

Doug's diary, part two



It's a rocky start to 2010 for Doug Bailey and his Endurance collection, with price increases everywhere he looks. But, as the launch date edges closer and the revised samples arrive, things begin to look up...

Tuesday 5th Jan 2010

After receiving the new improved samples and feeling really pleased, everything else has gone wrong and I sit here as frustrated as can be and would like to swear! Prices have gone up - fabric by a substantial sum - and I have had a long and unpleasant argument with the supplier about timing; for prices to increase after I have committed to the first bulk order is a real blow.

I managed to get the increase lowered slightly, and delayed slightly, but I still have to work a substantial fabric price increase into my selling price. Freight has also gone up and I am threatened with a further increase. I have fixed selling prices four times so far and I can't keep putting up the intended price or it won't be worth having the Endurance Collection!

Wednesday 6th Jan

Chris wants to make the initial bulk in India (big retailer increased their order in Romania). I said I would like that if delivery could still be met.

Thursday 7th Jan

But it can't. India can't make the order in time so we're back in Romania. No one said it was gonna be easy!

Great afternoon with Paul (world class garment technician; he has worked with some of the finest clothing companies and saves my life, often). All garments massively improved. The only real issue was bagginess around the ladies' bust/scye. Paul has introduced a gorge dart under the lapel to clean this up and we will see what it looks like on the next sample. Other amends were for daft things like lining not running on the bias and pocket welts without extra strength bar tacks on.

The new trouser for ladies is perfect, and frankly, when a ladies' trouser is good, it is a huge relief. New samples will be with us for Jan 22nd. We will use these as photo shoot samples and for a final check before gold seal samples.

Monday 11th Jan

Fitted models for size and ran through the photo shoot brief. Vikki Harriman is organising the accessories (buying them from the high street) as well as the shoot and is taking to it like a duck to water. She loves it and I vaguely remember when I still had that kind of enthusiasm. Mine is now rather tinged by fear just in case I miss something important. That said, I can't wait to start developing collections that may help Clubclass to survive and even prosper.

Friday 15th Jan

Spent the day looking at brochure text and naming the garments. Always spend too long naming garments; does anyone really care about the name of the jacket?

Friday 22nd Jan

Directors meeting. Updated the board on all developments. While writing this diary about the Endurance Collection I am also developing the Made to Measure and ideas for the next 12 months.

Van delivering samples has been delayed and will be with us on Monday. Let's hope the garments look good because we will be taking photos of them on Wednesday.

Monday 25th Jan

Samples arrived with two alternatives for each item. They look brilliant for what is an inexpensive collection. The ladies' jacket was much cleaner on the bust and through the scye. A couple of minor adjustments to the spec (double stitching not on trouser seats, skirt lining too long by 1cm, lots of little bits). Gold seal samples and graded set being made and we should have them by Feb 24th.

Tuesday 26th Jan

Arranged all garments in shoot order and double checked with the models over times and venue.

Wednesday 27th Jan

Arrived at the Studio at 8am and as usual waited for the 'creatives' to arrive. Once Iain (brochure designer) and the photographer arrived, we took some detail shots. Our models arrived and after a slow start we got the pics we needed. Nothing much, but enough to get a small brochure together.

I've also done some really exciting shots of the Charles Redd suits - much easier because these are fine fabrics with interesting patterns and photograph beautifully; they should cost £500 a suit!

Monday 1st Feb

Went through the shots with Iain. The usual story - some good, some bad and some unusable. Decided on the best shots and left him to do a bit of manipulation on the Mac.

Wednesday 3rd Feb

Visit to Savile Row to speak with the only professor of bespoke in the world, Andrew Ramroop of Maurice Sedwell

Bespoke Tailors. He gave me a fascinating insight into some of the problems with my jacket. If I had a few thousand pounds to spend he would have advised me on how to correct them. In fairness, I think most of the issues could have been corrected by spending a lot more money on the trim pack, but if I had done that I wouldn't sell any. Even so, I loved listening to Andrew. His knowledge is incredible.

doesn't pass the AQL standard. The factory agrees and we must now insist on it, factories being what they are...

Thursday 11th Feb

Went through the brochure layout with Iain; overall great look when you consider the cost. We spent £750 on photography - the least I have ever spent by some distance. OK, there are things I would have done differently, but for the money I am delighted. The men's Docksider jacket looks brilliant photographed with a DLR sign behind it. Made some changes and will now scrutinise the brochure for errors. Six of us will check it and there will still be errors when it is printed. I should put up a prize for the first customer to phone me and point them out.

Friday 5th Feb

Spent the day looking at trims, specifically shoulder pads and gorge tape. I am never happy. I always believe a garment can be improved, and even at the last minute I will look at options. Decided to use a heavier thread in all the garments for extra strength. Fabric on schedule, lining and trim in place, I can almost feel the excitement of being on time with a collection.

Friday 12th Feb

All quiet on the pricing front. I have decided I will have to pass the increases on because the margin just isn't there to absorb them. Once I publish the price I will have to stick with it unless extraordinary circumstances dictate otherwise.

Monday 8th Feb

Just been told that freight has been increased, again! It's up by 17p on a jacket and 4p on a trouser. In this industry pennies are important and I have to make a decision on price - do I absorb the cost or increase the price?

Monday 15th Feb

Brochure checked and checked and errors or not it is a done job. Spent the day looking at linings and fabrics for Charles Redd and potential large contract for a customer; I know it sounds bad but it was a welcome distraction from the endurance collection. Not long to go now...

Tuesday 9th Feb

Had a 70min conversation with the Romanian factory about our AQL system which was set up for Indian production; not my favourite subject but essential. Nothing is shipped if it

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