

KNOTS OF FUN

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ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

Even people who say they believe this foolishness know in their hearts that James Bond, 007, can clean a pistol, change an Aston Martin's tire in a rainstorm - and tie a bow-tie. Not to mention the fact plenty of state troopers wear bow-ties and cowboy hats!

Unlike long ties, bow-ties in stores always seem to run about five years behind the fashion of the day. So, if wider ties are in, only skinny bow-ties can be had. When narrow ties are the rage, only fat bow-ties are available. Worse, some store designers can't resist monkeying with the traditional shape that works best. That's why it's called a bow-tie shape, for heaven's sake.

FULL TEXT

It takes a real man to wear a bow-tie.

Common, any sissy can strap on a long tie or wear no tie at all.

Try walking into a room full of grease monkeys in stained coveralls and asking directions to the foreman's office, or trying to get a recalcitrant big city taxi driver to extinguish his cigar - if you're wearing a nice polka-dot bow-tie, they'll know right off who's boss.

That real men don't wear bow-ties is only the first myth about the most elegant variety of neckwear, spread, one suspects, by timid people not dextrous enough to tie one.

Even people who say they believe this foolishness know in their hearts that James Bond, 007, can clean a pistol, change an Aston Martin's tire in a rainstorm - and tie a bow-tie. Not to mention the fact plenty of state troopers wear bow-ties and cowboy hats!

Here are the other main myths about bow-ties:

Bow-ties are hard to tie.

Nonsense. If you can tie your shoes, you can tie a bow-tie.

Once you have the knack, it's quicker than the windsor, half-windsor, quarter-Nanaimo or any other long tie knot known to man - and you don't need a PhD in engineering to figure it out.

Plus, you never, never have to worry about whether the end should be above or below your belt.

Men who wear bow-ties lack confidence.

This is a species of Myth No. 1, likewise bunk. Look, isn't a man in a bow-tie saying, "I can get my soup to my mouth without spilling"?

Ask yourself, what could be more confident? (Answer: a man in a bow-tie with a moustache.)

Women don't find men in bow-ties attractive.

This one is hardly worthy of contempt, let alone a response. Consider only this: Nine out of 10 men get married in a bow-tie. Nuff said.

Wearing a bow-tie makes you look like a waiter.

OK, it can. So what? Waiting tables is an honorable profession.

You must never wear a clip-on.

This one is spread by people who recognize that it is axiomatic that men in bow-ties are Real Men, but can't tie

one.

It's not strictly true: you can honorably wear a clip-on bow-tie if you're a policeman on duty, are under seven years of age or are missing three or more fingers.

Men in bow-ties are stuffy conservatives or eccentrics.

This is the sort of thing merchants write in advertisements trying to persuade stuffed shirts and kooks to buy their bow-ties. Try telling this to Sylvester Stalone (yes, Rambo's been spotted in a bow-tie) or a boxing referee.

Good bow-ties are hard to find.

Alas, this is no myth. Even the best sorts of men's wear stores generally have but a pathetic collection of bow-ties. Unlike long ties, bow-ties in stores always seem to run about five years behind the fashion of the day. So, if wider ties are in, only skinny bow-ties can be had. When narrow ties are the rage, only fat bow-ties are available. Worse, some store designers can't resist monkeying with the traditional shape that works best. That's why it's called a bow-tie shape, for heaven's sake.

But take comfort. Several U.S. mail-order merchants have excellent collections of top-quality, properly shaped bow-ties at reasonable prices.

Indeed, as he writes, your correspondent is wearing a handsome Lands End tie from Wisconsin that, after duty and postage, cost half what a comparable tie would have fetched retail in Canada.

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