

A man with dark hair is shown from the waist up, wearing a grey herringbone tweed jacket over a vibrant purple turtleneck sweater. He is leaning against a dark, textured vertical post, possibly a metal pipe or wooden beam. The background is a dimly lit, rustic interior with wooden beams and a warm, golden light source from the right, creating a moody atmosphere. The overall composition is a fashion advertisement for Harris Tweed.

TEXTILES

Scotland's Fabric

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Harris Tweed is a unique fabric that has been woven by hand on the Western Isles of Scotland since the Victorian times by the crofters in their cottages. Made famous by Lady Dunmore and her close friend Queen Victoria, Harris Tweed sales started to boom and by the 19th century Harris Tweed was firmly established as a status symbol around the world. It is now having a global renaissance with a sports jacket collection.

In its heyday Harris Tweed was used by designers such as Vivienne Westwood who used the fabric in her early Autumn/Winter 1988 collection to produce a very British look that was highly successful. Since then, Nike has produced the Terminator trainer and sartorial urbanites have been able to pick up a Harris Tweed sports coat at Polo Ralph Lauren.

Many celebrities over the years have worn the Harris Tweed fabric and this has, of course, included the British royal family, but also well known actresses such as Gwyneth Paltrow on the cover of Vogue (in Jean Paul Gaultier), Clint Eastwood in Dirty Harry, the super sleuth Sherlock Holmes and even the famous mountaineer George Mallory who died on Everest in 1924. His body was identified in 1999 by the famous ORB trademark in his Harris Tweed jacket.

It is the only brand in the world that is protected by an Act of Parliament, meaning that every 50 metres is inspected by the Harris Tweed Authority prior to being stamped with their ORB, which gives its seal of authenticity. No other fabric can call itself Harris Tweed.

However, in recent years the industry was struggling and was in danger of falling into obscurity and fading away forever. The number of weavers had dwindled to just over a hundred and orders were few and far between. In 2006 Brian Haggas decided to buy the largest

mill on the Isle of Lewis and to revive Harris Tweed selling the industry's first sports jackets not fabric.

The first sports jacket collection was inspired by Chairman Brian Haggas' desire to sell to high-class independent retailers around the world and infiltrate the blazer market.

Brian Haggas said: "We wanted to design a sports jacket that would appeal not only to traditional gentlemen around the world but also younger men who want to dress up a pair jeans, open neck shirt and boots. We decided that a two-button, two side vent, two straight pocket design was universally considered to epitomise class and elegance. We then took this style and with our four designs of Harris Tweed fabric created the industry's first ever sports jacket collection."

Brian Haggas continued; "Harris Tweed is remembered with fondness and nostalgia around the world but it is very much in the back of people's minds. It is seen as product of yesteryear but it was an iconic brand and it can still be an iconic brand. In this economic climate, people appreciate a well-made garment that will last a long time. We are currently selling to department stores and high-class independent men's stores throughout the UK, Europe, USA and Canada. Our most famous stockists are Harrods and Bloomingdales. I want to hear the looms clacking all over the Western Isles of Scotland."

Harris Tweed Timeline

- 1887 – Sherlock Holmes wears a Harris Tweed deerstalker
- 1924 – Famed mountaineer George Mallory dies on Mount Everest where his body lies frozen until 1999. His Harris Tweed jacket identifies him.
- 1971 – Clint Eastwood wears Harris Tweed in the film Dirty Harry
- 1987 – Vivienne Westwood uses Harris Tweed in her winter collection
- 2003 – Gwyneth Paltrow graces the cover of Vogue in Jean Paul Gaultier and shoes made of Harris Tweed
- 2004 - Nike creates a Harris Tweed edition of its iconic Terminator basketball shoe from the mid 80s
- 2006 – In the film The Da Vinci Code Tom Hanks wears a Harris Tweed blazer when in search of the Holy Grail
- 2008 – Alexander McQueen uses Harris Tweed in his winter collection



Harris Tweed Classic Range – Taransay

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Woven by hand in the Western Isles of Scotland

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