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# Esquire

# The Big Black Book

*SPRING  
SUMMER  
2013*

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CLOTHES  
SHOES  
WATCHES  
VACATIONS  
COCKTAILS  
AND  
ALL-PURPOSE  
ESSENTIALS

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ALL-NEW  
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KNOW-HOW,  
AND DAMN  
GOOD ADVICE

*The STYLE MANUAL  
for SUCCESSFUL MEN*

DISPLAY UNTIL JUNE 28, 2013





# The EDITOR'S LETTER



2006: MARCO MACCIONI, RESTAURATEUR.



2013: MASSIMO PIOMBO, CREATIVE DIRECTOR.

IN THE VERY FIRST ISSUE OF ESQUIRE'S BIG BLACK BOOK, way back in the fall of 2006 (wow, that was a different world then, right?), fashion director Nick Sullivan introduced us all to a concept called *sprezzatura*. "The ultimate ambition of elegant male style," we wrote, "is working hard to look as if you don't give it a thought at all." And we followed that with photos of stylish Italian-American men demonstrating some of the finer points of highly individualistic style, such as wearing a sweater under your suit jacket, sporting a bold pocket square, an unexpected flourish on your wrist, distinctive dress shoes, soft, unstructured shoulders on a suit jacket, and a showy shirt cuff.

Every one of those things—which could not have seemed more exotic seven years ago—is now a commonplace of American (and global) style. The Milanese still do the *sprezzatura* thing better than anyone else (see our story about Milan on page 100), but we've all embraced the joy of details, the little touches of individuality that imbue us with confidence. In nearly every city in the United States, both the stuff of *sprezzatura* (garment-dyed jackets, cotton suits, distinctive colors) and the way it's worn (thoughtfully disheveled, artfully mismatched) are on display. I can't help but feel like our Big Black Book had just a little to do with this.

It's liberating but it's also surprising. At the men's shows in Milan earlier this year, I fell into conversation with Guy Trebay of *The New York Times*, who said he'd been musing on the shocking escalation in fashion literacy among men in just the past decade or so. Wendell Brown, our senior fashion editor, joined in, recalling that as a boy he felt like he had to hide his interest in clothes for fear of being mocked. Now—probably ever since the revulsion at the idea of Casual Friday that spawned shows like *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*—young men wear their style IQ on their sleeves. It's a massive generational shift. As a young man, I made a point of knowing no more than one brand—Levi's. Now I know dozens of boys and young men who see dressing well—no, more than that... dressing expressively—as a token of manhood. I took pride in showing that I was above the limitations that putting on a suit and tie represented; it was a sign of seriousness and purpose. Now it's the other way around. Dressing interestingly is a sign that you're serious about your life—that you care enough to stand out.

As ever, this is what The Big Black Book is here for. To make suggestions about the thrilling and frightening number of options that are available to us all and be a guide to wherever this coming summer takes you.

**DAVID GRANGER**

EDITOR IN CHIEF