

THEY'RE FRESH, THEY'RE DASHING, THEY'RE ALTOGETHER FABULOUS.
CS SALUTES OUR 7TH ANNUAL

MEN OF STYLE

BY AMALIE DRURY

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Thanks to the endless march of makeover-themed reality TV shows, magazine racks crammed with style how-to guides and an overall renewed interest in men's fashion, there seem to be more well-dressed men crowding the streets of Chicago every day. The task of narrowing them down to just seven shining paragons for this annual feature is hardly easy, but in the end, a few intangible traits point us to the final cut. For example, a truly stylish man is poised and sophisticated, but possesses a certain daring edge not far beneath the surface. He stands out in a crowd, but doesn't aim to overwhelm everyone else in the room. He has a sense of style that's innate, not gleaned exclusively from watching reruns of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.

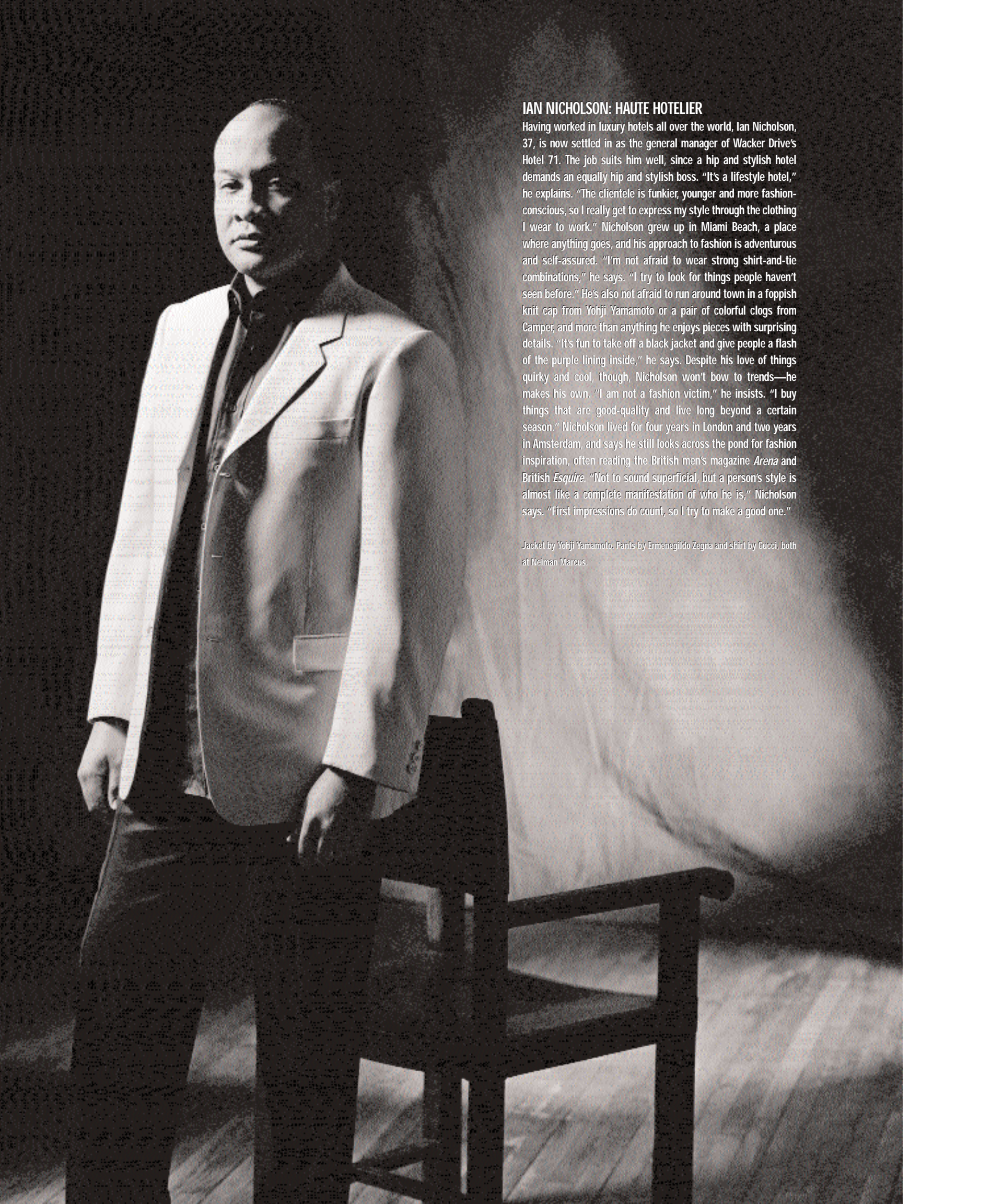
This year's fashion-savvy Men of Style inductees are as varied as a sale rack at Barneys, but each one of the men on these pages is the real deal. Not only does he know good style when he sees it, he knows just what to do with it—no "Hip Tips" required.



