

BLACK TIE



For cruise and Southern wear: white dinner jacket, pointed-end tie, blue trousers, patent leather shoes

SUPPOSE you're invited to a dinner party or other social function and your hostess says, "Black tie, please." That means, as you probably know, that the affair isn't formal enough to call for a tailcoat, or, as some say, "a full-dress evening suit." You are expected to show up wearing a tuxedo, or dinner coat, with a black bow tie and all the proper accessories, including black shoes and socks.

Dinner coats, among the most popular men's garments, were scarce during the war, because manufacturers were forbidden to make them. But there are plenty of them in the stores now, and you'll need one if you get around much. A dinner coat is definitely required for dining and dancing, at the theater, aboard a cruise ship, when sailing for Europe, at bachelor dinners, at stag affairs, fraternity dances, and when the woman you're escorting wears a dinner dress. In general, a long dress on a lady means a dinner coat on her escort. But it is never worn on Sunday night. Never! Nobody knows why.



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He's "correct"—peaked-lapel, single-breasted dinner jacket, black ribbed waistcoat, white dress shirt, black butterfly bow tie, dark red carnation and white handkerchief

It used to be that all dinner jackets were black; those worn in the city, that is, for white jackets are properly for resort wear only. But midnight blue is fast replacing the black outfit, and the double-breasted jacket is becoming more popular than the single-breasted. A waistcoat—vest to you, maybe—is not worn with a double-breasted jacket, but a cummerbund—a pleated, sashlike affair which is wrapped around the waist—is okay. Don't wear a white waistcoat. Outdated.

Nearly all evening dress shirts for wear with a dinner jacket now come with attached collars, and a soft or pleated bosom in ribbed or waffle piqué. For buttons wear colored stones: precious jewelry is proper only with full dress. The black tie should match the facing of the dinner jacket, of satin or ribbed grosgrain. Available tie models include the pointed-end, the square-end and a small butterfly shape, which is the most fashionable. On your head wear a black Homburg or a collapsible opera hat, but not a derby. Too informal.

Once you're dressed in your dinner coat there are a few finishing touches that might add a well-groomed look. Put a dark red carnation in your buttonhole. Let a half inch of white collar show at back of your neck which, of course, should be clean. Let an inch or two of white shirt cuff extend beyond the sleeves of your jacket. Display a white linen handkerchief with rolled edge. But don't let your monogram show. That's bad. ★★★



Collier's

November 29, 1947

p. 82

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