



5 key takeaways from Paris Fashion Week Men's

Jonathan Anderson's Dior debut, Julian Klausner's men's debut at Dries Van Noten, Grace Wales Bonner's return and more highlights from Paris Fashion Week Men's.

By Laure Guilbault



From Jonathan Anderson's debut at Dior to the opening of Demna's Balenciaga exhibition attended by both Demna and his successor, Pierpaolo Piccioli, Dries Van Noten's creative director Julian Klausner's debut men's show, Paris Fashion Week Men's heralded fashion's transition into a new era.

Most of the week felt like it was building up to Anderson's debut. "It definitely feels like Dior's week," said *GQ*'s global fashion correspondent Samuel Hine, noting that Jonathan Anderson's Jean-Michel Basquiat teaser image has been plastered all over Paris. "Expectations were super high because Jonathan Anderson is so talented, Dior is so big, and everyone is looking for someone to introduce a big idea that people can follow or react against," Hine added.

It was peak hype, and Anderson exceeded the anticipation, according to Harrods's director of buying, Simon Longland. Jonathan Anderson's father, Willie Anderson, seemed very happy and proud, speaking to *Vogue Business* backstage. "Great start. First step of the 10,000-mile journey," he quipped. (Anderson's women's debut show is slated for October.)

Heatwave dressing

The week before, in Milan, Dolce & Gabbana showed an all-pyjama collection, and the trend continued in Paris. "A lot of designers have tried to embrace a sense of intimacy in the clothes this season, starting with The Row. It was pyjamas and undergarments that you can wear outside," said Hine. "People want to buy things that feel like they really fit into their lives in a really personal way." Saint Laurent's interpretations were breezy, silky shirts that looked incredibly comfortable yet sensual. "It's a lightness that designers are going for because they're trying to figure out how to make clothing that is comfortable and easy and that people want to wear in the heat but that still looks cool," Hine added.

It's a challenge indeed. Fashion week goers themselves tried to crack summer dressing this season, as many show venues didn't have air conditioning (the historic library under the roof of Lycée Henri-IV,





where Wales Bonner chose to stage her show, was particularly warm). Only the thunderstorm that struck just as the Ami Paris show was ending brought some relief from the sweltering heat. At Rick Owens, models were sent to swim in the Palais de Tokyo's fountain in their show clothes. "Owens finally took the dive," wrote my colleague Luke Leitch in his review of the show.

"Eventually it's not a retrospective," Rick Owens's wife Michèle Lamy told *Vogue Business* about the major Palais Galliera exhibition dedicated to Owens's work that opened this week, right after the show. "Usually a retrospective is because you are finished and it's not the case at all, so the show at Palais de Tokyo was the answer [to show the brand is still full of life] and it was nice to go from the show to the museum."

Designing for extreme weather resonated with what buyers are looking for. "Being in the south, we buy with weather and heat at the forefront of our mind," Lauren Amos, owner of Atlanta concept store Antidote, explained. "Especially with a climate becoming hotter and hotter, we gravitate towards gauzy textures, tailoring that sits off the body, and searching as much as possible for breathable fibres as opposed to synthetics." She liked the leather vests (as opposed to leather jackets) at Rick Owens, the double-gauze tailoring in Ann Demeulemeester pre-collection and the open puzzle jacket at Walter Van Beirendonck.

GQ's Hine sums up: "There's one theme that's consistently emerged: a lot of brands are trying to crack this casual formality of summer clothing in the city." He cited the flip-flops at Auralee and pretty much every other show, as well as the dressed-up short shorts at Dries Van Noten.

Hermès's SS26 collection by the house artistic director of men's wear, Véronique Nichanian, was all about summer in the city too: "Breathable clothing, just some lightness, softness, sensuality in the silk, in the prints," she said after the show. What about the monkey print on tote bags? "Just for fun," she replied. "It can't do any harm in this world."

Political statements

The menswear season took place against the backdrop of escalation in the Middle East (the US attack in Iran on 22 June during Milan Fashion Week) and continued raids in the Los Angeles area led by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE).

While most collections didn't really reference what's going on in the world, American designer Willy Chavarria stood out as an exception. His show opened with 35 men in white T-shirts made in partnership with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). "This moment was in reference to Salvadoran prisons where people are being profiled and persecuted with no due process," read the show notes. The collection titled Huron, after the designer's native town in California, was very colourful. "Brights are not just decorative, they're defiant," also read the notes. Victoria Dartigues, fashion buying and merchandising director at La Samaritaine, praised "the dazzling colours on sharp tailoring and bold feminine silhouettes".

Meanwhile, French designer Jeanne Friot, who created her namesake label in 2020 focusing on genderless fashion and LGBTQ+ culture, featured an entirely trans and non-binary cast. Some models wore T-shirts festooned with the words "Trans lives matter".