JOHN HARNEY: ENLIGHTENED EXECUTIVE

When John Harney finds time to shop, it's usually not with himself in mind. As a single parent to four children ranging in age from 3 to 15, there are lots of wardrobes in his household to keep up with. After he drops the crew off at school in the mornings, however, Harney, 40, goes from doting dad to hard-working businessman. His job as senior managing director in the insurance division at Mesirow Financial, a large Chicago-based brokerage firm, calls for suit-and-tie seriousness. Sound too stuffy to be fun? Not at all. Harney enjoys the details that go into dressing up, especially when it comes to interesting cuff links, which he collects. He has all of his dress shirts custom-made by local clothier Tom James, and looks to Prada and Gucci for suits. When he gets out his tuxedo, he makes it a point to find different ways to wear it, eschewing the traditional tux shirt and bow tie. Not surprising for a man so debonair, travel and design are Harney's hobbies. After moving into a new house in the St. Benedict neighborhood, Harney decorated the interior himself using objects collected from his travels. "The outside is traditional," he says. "But inside it's more eclectic. There's definitely an Asian influence." Although he's more tied down than he used to be, Harney still likes to get away whenever he can, naming Paris as his favorite destination. "It's a progressive city," he says. "If I lived there, I might wear things that I couldn't get away with here."

Shirt and tie by Brioni and pin-striped suit by Prada, all at Neiman Marcus.



IAN NICHOLSON: HAUTE HOTELIER

Having worked in luxury hotels all over the world, Ian Nicholson, 37, is now settled in as the general manager of Wacker Drive's Hotel 71. The job suits him well, since a hip and stylish hotel demands an equally hip and stylish boss. "It's a lifestyle hotel," he explains. "The clientele is funkier, younger and more fashion-conscious, so I really get to express my style through the clothing I wear to work." Nicholson grew up in Miami Beach, a place where anything goes, and his approach to fashion is adventurous and self-assured. "I'm not afraid to wear strong shirt-and-tie combinations," he says. "I try to look for things people haven't seen before." He's also not afraid to run around town in a foppish knit cap from Yohji Yamamoto or a pair of colorful clogs from Camper, and more than anything he enjoys pieces with surprising details. "It's fun to take off a black jacket and give people a flash of the purple lining inside," he says. Despite his love of things quirky and cool, though, Nicholson won't bow to trends—he makes his own. "I am not a fashion victim," he insists. "I buy things that are good-quality and live long beyond a certain season." Nicholson lived for four years in London and two years in Amsterdam, and says he still looks across the pond for fashion inspiration, often reading the British men's magazine *Arena* and British *Esquire*. "Not to sound superficial, but a person's style is almost like a complete manifestation of who he is," Nicholson says. "First impressions do count, so I try to make a good one."


Jacket by Yohji Yamamoto. Pants by Ermenegildo Zegna and shirt by Gucci, both at Neiman Marcus.



STAN SLOAN: SARTORIAL SAMARITAN

As the CEO of Chicago House, a not-for-profit organization that has provided permanent housing and support to hundreds of metro area adults and children living with HIV and AIDS, Stan Sloan has a lot on his plate—and not much time left over to worry about what to wear each day. Yet, he always winds up looking stylish and professional, whether he's in a suit and tie at a dinner to woo donors or casual in jeans while working with the residents of Chicago House's apartment complexes in Uptown, Edgewater and Humboldt Park. An ordained priest who conducts mass each week at the inner-city St. Gregory Episcopal School, Sloan, 40, occasionally dons his white collar, most often when he's lobbying in Springfield. Because of the many fundraising events Chicago House holds each year, the Texas-born Sloan ("people are still wearing Wrangler jeans down there," he marvels) often appears on social pages around town looking every inch the Southern gentleman in a debonair tuxedo. "At Chicago House, our main claim to fashion fame is our annual fashion show brunch at the Harold Washington Library," he says. His various uniforms aside, Sloan never wants his everyday look to take away from the work he's committed to. "When people see me, I want them to think nothing more than that I look comfortable with who I am," he says.

Oxford shirt by Kiton at George Greene. Cream wool pants by Yohji Yamamoto. Tie by Ermenegildo Zegna at Neiman Marcus. Cashmere sport jacket Sloan's own.



HAJ: MADE-TO-MEASURE MAVEN

The celebrities Haj dresses—everyone from Bernie Mac to Mike Tyson—look great in the clothes he makes for them, but the best walking advertisement for this Chicago menswear designer is the man himself. Every detail of Haj's attire is impeccable, from his coordinating pocket squares to his alligator shoes, from his perfectly hemmed wide-cut pants to the initials stitched discreetly on his shirt cuffs. "I am my own best customer," he says. "Even if I wake up in the morning and have nothing to do, I still get dressed for the day. It makes me think better." Born Elhadi Gueye in Senegal, West Africa, Haj grew up in Paris, where his father moved the family in 1941. A third-generation designer, Haj never buys clothing in stores. "The best thing you can do is have your clothes made to measure," he says. "I like clothing from designers like Armani and Versace, but I never see pieces that have it all. Either they've got great fabric but a not-so-great cut, or they've got a beautiful cut but not the right fabric." Haj's feelings on the subject of casual dress in the workplace are emphatically negative. "Don't you want to look your best?" he asks. "People think jeans and khakis and T-shirts are OK to wear to the office these days, but come on. Please! To me that is unacceptable." One person who does know what is acceptable, however, is Haj's 6-year-old daughter, who loves to help her father put together outfits. "I tell her what things go together, and it's amazing how she remembers," he says. "She'll stand in my closet and say, 'Daddy, I want to see you in this!'"

