

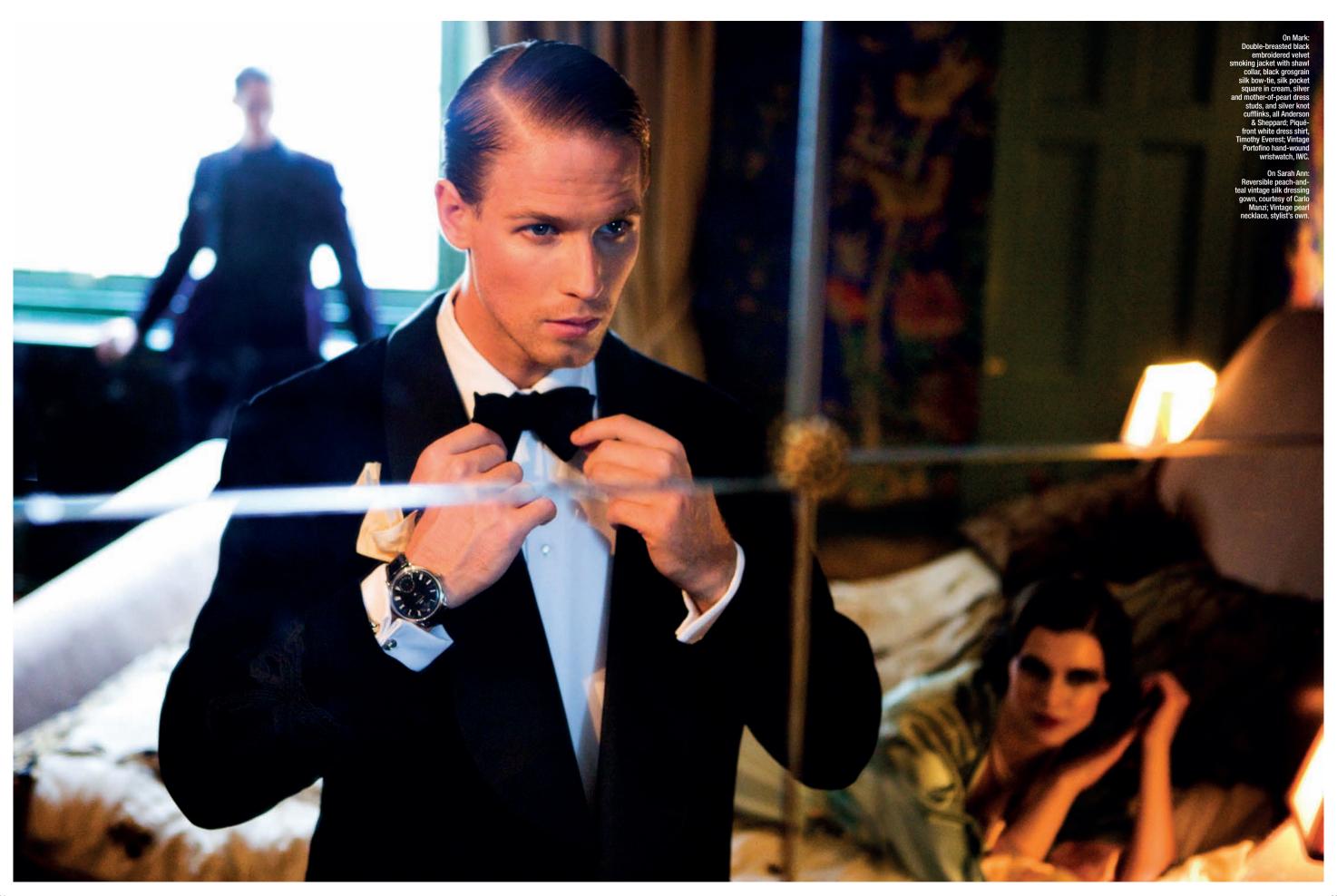
The Bentley Boys' ethos is embodied in their unofficial leader, Woolf 'Babe' Barnato. He inherited a South African diamond mining fortune at the age of two, and was an officer in the Royal Field Artillery in World War I and, later, a first-class cricketer for Surrey, before agreeing to finance Bentley's business. After assuming chairmanship in 1925, he went on to become a legendary racer, scoring a hat trick of Le Mans wins and wagering £100 that his Bentley Speed Six coupe would get back to London from Cannes before the much-lauded *Le Train Bleu* made its journey from the Riviera to the Channel (and indeed, he parked outside the Conservative Club in St. James four minutes before the sleek loco pulled into Calais). Barnato first synthesised Dubonnet and calvados into a concoction that is today still known as the fearsome Bentley Cocktail, and Ardenrun, his house in Surrey that many thought trumped the Savoy Hotel in décor splendour, was the scene of hearty bacchanals that outdid Le Mans in duration and derring-do. On one occasion, Brooklands-style racing pits were constructed along the quarter-mile gravel drive, and guests in powerful cars, accessorised with the requisite decorative flappers, tore into the "pits" for champagne served by waiters clad in linen helmets and goggles. Barnato himself could drink two bottles of champagne with no visible effect.

