

WHAT'S NEWS.

SOFT SPOT
Old Stone Trade
(pictured) offers
handmade-to-
order garments.



SILENT LUXURY

Discreet by-appointment stores offer the rarest commodity of all: a point of view.

BY JENNY HARTMAN





AT A TIME when most fashion is mass-produced and trends cycle at a breakneck pace, a new wave of by-appointment boutiques is shaping what luxury means. Behind discreet facades, shoppers discover intimate sanctuaries of design and craftsmanship, curated small-batch collections, one-of-a-kind pieces and bespoke offerings. One might find a hand-stitched coat made by a single artisan in northern Sicily, a sleek technical shirt woven from seaweed or a vintage couture gown.

This comes as some luxury clients are souring on shopping in person. Over a third of customers surveyed in a recent McKinsey report said the in-store experience has worsened in recent years, citing long lines, uninspiring environments and impersonal experiences as example pain points.

But these boutiques are quieter than quiet luxury. They keep limited hours and, for the most part, require appointments in advance. This less-is-more approach has helped market these spaces as more special than the average retail experience. They're "salons" and "showrooms," not merely stores.

Stòffa

An appointment at Stòffa begins with coffee and conversation in the private salon, warmed by an expansive skylight. The brand's name is the Italian word for fabric, which is often the starting point for any bespoke creation. Though suiting is a large part of its business, it offers anything from classic knits to a leather flight jacket done in lambskin suede. *125 Grand Street, New York City*

Old Stone Trade

Founder Melissa Ventosa Martin created her own paradise where every wardrobe essential is handmade-to-order by artisans and independent ateliers who have spent years perfecting their craft. A "Fair Isle" sweater can be found at any brand, but at Old Stone Trade, it is made in Fair Isle, Scotland, by an experienced craftswoman.



BY DESIGN

A well-decorated space is central to these shopping experiences. From left: Attersee, Stòffa and Atelier Bomba.

An appointment at the showroom, which recently opened in a historic Upper East Side townhouse, typically lasts two hours. A client tries on samples and selects fabrics surrounded by heirlooms and objects from Ventosa Martin's own life. Each garment is numbered and signed by its maker and accompanied by a handwritten note. *17 East 70th Street, Suite 3A, New York City*

Atelier Bomba

Since 1980, Atelier Bomba has been making versatile, timeless garments meant to be worn over and over like a uniform. At an appointment at the intimate, family-run bottega in Rome, they will invite you in, take your measurements, discuss your preferences and write down your order. Each piece—especially the signature knitwear and apron dress—is shaped to each client's body, color preferences and fabric choices. *Via dell'Oca 39, Rome*

Jacques

Shopping by appointment for men's tailoring and eveningwear is luxurious, but doing so for athleticwear is more unusual. At Jacques, which also accepts walk-ins, clients can buy sleek, high-performance base layers made from materials such as wood and seaweed fibers, meticulously tailored tennis sets and off-court knitwear made from premium cashmeres and virgin wools. After a series of pop-ups in Manhattan and the Hamptons, Jacques found its home in SoHo. *21 Crosby Street, New York City*

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: ATTERSEE, WILLIAM JESS LAIRD; ATELIER BOMBA



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ATELIER SAMAN AMEL AND HLYM PARTNERSHIP; CLEMENT FASCAL; TORI WILLIS

BEST DRESSED

At these salons, one can shop for a bespoke suit, athleticwear or vintage gowns. From top: Saman Amel, Jacques, Desert Vintage.



"THE DIFFICULTY IS NOT FINDING SOMETHING—BUT FINDING YOUR VERY BEST VERSION OF SOMETHING."

—DAG GRANATH

Desert Vintage

Owners Salima Boufelfel and Roberto Cowan took over Tuscon, Arizona's Desert Vintage in 2012 from a woman who was known for her selection of quirky Halloween costumes. Today customers are more likely to find ethereal 1930s silk gowns, antique coats or patinated 1970s suedes. The sunny, open space is shoppable by appointment only, though a second location in downtown Manhattan allows walk-ins. *403 N. Sixth Avenue, Suite 119, Tucson, Arizona*

Saman Amel

By-appointment visits here are not about browsing but about dialogue, talking through the client's lifestyle, wardrobe philosophy and long-term vision. The Swedish menswear label's made-to-measure program relies on tailoring and eveningwear, and also includes knitwear, leather and suede pieces, overcoats and outerwear. Co-founder Dag Granath describes the process as a remedy to what contemporary luxury has lost. "In a world where everything exists in abundance, the difficulty is not finding something—but finding your very best version of something." *17 Albemarle Street, London*

Perennial

Perennial is a bright jewel box of a boutique nestled in the heart of Sausalito, the seaside town just north of San Francisco. Founder Amelia Haney, who started the shop online in 2018, remains the sole employee. The gallerylike space is punctuated by a Claude Lalanne-inspired ginkgo bench and a French art deco center table adorned with fresh flowers for each appointment. Her collections, which are made in California in very small quantities, are fluid and airy. Among key pieces are her caftanlike top and pant set done in Italian wool poplin, and a cropped ivory jacket cut from vintage embroidered and quilted silk. *110J Caledonia Street, Sausalito, California*

Attersee

Tucked away on the fourth floor of a brownstone off of Madison Avenue, Attersee's discreet studio embodies the elegance of its founder, Isabel Wilkinson Schor. The brand is known for effortless vacation essentials and beautifully tailored eveningwear, and its intimate space reflects that refined outlook with walnut millwork and custom brass finishes. Fabric is central to Attersee's aesthetic, and appointments allow clients to experience them in person. The studio also plays host to a literary series, where Wilkinson Schor invites writers to share unpublished works. *26 East 64th Street, 4th floor, New York City*