

Dani wears Simone jacket by ELAINE KIM, tuxedo shirt by FRIAR TUX, bow tie by RYAN SEACREST DISTINCTION SUITING, ankle pant trousers by TOPSHOP provided by Nordstrom, leather dress shoe by ESQUIVEL and feather boutonniere by JULIE HARRIS



GENDER OPTIONAL

No longer will finding appropriate wedding wear come with a sense of dread, as gender-neutral fashion lines have finally entered the market **By Lydia Siriprakorn**

It's wedding season, and the fashion industry is finally catching on to that fact that people want to say "I do" however the hell they want to. Rather than letting gender dictate style, a few brands have emerged aiming to change the way people suit up for their special day by being inclusive of all genders and styles.

Nik Kacy, founder of Nik Kacy the luxury footwear company, knows all too well what it feels like to dread dress code—after decades of maneuvering disproportionate shoes, adding extra insoles and layering on pairs of socks just to finagle a close fit. "No one should have to go through that on their big day," Kacy said. Nik Kacy charts new territory, and come late fall, you can walk down the aisle wearing classic men's style shoes in women's sizes (and keep an eye out for a line of women's styles in men's sizes).

Two other like-minded brands setting out to give people more wedding attire options, no matter how they identify, are Sharpe Suiting, the go-to for custom wedding suits that fit androgynous bodies, and Greyscale Goods, a monthly subscription-based service that scours the market for the best gender-neutral styles, delivering right to your door.

Shopping for everyday wear is already a daunting task for many, let alone finding an outfit for the biggest day of one's life. Sara Medd, owner of Greyscale Goods and a stylist who has been working in the fashion industry for well over a decade, starts by asking clients how they like their clothes to fit, and if they normally shop in the men's or women's department. "Unfortunately, those are still questions that need to be asked, just so I can get an idea of how someone likes their clothes to fit."

A shopping trip usually means exhausting all options in the women's and men's departments, in hopes of finding the right outfit or at least one close enough that can be tailored. "There's no 'one-stop shop' unless you're going to get a custom suit. That's a huge hurdle," says Medd. "And then you bring in a tailor, and if you're not their normal customer—if you're a masculine woman in the men's department—they don't always know what to do with tailoring your suits. A lot of my friends face those judgments in the men's department constantly."

However, Medd notes a tipping point only in the last two or three years. "More and more women are wearing suits. In the last two years, especially. There are celebrities wearing suits to the Grammys, to the Emmys. Suits are a lot more acceptable in the last



Melinda (left) wears Simone jacket and Diva leather pants by **ELAINE KIM**, tuxedo shirt by **FRIAR TUX**, bow tie by **BURBERRY** provided by Nordstrom. Bonnie wears Reya Blazer by **ALLSAINTS** provided by Bloomingdales, stretch poplin shirt by **THE KOPPLES** provided by Bloomingdales, tie by **BURBERRY** provided by Nordstrom, The Park pant by **RAG & BONE** and Lorenzo boots by **ELAINE KIM**

two years in dressing up for red carpet and wedding capacities."

While celebrities certainly influence fashion, Medd sees gender-neutral clothing as a permanent part of the changing landscape. "I don't want to say trend, because I don't think that it's going to go away anytime soon," says Medd, "but I say trend in the way that it's what we're moving toward. We're in a progression toward androgyny in general in our style. From the 1950s, where it was this huge dichotomy between women wearing dresses and men dressing up in suits, costume has just moved toward a more androgynous point."

But for a special occasion, the right fit is critical, and it often takes more than a few alterations to achieve that. It's no surprise that Sharpe Suiting has the art of fitting androgynous bodies down to a science. "Our sizing is based on real data, real clients," explains Leon Wu, founder of Sharpe Suiting. "We took over 1,000 measurements that we had obtained from our initial clients, and I basically scatter-plotted all of these points and saw that there was a natural small, medium and large that came out of it. These sizes are sizes that are in between what's available for men's wear versus women's wear."

This summer, Sharpe Suiting is debuting yet another game changer—the launch of a highly anticipated ready-to-wear line. Ready-to-wear means a more affordable price point (\$650 and up, compared to custom, which starts at \$985) and more accessibility. "We've gotten so many requests from people who are remote from us, and we want to be able to provide our suits to them as well," says Wu. "What's difficult with custom is that we have a lot of clients who can't come here to L.A. For those who purchase remotely, they can take it to a dry cleaners or a local tailor and get those things fixed real quick." It's all the convenience of Men's Wearhouse without the crap suit quality, cheeseball TV commercials or judgmental staff.

"We're just in this really cool moment right now of progressive thinking," says Medd. "In the fashion world there are some really cool things happening." ■



From left: Nik Kacy, Sara Medd, Leon Wu

Wing-Tip Derby

Once considered too flamboyant for proper British gentry in the 1920s and '30s, they're perfect for those looking to make a statement. \$325, nikkacy.com

