

JACKET REQUIRED AND THE BUYER'S EYE

Previewing the forthcoming Jacket Required show at The Old Truman Brewery on 26 and 27 July, and catching up with retailers for a mid-year round-up in the meantime, Tom Bottomley gets the word from the frontline.



PETER TURNER,
DIRECTOR, WELLGOSH,
LEICESTER

How has business been this season so far? S/s 17 has, in general, lived up to expectations. Coming off the back of a good autumn/winter season, we got a bit of traction with fresh styles from the top-performing brands, and the introduction of a couple of new labels has worked well for us and freshened things up.

What has been performing well?

Footwear is again massively important for us, in particular top-tier trainers from Adidas, Nike and Reebok. On the apparel side, we have a good offering of Japanese

brands that have a keen following in store, and we have continued to build on that this season with CE, Human Made and Nanamica doing well again.

How useful do you find Jacket Required?

The show is a great opportunity for catching up with existing suppliers, as well as having a look at some new brands. It's also a good chance to have a beer with old industry mates. Despite the UK having suffered in terms of good trade shows, I think Jacket Required now comes close to European and international shows that have in the past tended to be more interesting for us.

Are there any brands you will want to take a closer look at this time at the show?

I have always admired what Kenneth Mackenzie does with 6876, so I would like to have a closer look at that. Also, there seems to be a buzz about corduroy at the minute, so we might have a look at The Cords and Lois to see the specialists at work. There is always something new to pick up at Jacket Required, and even though it's not the main reason for us being there, we normally come away quite excited about something.

What brands do you always see at the show?

We always get a first look at the new range from Clarks Originals before we do the buy at the showroom, and the same for Nemen and Portuguese Flannel.

What kind of product will you be out to find more of for s/s 18 that you think you may see at Jacket Required?

Anything fresh and interesting really. We generally know which brands we are targeting away from the trade shows, but it's always nice to see something good that you hadn't bargained for, and sometimes you can stumble across a gem.

DAVID JOHNSON
OWNER, JOHN DOUGLAS, MACCLESFIELD

How's business this season?

It's a rock 'n' roll ride, that's for sure. We're having amazingly busy days, and then days that are as flat as a flute. It's a similar story with everyone in the industry that I talk to. It's good when it's good, but when it's bad - it's bad. So, I'm not looking at figures weekly now, I'm looking at them monthly, and that cheers me up a bit. There are encouraging signs. I'm scoring better with putting outfits together, especially on the tailoring side, though brands such as Pretty Green, Fred Perry and Barbour continue to perform strongly for us.

What will you be looking for at Jacket Required this time?

I'll just be going with open eyes, as I always do. There's not particularly any new brands that I'm really looking for, but I'm a great believer in acting on instinct. So, if something is a bit edgy, and a bit different, then I may just slot it in to our mix.

Do you always benefit from attending?

It's a good place to touch base with people I deal with, and I like the layout because it's all about product rather than who can build the best stand and look the wealthiest brand. It's simply about product and people, so I like it a lot. I usually see Replay Jeans and Gibson London there to have a catch up with for the new season. And I'll have a beer with the lads from Original Penguin.

How important is it for London to still have a major menswear trade show?

It's definitely an important show, and a lot of guys that I know in the north will tie it in with appointments in London, as I do with seeing the likes of Henri Lloyd. I may not actually place orders at the show, but I will jot down styles that I like, and then place orders over the phone at a later date. I'm pretty easy to deal with when it comes to buying. I either like it, or I don't. It's obviously great to see a lot of brands in one hit. One idea would be to do a roadshow with Jacket, maybe do one in Manchester. Variety can be a good thing, then people can visit different cities, and it also might attract some different brands.



THOM SCHERDEL
BUYER, THE IDLE MAN

How is The Idle Man performing? Is it seeing significant growth already this year?

We're in a good place. The business plan is to lift 100 per cent every year, and so far we are achieving that. It's going to be more challenging for a/w 17, as we are up against some bigger numbers from last year, but all the metrics are heading in the right direction.

Are new brands increasingly coming on board to be included in your men's offer?

We've been very well received in the industry and we appreciate that a lot. There is always a sense of reticence around online businesses due to the lack of control, but we play fair and do a really good job for brands in terms of telling their stories and the content we produce. Everyone has been very positive about us, and that kind of news gets around and opens up doors.

What are some of your key brands at the moment?

Jackets are our bestselling category all year round, and Barbour is going from strength to strength. Champion has also smashed it this season. We bought double what we did last year, and sold all of that pretty much straight away. Converse has been big as well.

How do you find the Jacket Required show?

It's perfect for us because there's so many brands we sell there. It's great for catching up about trade, chasing deliveries and booking appointments. We do appointments as well with some of the smaller brands, so we get a lot out of it. And we always come away with something new.

What did you pick up at Jacket Required for a/w 17?

We finalised Portuguese Flannel and Sandqvist, which were ongoing conversations, and we picked up a wicked British grooming brand called Filmore Skincare which has amazing natural products and a great story behind it.

Are there any brands you will be particularly keen to take a look at?

I think the standout for me is 6876. I've always been into it, so I'm looking forward to seeing what they have to show. It feels like we need a homegrown talent to step up and start conquering some of the international brands.

Are there any key product types you will be looking for that you think you may see at Jacket Required?

I want to see brands go mad on trousers - shapes, technical fabrics, trackie bottoms. We have seen a big move into a wider cut and combat shapes, and I want to see that develop more. I think trackies are going to be big next year, and they hold a special place in my heart from my chav roots in Grimsby.

HENRY THREADINGHAM
OWNER, CURATED MAN, RICHMOND AND
FARNHAM

How has s/s 17 been for you so far? What brands and products have been performing?

S/s 17 was a tricky start with the launch of Curated Man. The shop previously operated as Lizard Menswear, my father's old business. He's now retired, so this is a brand new beginning. Hartford, Oliver Spencer and Edwin have all performed well. Re-ordering sell-outs from all our brands has been key, and I'll be favouring suppliers who can help meet in-season orders when considering what to grow.

Are you looking at bringing in some new brands going forward? Anything in particular?

I'm open to new brands for s/s 18, but I've already taken on Norse Projects and Universal Works, among some others, for a/w 17. I'm happy to stick with our new brand mix and work on growing our existing strong performers rather than over-complicating things with tiny collections from too many labels.

How useful do you find the Jacket Required show?

It helps to see everything under one roof to get a picture of the way relevant menswear is moving as a whole. I'm usually already in conversation with brands I'm considering bringing on board, but Jacket offers a quick recap to work out if I really want to go to a showroom to place an order.

Are there any brands you want to take a second look at this summer at Jacket Required?

I thought Wood Wood looked promising last season, more grown-up and premium, but I didn't get anything down for it, so I'll be keen to have a look again this time around and hopefully get something going.

Is it good for meeting with other retailers and getting an idea of what's performing and what to take a look at?

That's always a big draw for attending shows. Although we find Richmond can often ignore general trends and be a difficult town, first-hand conversations from other retailers can be the biggest element in persuading me to take a chance on a new brand.

Are you looking forward to the a/w 17 season and starting afresh with new brands and products?

I can't wait to get a/w 17 in. Summer is always the harder season, but this autumn will see a lot of changes for the store, with a refit planned before the season's launch, and some great new additions to the brand mix. I'm hoping this will be the season that really lets our customers know what Curated Man will be about, for what will hopefully be many more seasons to come.

