

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Robb Report



Image Matters

What the modern man should wear right now

Genius at Work

THE ITALIAN WAY

At Kiton, it takes 25 hours to hand-make a suit that will endure the ages. Here's what that looks like.

BY JILL NEWMAN

Inside Kiton's sprawling workshop, the first thing you notice is the noiselessness. No machines buzz; only the hushed banter of men gathered around tables rhythmically sewing swaths of creamy fabric into exceptionally crafted Neapolitan jackets. This type of hand-touch is impossible to automate; each bespoke model gets cut and sewn to fit the anatomical nuances and movements of its owner. Today, the brand that patriarch **Ciro Paone** established in Naples in 1956 employs more than 350 skilled tailors and operates a school to train the next generation. "Our tailors are artists," says **Antonio Paone**, one of **Ciro's** nephews and Kiton's U.S. president. "They take pride in what they make; a well-made jacket can last a lifetime."



1
Pattern Play

There is no standard size; a man's right shoulder might be slightly higher than his left, or one arm longer than the other. A tailor's tedious measurements account for every distinction and serve as a road map for an individual's paper pattern. Clients select from a wide range of exclusive fabrics—Super 180s lightweight wool, heavier cashmere, ultrasoft vicuña—and their cloth of choice is then cut to the pattern.



2
Stitches in Time

The jacket pieces are loosely sewn together (basted) before the whole gets turned over to the most accomplished tailors to sew the collar and shoulder in place, a skill that requires eight to 10 years of practice to master. Once the basted trial garment is fitted on the client, a tailor makes adjustments before finishing the final suit coat.



3
Culture Club

What separates the Neapolitan jacket from British, American, or other tailored styles is the softly rounded shoulder, which not only looks more relaxed, but also makes motion a heck of a lot easier. To achieve this unique construction, the most proficient tailors (typically 40 to 50 years old) hand-sew the sleeve into a precisely calibrated armhole; it takes know-how to shape the shoulder with just the right amount of give in the stitches to allow that ease of movement.

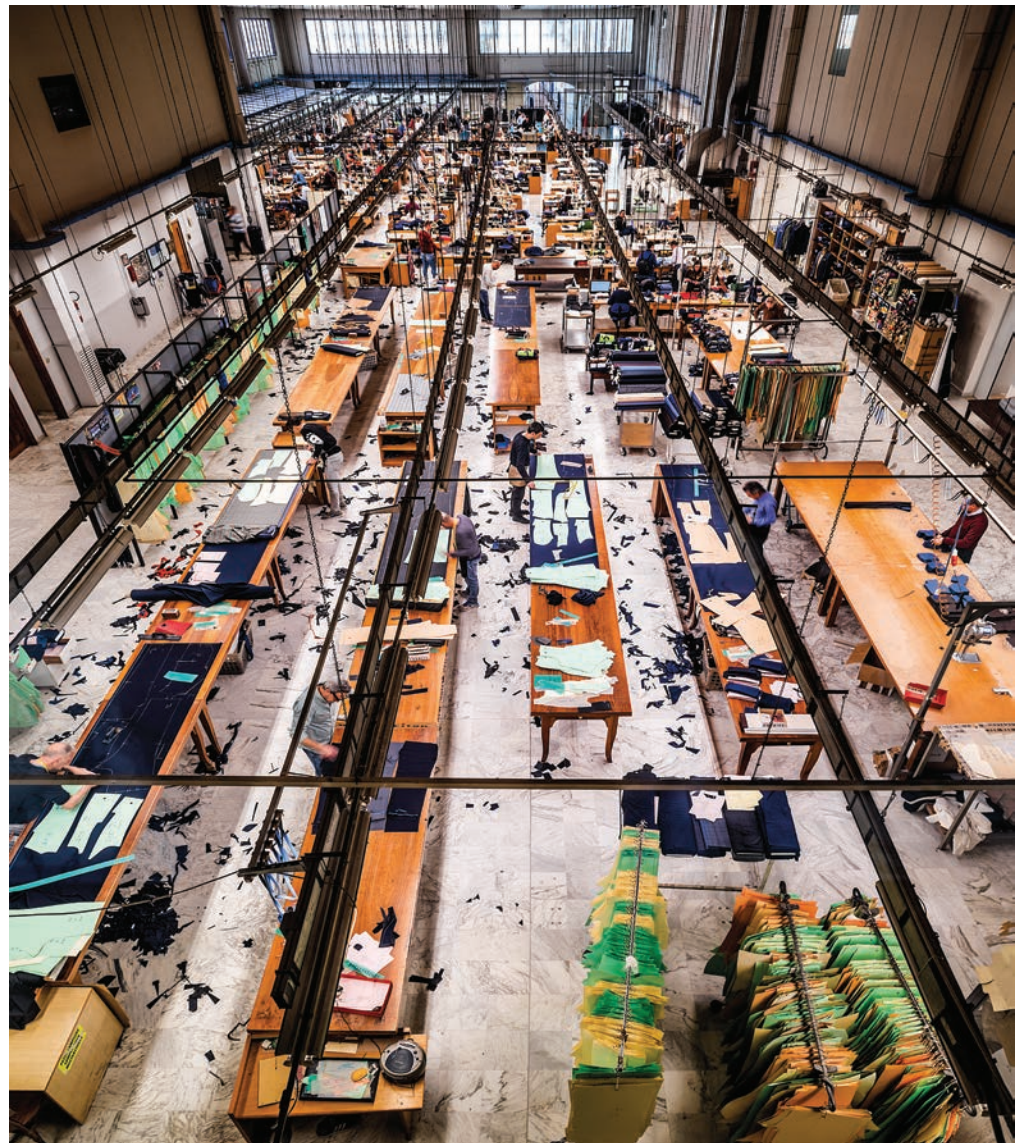


Genius at Work

4

The Hole Shebang

It takes a steady hand, hammer, and sharp blade to slice the button-hole; one mistake and the jacket is ruined. Women—with their typically more delicate hands—sew Kiton's hallmark embroidered button holes; a single hole requires precisely 137 stitches.



5

Family Values

The vast workshop executes everything from shirts and suits to shoes and neckties, and, like the bespoke jackets, nearly everything is handmade by local Neapolitans, many whose parents and even some grandparents have worked for the Paone family. Doing this work is more than a job; it's a way of life. When the lunch bell rings, the tailors vacate the floor and convene in the lunchroom where the chef prepares fresh pasta and local dishes, ensuring the same Italian traditions continue—the food, like the jacket, is a ritual not to be sacrificed, but honored. 