



Mr Thomas Beck in a studio portrait, circa 1935. Photo:

The new crop of elegant, tactile pyjamas work harder than ever, making for handsome nights and dashing downtime too. **Nick Scott** reports

the day of the PJ

In fiction, nightwear tends to represent either sudden displacement (*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) or unkempt indolence (see *The Big Lebowski* or any number of Einsteinian-haired comic characters). But in reality, a man's PJs should represent precisely the opposite: blissful domestic ensconcement, and a level of sartorial diligence whereby quality and elegance reign supreme – even though they never leave the house.

One fictional cove that meets the brief is the eternally dapper Bertie Wooster. In 1934's *Thank You, Jeeves*, Wodehouse refers to his most famous character wearing heliotrope pyjamas – a look faithfully reinforced by Hugh Laurie's Wooster some six decades later, and which is best emulated today with a visit to shirtmaker Emma Willis's Jermyn Street emporium. Her made-to-order men's nightwear range (£450 for a set, pictured top right, £250 for bottoms) comes in soft, fresh Swiss Oxford cotton, and a comfortable cut that would make dear old Bertie feel right at home.

The word "pyjamas" – was brought back from India by colonial officers, and inevitably caught on at home, given the draughty bedrooms of Britain before central

heating. Willis's intention is to produce nightwear that befits not only the modern man but also our changing seasons. "The pyjamas in Swiss Oxford cotton are for when your linen ones begin to feel a little cool against the skin, as summer turns to autumn," she explains. "The structure developed by our Swiss mill somehow combines the smoothness and breathability of natural cotton with crease-resistance, using none of the chemical techniques sometimes employed." Available in various shades of blue – or even heliotrope, if you're so inclined – as well as checks and stripes, they're perfect for the modern, hard-

toiling gent who would welcome a bit more of a Bertie Wooster lifestyle. Also making pyjamas worthy of the word "loungewear" is Giorgio Armani, where a collarless set (£1,450, pictured overleaf) in navy-blue silk ushers in a new level of tactility against the skin, while New & Lingwood's pairs (£275), in two-fold Italian cotton with mother-of-pearl buttons, feature a hybrid of a shawl collar and notch lapels, played up with contrasting piping (red for the navy set, sky blue for the white). Derek Rose's dark-

blue silk PJs (example pictured second from top right, £500) are also putting shawl collars back on the map, while Otis Batterbee's (£165, pictured left) – in ultra-soft cotton sateen, with a

Clockwise from above: actor Thomas Beck in pyjamas c1935. Emma Willis cotton pyjamas, £450. Derek Rose silk pyjamas, £500. New & Lingwood cotton nightshirt, £255. Turnbull & Asser cotton pyjamas, £275. Otis Batterbee cotton pyjamas, £165



Clockwise from right: **Dolce & Gabbana silk pyjamas, £1,430. Rubinacci silk pyjamas, £2,300. Anderson & Sheppard linen pyjamas, £345. Giorgio Armani silk pyjamas, £1,450. Paul Smith cotton pyjamas, £145**

distinctive cravat print – are a tempting buy if quirky patterns but conventional cuts appeal. At Zimmerli, a slightly irregular cut, in tandem with the elasticity of a wool-and-silk blend, makes

for a perfect silhouette, says CEO Marcel Hossli about the Swiss outfit's short- (£105) or long-sleeved (£129) pyjamas. The brand's cotton iridescent houndstooth set (£345) stands up to his simple assertion that "men with style wear stylish nightwear". He'll get no arguments from Paul Smith, where the signature cotton pyjama set (£145, pictured top left) features the label's trademark ultra-fine vertical, multicoloured stripes, nor from Ermenegildo Zegna – a big hitter in this area – where loose-fitting silk pyjamas (£743) in various dark colours have a subtle Aztec print and classic four-flap camp collar.

Turnbull & Asser also has a record of taking nightwear very seriously indeed – in the 1920s, its Jermyn Street premises had a gown lounge where customers could relax with a scotch and a cigar, and try on the latest silk and cotton numbers – and its head of design Dean Gomilsek-Cole is determined to continue that tradition. "For me, a crucial part of the routine of preparing for a good night's sleep is a change of wardrobe," he says. "Today people find it less necessary to wear pyjamas for practical reasons – warmth – but they've become more of a signifier that we're in relaxation mode." The brand's pyjama sets (£275, pictured on previous page) – notably

These linen pyjamas are – especially if partnered with a Panama – as suited to treading the jetties of St Tropez as the stairs to bed

those in white with navy piping, and in light blue with red or navy piping – are perfect for being laidback without letting standards slip.