Haj wears a suit, shirt and tie of his own design (call 312.588.1334 for availability).

A black and white portrait of Phillip Sylvester, a man with dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

PHILLIP SYLVESTER: JAUNTY JETSETTER

By splitting his time between the businesslike bustle of Chicago and the easygoing extravagance of Miami, Phillip Sylvester has become a pro at adapting his look to two polar-opposite home cities. "I dress more expressively in Miami," he says. "You can wear anything and people aren't phased." Here, the 37-year-old investor—who maintains a Chicago office but works mostly from his Gold Coast house or a beach cabana in Miami—loses the linen pants and sandals but keeps a casual credo, saying, "I like to mix a pair of Diesel jeans with a fitted shirt by Christian Dior and my favorite half-boots from Prada." Sylvester's fun-loving approach to style extends from his wardrobe to his social life: His rooftop *Sex and the City* viewing soirées (complete with lounging sofas and an eight-foot screen) are legendary, as are his yearly Green Tie Ball pre-parties, which have grown from pizza and beer among a few friends to include a crowd of 250 who caravan to the ball in trolleys decked out disco-style. It's this kind of spontaneity that Sylvester thrives on, especially when it comes to fashion. "Since work doesn't dictate what I wear, I have a lot of freedom with the way I dress," he says. "If I wake up in the morning and I don't feel like shaving, then my clothes will reflect that kind of laid-back attitude. But if I'm feeling super-charged, then I might be more aggressive and wear something that's almost costume-like."

Suit and shirt by Hedi Slimane for Christian Dior, both at George Greene.



JOHN MULLER: RETRO REVIVALIST

A lifelong affinity for fashion has finally led John Muller, 39, to open a store of his own in Chicago, where he has lived on and off for 10 years. *But-Couture Club*, off Armitage Avenue, is not your run-of-the-mill boutique: To stock it, Muller searches out the best high-quality vintage women's clothing he can find. "Everyone asks where I get things for the store," Muller says. "It comes from all over—estates, private sellers, other dealers. I make lots of trips to the East and West coasts." Some of the pieces in his store—like the vintage Pucci and Courrèges—are unlike anything you can get on Michigan Avenue, and Muller is forever urging his customers to take fashion leaps of faith. "The things at *Couture Club* are one of a kind," he says. "If someone feels iffy about an item, I tell her to at least try it on. You never know when you might fall in love! Don't limit yourself to what you're used to." When it comes to his own wardrobe, Muller practices what he preaches, and has been known to wear an ascot or a wildly patterned vintage shirt if the occasion warrants. Each season, he buys sandals from "whoever has the coolest ones," and his favorite accessory is an alligator belt to which he has attached a silver vintage Tiffany buckle engraved with his initials. "Men are lucky," says Muller. "Women are so much more likely to be criticized for what they wear, which is unfortunate. But as long as they're confident, men can get away with almost anything."

Suit by Alexander Saville Row at Marshall Field's. Shoes by Hugo Boss. Vintage shirt.



STEVE HARRIS: MAVERICK MAESTRO

When Crobar general manager and Watusi restaurant owner Steve Harris arrives at our photo shoot, he is wearing the following ensemble: camouflage cargo pants, scuffed yellow work boots and a navy Dickies jacket. The outfit seems urban and trendy; it could be straight out of an MTV hip-hop video. "Everything I have on is from Sears," says Harris matter-of-factly, dashing any assumption that the look was carefully planned. "I'm doing repairs at the club today, and these are my work clothes." Despite his dark, glamour-boy good looks—the result of a family that includes Greek, Hispanic and Sicilian heritage—Harris isn't afraid to get his hands dirty. At Crobar, one of the city's largest nightclubs, he does what it takes to keep things running smoothly, whether it's fixing broken floorboards on Monday mornings or running interference on a jam-packed Saturday night. "When the club's open, I usually wear a jacket and tie," he says. "I'm the boss, and I need to look like it." When he's feeling particularly suave, he'll don his favorite tie ("*the* tie—the Brioni"), a taupe-and-gold tour de force in paisley-printed silk. At 39, Harris is confident in the way he dresses, and despite his job at Crobar, avoids club-culture trends. "I would never wear a trucker hat or sunglasses indoors," he says. "Those things are OK on some people, but I'm not 21." His most recent purchase, a brand-new Ford F150, is the perfect accessory for this well-rounded man: It's black and shiny with a specially ordered carbon interior, and it's utilitarian but still a little flashy—a refreshing anomaly on the city streets.

Vintage jacket by Dolce & Gabbana. Shirt and pinstriped pants both by Gucci at Neiman Marcus. Pocket square by Hermès.