

Life Styles

# Born to Be Mild

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**The leather jacket has advanced to a must-have item in any fashionable man's wardrobe. Although it's no longer the domain of macho men and no longer necessarily black, it has lost none of its cool allure.**





*“I believe that, with respect to our company, you can’t separate function and beauty. Beauty as an end unto itself has no place in automotive engineering.”*

**The metamorphosis of man** proceeds along these lines: all day long, man sits in meetings in a slate gray suit, button-down shirt, and striped tie, downing coffee by the potful to keep him alert so he won’t lose his bearings in the Excel jungle. In the evening, he glides home in his sensible sedan, the air-conditioning cooling his fevered brow as he goes through the figures in his head one more time. Then, when he gets home, his other life begins. As he changes from his suit into jeans and leather jacket, his body language, his gait, his facial expression—even the very tone of his voice—are transformed. He may not even own a motorcycle, but he feels like he’s doing 100 mph on Highway One, like he’s the embodiment of Marlon Brando and Dennis Hopper in one: masculine, with plenty of muscle and an air of mystery.

Film heroes in leather jackets aren’t usually men of many words. They tend to scrunch up their eyes into a steely squint before they either strike or walk off in silence. It would be unthinkable for a man in a leather jacket to stir a martini with genteel flair while making polite conversation. Right? Right—unless you’ve arrived in the year 2009. Leather jackets no longer necessarily signify tough guy. They can just as easily denote a gentle and sensitive soul. They have found a new, mellower vocabulary. You might say the leather jacket has been tamed. Born to be mild rather than wild.

To appreciate just how revolutionary this step is, it helps to briefly recap the leather jacket’s history. From its beginning, it

represented the antithesis of the suit, which served to indicate a man’s status. A leather jacket, on the other hand, was supposed to protect from cold and wind. Pilots wore them before the cockpits of their planes were enclosed; race drivers wore them before the advent of fireproof suits. Later the garments made from tanned animal hides became the trusty companions of men in their free time. A loyal friend that just got better as it aged, like good whiskey. It might get greasy and cracked with time, but it was indestructible. In the retro-frenzy of the recent past, designers often drew on the mythical appeal of the leather jacket to resurrect style icons of the 1950s—Steve McQueen, James Dean—and tap into their nimbus of coolness. ▶

**Sports cars and leather jackets have always been a natural match; direct, but with a unique elegance, they complement each other as consummate expressions of a zest for life.**



Meanwhile, the tried-and-tested classic has become a fashion item subjected to plenty of playful experimentation. Just as the sneaker has advanced from a simple article of footwear to a lifestyle product serving as a canvas for all sorts of fashion trends, the leather jacket that was once primarily a functional piece of clothing has become a playground for designers.

The new take on the leather jacket sometimes includes adventurous twists one might have seen only on women's models up to now. Some feature flower and leopard prints; others are jazzed up with asymmetric zippers. But the reinterpretation of the classic garment is also about comfort. Leather jackets have rarely been as light as they are now. The bulky motorcycle jacket is out. The trend is toward models with contemporary cuts made of leather that has been tanned and processed so extensively that the jackets are almost as lightweight as a cotton blazer.

Safari jackets of kidskin would work well for a trip to the Sahara, and suede sports coats are great for everyday wear in an air-conditioned office. And those who insist on playing the he-

man can always opt for the classic biker jacket. The important thing is having a leather jacket at all, for anyone without one of these all-rounders in his closet is apt to find himself out in the rain, fashion-wise.

One reason for their surge in popularity is because the 1980s have returned to the catwalks—the era when leather reigned supreme. Leather jackets, leather pants, leather ties: back in this fashionably not uncontroversial decade, men were frequently known to wear all three at once. Another hot item from this period, the classic suede blouson with ribbed cuffs and waistband, has also made a comeback. But while they used to be available mostly in black and various shades of brown, they now also appear in bolder colors like petrol.

Rather than exuding the pungent odor of engine oil and gasoline, the new leather jackets smell more like freshly laundered sheets. It's not your typical association—leather and fresh linen; on the other hand, real rebels are always ready to try something new.

## Classics with a Contemporary Twist

Porsche Design is introducing a specially designed menswear collection just in time for the coming fall/winter season. Created in the Porsche Design Studio in Zell am See, Austria, the men's line focuses on leather jackets in classic styles. The most exclusive model is the Leather Blouson Limited Edition, incorporating cutting-edge technology and in a limited edition of 150. Made of finest calfskin with a watertight membrane laminated onto the

inside and featuring welded seams like those used in high-end sports clothing, it is waterproof, wind-resistant, and breathable. The other jackets in the collection are equally stylish and feature sophisticated details such as characteristic decorative stitching.

The Porsche Design product portfolio encompasses classic men's accessories, a sportswear and fashion collection, consumer electronics, and a men's fragrance line. The men's collection will be available in Porsche Design shops, franchise stores, and shop-in-shops from the fall of this year.

For more details, see [www.porsche-design.com](http://www.porsche-design.com).

## The Three by Porsche Design

Leather Blouson Limited Edition



Blouson Stretch Calf



Blazer Piping Calf



**The leather jacket has been tamed—somewhat, at least. A revolutionary step that gave us the idea to do our photo shoot in a place where testing new frontiers is par for the course: the Porsche Motorsports Center in Weissach.**