Connolly – once a purveyor of fine leather famous for upholstering early Ferraris, but a more general outfitters since it returned last year after a six-year hiatus – has taken the concept of unwinding literally with a cotton liqueur nightshirt (from £395). With work getting out about the comfort of a cling-free waistline, perhaps one-piece night apparel will even come to the fore again: Anderson & Sheppard's cashmere/cotton nightshirts (£345) in light blue or cream, and gingham check cotton ones (£275) in blue or light pink, certainly seem to point in that direction. New & Lingwood is also making a nightshirt version (£255, pictured on previous page) of its abovementioned pyjamas.

Venturing further into Anderson & Sheppard's Clifford Street haberdashery, emblazoned across a wall is a rainbow display of sets that double up as ultra-casual out-and-about wear – another development that is nudging pyjamas down the evolutionary flow chart. The label's linen pairs (£345, pictured third from top left) in emerald, fuchsia, china blue, navy and white are – especially if partnered with a Panama – as suited to treading the jetties of St Tropez as the stairs to bed. Audie Charles, the haberdashery's curator, likens them to the stylistic smarts of Cecil Beaton and James Goldsmith, and recalls the late AA Gill who, given a set to road-test over a balmy few days in Rome, was accosted by admirers several times a day.

If striding out in something eye-catching appeals, consider doing so in another set (£1,400 for top, £950 for bottoms) intended for outdoor wear, from Louis Vuitton's new collection. Made from fils coupé, their cut is based on the fashion sensibilities of Jean-Michel Basquiat – the whole collection is inspired by New York's rich artistic tradition – while the three contrasting patterns are overlaid with Louis Vuitton advertising from the 1930s. Dolce & Gabbana can, of course, always be relied



on for flamboyance, and a pair of silk pyjamas (£795 for top, £635 for bottoms, pictured above) in the autumn/winter collection is emblazoned with Sicilian coats of arms, continuing the brand's long-standing love affair with the island.

Also veering towards the tastefully outré are the sets (£2,300, pictured bottom left) from Rubinacci's new collection, a collaboration with entrepreneur Gianluca Vacchi, who has a highly developed penchant for pyjamas. Made of fine foulard, one style is silk screenprinted with a painting of Nelson's HMS *Victory* voyaging to Naples, while the other's print is inspired by the Samurai bushido code of conduct.

It's hard to imagine Bertie Wooster sporting a pair of these more showy PJs, even in his private Mayfair quarters. But since assiduous dressing in the comfort and privacy of home is commendable, then surely an occasional spot of well-executed stylistic bombast should be part of the story. ♦

WAKE-UP CALL

Anderson & Sheppard, 17 Clifford St, London W1 (020-7287 7300; anderson-sheppard.co.uk). **Connolly**, 4 Clifford St, London W1 (020-7952 6708; connollyengland.com). **Derek Rose**, 178A Westbourne Grove, London W1 (020-3405 6440; derek-rose.com) and see Harrods. **Dolce & Gabbana**, 53-55 New Bond St, London W1 (020-7495 9250; dolcegabbana.com). **Emma Willis**, 66 Jermyn St, London SW1 (020-7930 9980; emmawillis.com). **Ermenegildo Zegna**, 203-204 Sloane St, London SW1 (020-7201 7000; zegna.com). **Giorgio Armani**, 135 Sloane St, London SW1 (020-7235 6232; armani.com). **Harrods**, 87-135 Brompton Rd, London SW1 (020-7730 1234; harrods.com). **John Lewis**, 300 Oxford St, London W1 (020-7629-7711; johnlewis.com). **Louis Vuitton**, 17-20 New Bond St, London W1 (020-3214 9200; louisvuitton.com). **New & Lingwood**, 53 Jermyn St, London SW1 (020-7493 9621; newandlingwood.com). **Paul Smith**, 9 Albemarle St, London W1 (020-7493 4565; paulsmith.com). **Otis Batterbee**, otisbatterbee.com and see John Lewis. **Rubinacci**, 96 Mount St, London W1 (020-7499 2299; marianorubinacci.net). **Turnbull & Asser**, 71-72 Jermyn St, London SW1 (020-7808 3000; turnbullandasser.co.uk).

