

Wool suit, approx. \$3750, wool waistcoat, approx. \$1250, cotton shirt, approx. \$600, wool tie, approx. \$300, and leather shoes, approx. \$810, all by **Giorgio Armani**.

MEN
OF THE
YEAR

MAN OF STYLE

DARREN McMULLEN

HE'S THE SCOT WHO NEVER LOST THE ACCENT. A FORMERLY LOOSE MTV VJ, HE HAS MATURED, STAMPING A NEW SENSE OF STYLE (AND HONESTY) ONTO AUSTRALIA'S SMALL SCREEN.

WORDS HAYDEN NORRIS PHOTOGRAPHY JOHAN SANDBERG STYLIST BRUCE PASK

Tabloids may suggest otherwise, but Darren McMullen is not your typical, jetsetting, playboy TV host. Sure, you see him remain cool in front of an audience of millions. Yeah, you hear about him officially/unofficially dating some of the country's most beautiful women (though he's single now). You might even read about the house he bought in the south of France.

But soon you learn that purchase wasn't for Berlusconi "bunga bunga" parties, but for his parents – fulfilling their retirement dream. Soon, you also realise he's a hopeless romantic whose favourite film is *Moulin Rouge!*.

Wait – what?

"Really," he says, deep into a second bottle of wine at a buzzy haunt in London's Soho.

"And life's good," adds the 31-year-old. "I'm really happy."

If you caught the last season of *The Voice*, McMullen is the man you'll have noticed. Among the reality TV caricatures and preordained production drama, he was the welcome supply of dapper fresh air – stoic, competent and cool, the Scotsman acting as the perfect counterweight to the theatrics and network gloss.

"The job of host for *The Voice* is like a traffic conductor," he says. "I see it as an acting gig."

He certainly dressed as sharply as any Hollywood star – all smart suiting and strand-perfect hair. Live Australian television has definitely come a long way, sartorially, since Red Symons.

Lunch slowly vanishes. Evening traffic starts picking up around the bar. This is the kind of joint – well, London the kind of city – where eyes ought to wander. Here, the girls sipping tea and cocktails are long-legged, bright-eyed and the right kind of demure. But McMullen is professional.

"I'm so focused on the future, the future, the future that sometimes I forget to enjoy the now," he says. "I have to pinch myself and



say, 'What the fuck man, if you could have pictured yourself doing what you do now, 10 years ago, would you be happy?'"

On this long Sunday, the answer is a given. McMullen is on the path to incredible highs. Case in point – a National Geographic show-in-the-works has him gallivanting across Europe, exploring niche cultures.

"I want more, I want more," he barks. "I have to remind myself to enjoy now."

As I move to leave the bar, a stunning, tall brunette enters. She parts the room like a one-woman cavalcade, smiles – a big, suggestive smile, makes a beeline for our table, and sits.

McMullen, in pitch-perfect French, greets her: "*Ab, salut Marie.*" Typical.

7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DARREN MCMULLEN

HE MORE THAN PAID HIS DUES.

"I've done every job under the sun – janitor in a school, valet parker. I've cleaned public toilets, worked on a front desk at a hotel."

HE APPRECIATES FASHION.

"I fucking love Tom Ford. That guy knows how to cut a suit. Impeccable. His sunglasses are great, his scents are great, his suits – great. And *he* looks great. I love the fact he puts himself in his own ads – brilliant."

...BUT HIS STYLE IS FLEXIBLE.

"I'm not a brand merchant. I like chopping and changing. A stylist of mine at MTV taught me that any brand can make good clothes, it's how you wear 'em. The man maketh the clothes."

HE WAS DAYS AWAY FROM STARRING IN ONE OF THE WORLD'S BEST COMEDIES.

"It was the last season of the US edition of *The Office*. I didn't have to

audition – I was in. I had to pull out because of another contract I signed days earlier."

HIS NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SHOW WILL BE "INCREDIBLE".

"In the past two weeks alone, I've lived with people who believe they time travel every week; with people who think we were created by aliens and they're coming back; I've lived with bible bashers who believe homosexuals are going to hell as well as Vikings, vampires, people trapped in '50s America and a 78-year-old prostitute."

HE LIKES TO TELL THE TIME.

"I'm a big watch fan. A fanatic. This is my new IWC pilot. I flipped the band out – I've got different colours depending on my outfit."

HE WILL DEFEND *THE VOICE* COLLEAGUE JOEL MADDEN IN REGARDS TO *THAT DRUG BUST*.

"He's one of the loveliest men I've met. I was like, 'Are you fucking kidding me?' Fuck them, it's a joint. Bill Clinton smoked marijuana – why can't a rock 'n' roll star?" ■



Left: Wool coat, POA, cotton shirt, \$1315, wool tie, \$325, and wool trousers, \$1895, all by **Ermenegildo Zegna**; leather loafers, \$9325, by **Hermès**. This page: Silver lambskin coat, \$22,825, nickel cotton tank top, \$890, and grey-blue silk/cashmere scarf, \$795, all by **Hermès**; necklace (worn throughout), stylist's own.



**"I FUCKING LOVE
TOM FORD. THAT
GUY KNOWS HOW
TO CUT A SUIT.
IMPECCABLE.
I LOVE THE FACT
HE PUTS HIMSELF
IN HIS OWN ADS."**

This page: Grey wool jacket, \$899, white silk polo, \$129, black wool trousers, \$349, and cream/teal silk handkerchief, \$27.95, all by **Hardy Amies** from a selection at **David Jones**; black leather sandals, \$845, by **Hermès**; Silver stainless steel 'De Ville Prestige Power Reserve' watch, \$5625, by **Omega**. Right: Chino jacket, \$1990, silk shirt, \$990, mohair trousers, \$830, and leather shoes, \$1210, all by **Prada**; stainless steel De Ville watch, \$7175, by **Omega**. Grooming: **Lee Machin** at **Caren, London**.

