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## Shopping gets Personal, and Private

By Gena Ng

January 9, 2015 at 11:50 am



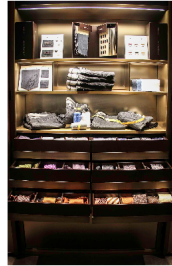
The men who have it all don't carry shopping bags, even if filled with designer labels. That's because they don't go shopping, at least not openly. But make no mistake about it — men do delight in shopping — but in privacy, at exclusive boutiques.

"They don't like going to 20 different stores looking for [clothes] and comparing. They want it to be simple," according to Andy Singh, retail manager of Uomo Group, an Italian luxury menswear house that carries premium couture brands.

The Uomo Group retails prêt-à-porter luxury clothing and accessories. And if something doesn't fit quite right, the shop will happily make alterations for the tailored fit. A big draw to its upscale clientele is its customised, made-to-measure signature su misura service.

Singh notes that increasingly, men are realising the importance of looking good. Given a choice, they prefer personal shopping, which promises undivided attention from the service staff.

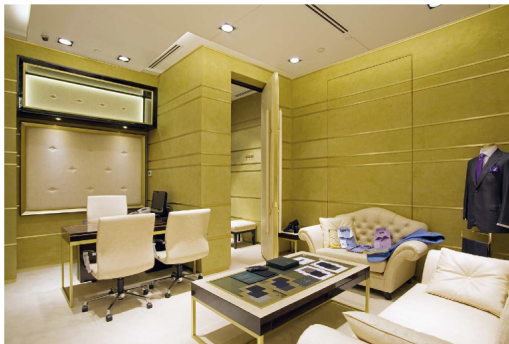
The stretch across the basement level at The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore appears like a sartorial runway dotted with the Uomo Group's swanky for-men-only Italian designer brands, Uomo Collezioni, Brioni, Zilli, Stefano Ricci and Billionaire Couture are just a few that offer masterfully-tailored clothing and accessories that pander to the hearts of gentlemen who love everything bespoke.



A display in Brioni featuring its made-to-order jeans service. (Photo: Siti Nur Mas Lina, Premier)

**Private personal shopping**

The Uomo Group puts luxury into its customers' retail experience. Uomo Collezioni's posh VIP room allows the discerning gentleman to leisurely browse in solitude, and precious time isn't wasted waiting for the next available salesperson. A personal shopping consultant is readily on hand to assist at all times. "We want to make shopping a very comfortable experience for the client," enthuses Singh.



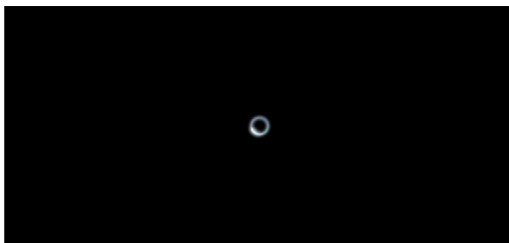
Uomo Collezioni's VIP suite (Photo: Uomo Group)

The VIP room resembles an elaborate walk-in wardrobe, replete with plush seats, a small bar stocked with wine and Champagne, and neat shelves stocked with clothes, bags and fabrics.

The moment a customer steps through the opulent doorway of Uomo Collezioni, he is ushered into the VIP suite. From styling to measurements, he is well taken care of every step of the way. All he has to do is sit back and enjoy a glass of bubbly while his personal shopper puts together a range of ready-to-wear items for his careful consideration. "Sizing is not a problem," adds Singh. "If the client doesn't like the fitting of the ready-to-wear, we can always do made-to-measure for him."

The Uomo Group's motto "the sky is the limit" is embodied in the impeccable details in serving its patrons and growing clientele, who come from all over the world. The hallmark of the Uomo Group's unique personal shopping experience is its ability to bring the boutique to the client if he is too busy to visit any of its boutiques. So when a customer wanted a blouson (blouse jacket) while he was in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the service question was simply answered: "We went there instead," quipped Singh.

There's even a virtual private shopping experience. "If they don't have the time to come to us, because in Singapore a lot of people come for business purposes, we schedule a meeting, we do a Skype call," says Singh. "It's like online shopping."

**Unparalleled su misura**

Su misura is the Italian phrase for made-to-measure or custom-made. The Uomo Group's su misura service is a world of its own.

Uomo Collezioni provides unparalleled su misura services from Italy. All items are handcrafted by master artisans in keeping with Italian tailoring tradition passed down to them through generations, and using the most luxurious fabrics from Europe's best mills.

Brioni encapsulates the quintessence of technical and style. It takes 18 to 22 hours to make one suit, 220 steps (jacket stitches are handsewn) and about 440 hands working on one article alone. A bespoke suit by Brioni is indeed, almost an art form.

Customers can select the fabric for the custom-made suit (the most requested bespoke item at Uomo), cherry-pick the buttons, the type of stitching, finishing with the lining embroidered with a name or initials or more. "We have customers who do their family tree!" exclaims Singh.

Indeed, when it comes to their clients, the Uomo Group always goes the extra mile, and through all the private fittings and discussions, precious relationships are built. "We respect our clients, and we maintain a relationship with them," says Singh, who takes pride in getting to know his customers, down to details such as the size of their clothes and their preferences, which is an important aspect of personal shopping.

"It's more of a friendship. Our clients come here to buy, but they end up being our friends. So we call them "Friends of Uomo," he laughs.


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