellow lid-lovers Gregory Westbrook and Nick Fouquet took matters into their own hands last year, launching Westbrook Maker, a California-based company specializing in handmade hats. Their fall collection, inspired by the preferred headgear of legendary American troubadours such as Gram

Parsons and Woody Guthrie as well as the wide-brimmed, high-crowned hats of Hasidic men, are, according to Fouquet, crafted with "a high attention to detail and a whole lot of love," not to mention the finest beaver and rabbit-fur felt, deadstock European grosgrain and inner sweatbands made from military-grade sheepskin.

One of their styles to check out is the Gold Digger, which carries the tagline: "Not named after the great gold rush of 1849 but after my ex-wife, who took everything I had, including my boots."

Hold on to your hats, though: Depending on felt content, weight and finishing, a Westbrook Maker can cost upward of 600 bucks. On the other hand, this trend is likely to hang around for at least a few seasons more.

Special to The Globe and Mail

Q & A

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Brightly coloured men's clothes, including shoes and even suits, seem to be prominent this fall. This is completely crazy, right?”



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No, it's not: It's delightful and welcome. There is no longer any reason for men to exist in drab uniformity. (The idea of bourgeois uniformity came along in the early 19th century because it paralleled the rise of democracy; we no longer have any aristocrats around to dress against.) Re: this fall, the suit you may have seen in magazines and elsewhere is a narrow cherry-red number by Lanvin and I think it is perfectly appropriate for any non-funeral occasion. Red is in fact particularly big this fall, also featuring in trousers and scarves. The extreme end of the colour craze was seen in a surge of printed (patterned) suits by the likes of Dolce & Gabbana, Kenzo and Versace; these wallpaper-like things will not catch on in law offices, but their radicalism will have an indirect influence in the form of a return to subtle plaids and checks even in mainstream stores. If I could afford to have someone make me the luxury of a pink suit, I would immediately invest in it; in the meantime, I will wait for the designer who will no doubt produce an off-the-rack version for next spring. Shoes have been going more and more colourful since snappy running shoes have occupied such a large continent on the sartorial landscape; now it is not considered unusual for a guy to have orange or purple highlights in his outfit at around shoe level. Designers of expensive shoes have been experimenting with all sorts of shade for leathers and a bright green suede brogue is today a not-unusual part of casual wear and should no longer brand you as an eccentric or architect. Remember that women respect a little daring in even the manliest of men.

Russell Smith is a novelist. His recent memoir, *Blindsided*, is available as a Kobo e-book. Have a fashion question? E-mail style@globeandmail.com.

MOST WANTED

HOW SWEDE IT IS

If there's one country that can relate to what Canadians go through when the temperature drops, it's Sweden. Consequently, homegrown hedonists would be well advised to stock up on the facial cleanser, under-eye gel and anti-shine moisturizer cooked up by Recipe for Men, a Scandinavian range of grooming products developed by three friends and skiers (one a former Olympian) to battle the effects of living in a cold, dry climate. Featuring ingredients such as the soothing herb *centella asiatica*, detoxifying juniper berries and polyphenol-rich black tea, it's a line that packs some serious skin-care punch. Not bad from a country full of pacifists. – C.W.

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TIFF'S LEADING MEN

At this year's Toronto film fest, the ladies weren't the only ones who rocked the red carpet. Behold a few of the dapperest dudes



BRUCE WILLIS
Confident in pink



PIERS HANDLING
Handsome in Hugo Boss



JOSEPH GORDON-LEVITT
Gunning for gangster chic