A strong celebrity scene

French soccer star Kylian Mbappé debuted Jonathan Anderson's first look for Dior on a teaser on social media — a reveal that quickly set the Internet abuzz. He, however, couldn't attend the show. PR guru Lucien Pagès sees more clients wanting to have footballers and athletes on their front row, in the wake of Paris football club Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) winning its first Champions League title a month ago. French footballer Jules Koundé attended the Louis Vuitton, Kenzo and Jacquemus shows. NBA star





Victor Wembanyama and rugby player Antoine Dupont were also at the Louis Vuitton show, alongside Beyoncé and Jay-Z.

Front rows this season featured a better-than-ever mix of big names and up-and-comers. Saint Laurent, which held two consecutive shows, had film directors Jim Jarmusch, Gaspar Noé and Francis Ford Coppola (which brings to mind Saint Laurent's big bet on cinema with Saint Laurent Productions). They sat front row, alongside American actor Hunter Doohan and British actor Finn Bennett. At Dior, Anderson blended longtime brand ambassadors like Rihanna and Robert Pattinson, with new faces like *The White Lotus*'s Sam Nivola and English actress Mia Goth (wearing Dior women's by Anderson, as a teaser) plus a number of Loewe transfers (Luca Guadagnino filming something, Drew Starkey, Josh O'Connor and Daniel Craig), all dressed in Dior's men's SS26.

Grace in Paris

Grace Wales Bonner returned to the Paris show calendar after her big moment at the 2025 Met Gala (she dressed co-chair Lewis Hamilton alongside FKA Twigs, Omar Apollo, Jeff Goldblum and more) "For menswear, Paris is basically the place to be. I am speaking a lot about heritage and tradition so I think Paris is the place where you can have those conversations," she said. For SS26, she sent out "a proposition for dressing that's eclectic, a mix between sports heritage, a casual, preppy language, and more fine tailoring. Also coming from the Met Gala and thinking about the idea of Superfine [referring to the theme of the Costume Institute exhibition Superfine: Tailoring Black Style], I wanted to have some sense of continuity, think about that character, and bring some of that spirit," the British designer said backstage. When asked if there was someone at the Met Gala that was meaningful to dress, she replied: "Lewis [Hamilton] has been so supportive over the years. It was just a really inspiring process working with Lewis, so it's definitely something I took from that experience."

Her namesake brand is 10 years old, and she has a longstanding collaboration with Adidas. Her name has been mentioned several times for creative director jobs in big houses in recent years. Yet in the dozens of debuts in the upcoming womenswear season, there's only one female designer — Louise Trotter at Bottega Veneta. *Vogue Runway*'s Sarah Mower wrote in her review of the Wales Bonner SS26 show: "Exactly why such demonstrably influential — and commercially sharp — women such as Grace Wales Bonner and her elder British counterpart Martine Rose have not yet been hired by a house or a brand is less a mystery than a total disgrace on the industry." She seems to have struck a chord: the comment has been widely re-posted on social media.

"It also highlights a fundamental flaw within the industry," Richard Johnson, chief brand officer at LuxExperience, the umbrella company of Mytheresa and recently acquired Yoox Net-a-Porter, points out. "Designers like Wales Bonner — and other emerging talents — often lack the structural support needed to scale their businesses meaningfully. These young brands shouldn't exist solely as stepping stones or résumé builders for roles within the major houses. They deserve the opportunity to grow into the next generation of household names in their own right."

A shot of optimism

Despite the industry downturn, editors and buyers stressed an overall mood of optimism this week, which translated into a burst of colours. "The prevailing optimism may seem paradoxical in the current situation. It looks like a fashion response to help find positive energy and face challenges," says Pascal Morand, executive president of Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode, the French fashion governing body.

"We saw collections rooted in beauty, certainly, but also grounded in real clothes designed for real lives — pieces to covet, wear, and ultimately keep," said Harrods's Longland.





Michael Sebastian, editor-in-chief of *Esquire*, agrees: “What we saw this week is the embrace of clothes that can be both wearable and interesting, not over the top, not boring, right in between. Designers are finding their sweet spot of clothes that can say something and sell. You saw it in Jonathan Anderson’s debut at Dior and Pharrell Williams’s latest collection for Louis Vuitton, among others. And I am very much here for it.”

“Paris is definitely the strongest fashion week, with a very good balance between mega brands who delivered great shows, and emerging talents or independent brands with high creative voices,” Galeries Lafayette’s menswear offer and buying director Alice Feillard said. “In a global luxury slowdown, brands managed to push forward fashion boundaries, as the fashion industry needs the return of desirability, value for money and restoring customers’ confidence.”

The Jacquemus show held at the Orangery, which sits just below the Château de Versailles, at the tail end of Paris Fashion Week Men’s, felt like a perfect transition into couture, which kicks off on 7 July. After years of showing outside the fashion calendar, Simon Porte Jacquemus now feels strongly about this slot: “A June show is very romantic, outside of Paris, you see the trees and you enter this space, which is very humble,” he commented. “Also, Sunday was the day my grandparents dressed up and wore white. I wanted a minimal collection, very pure.”

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