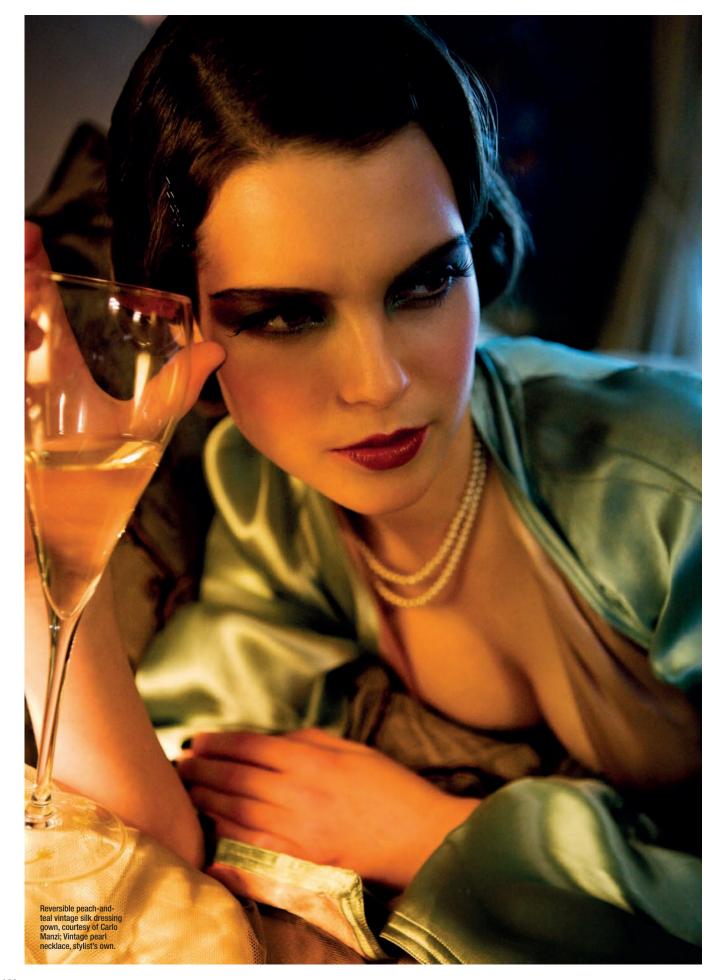
won death-defying motor races. Of at least several of them, this was not such an inaccurate picture."

As for Barnato's retinue — those roisterers that the romance novelist Dame Barbara Cartland would recall, decades later, as "great drivers and even better dancers" — there was Sir Henry 'Tim' Birkin, the beneficiary of a lace manufacturing fortune and the playboy of the pack, "the greatest British driver of his day and equally furious off the track, with his abundance and wide variety of girlfriends," according to W. O. Bentley; Glen Kidston, a handsome, impeccably turned-out former submarine captain "who seemed drawn to hair-raising escapades of every possible kind — naval, sporting and social"; and Dr J. Dudley 'Benja' Benjafield, a leading bacteriologist who was known to the team as 'The Bald Chemist'. In fact, there were at least 12 core Bentley Boys, but the scene gravitated around Grosvenor and Berkeley Squares in Mayfair. Barnato, Birkin and Kidston took adjacent flats in the south-east corner of Grosvenor Square (some cabbies still refer to this spot as "Bentley Corner"), while Benjafield's old residence at No. 28 Berkeley Square is now the louche club Morton's; Bentley Boy photos and memorabilia, including a Terence Cuneo painting depicting Barnato's duel with Le Train Bleu, adorn the walls. Former Bentley Boy Jack Barclay opened a Bentley showroom that still bears his name on Berkeley Square's east side. And if you listen closely on a still, sultry night, you might hear the ghostly roar of Barnato & Co.'s Blower Bentleys vying to beat their unofficial lap records around both Squares — an echo of those far-off, more innocent, and infinitely more dashing days. №

by stuart husband

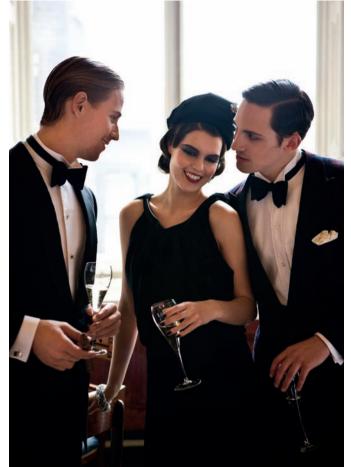








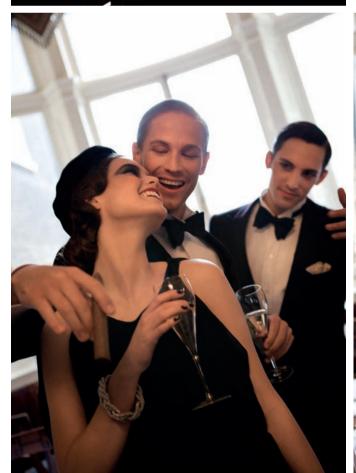




On Mark:
Wool and silk blend
barathea three-piece
dinner suit with shawl
collar, and black grosgrain
silk braces with leather
tabs, both Timothy
Everest; Dress shirt with
detachable wing collar,
and black grosgrain silk
bow-tie, both Anderson &
Sheppard; Platinum and
white diamond crease
dress studs, and platinum
and white diamond crease
cufflinks, both Guy & Max.

On Sarah Ann:
Silk sleeveless long dress,
Alberta Ferretti; Felted
wool vintage hat, circa
1930, courtesy of Carlo
Manzi; Crystal and silver
vintage brooch worn
on hat, and silver plait
bracelet, stylist's own.

On Sebastian:
Virgin wool peak-lapel
tartan dinner jacket and
matching horseshoefront waistcoat, midnight
blue wool and silk blend
barathea dress trousers,
and waffle-weave dress
shirt with wing collar, and
black grosgrain silk bowtie, all Timothy Everest; Silk
pocket square in cream,
Anderson & Sheppard.





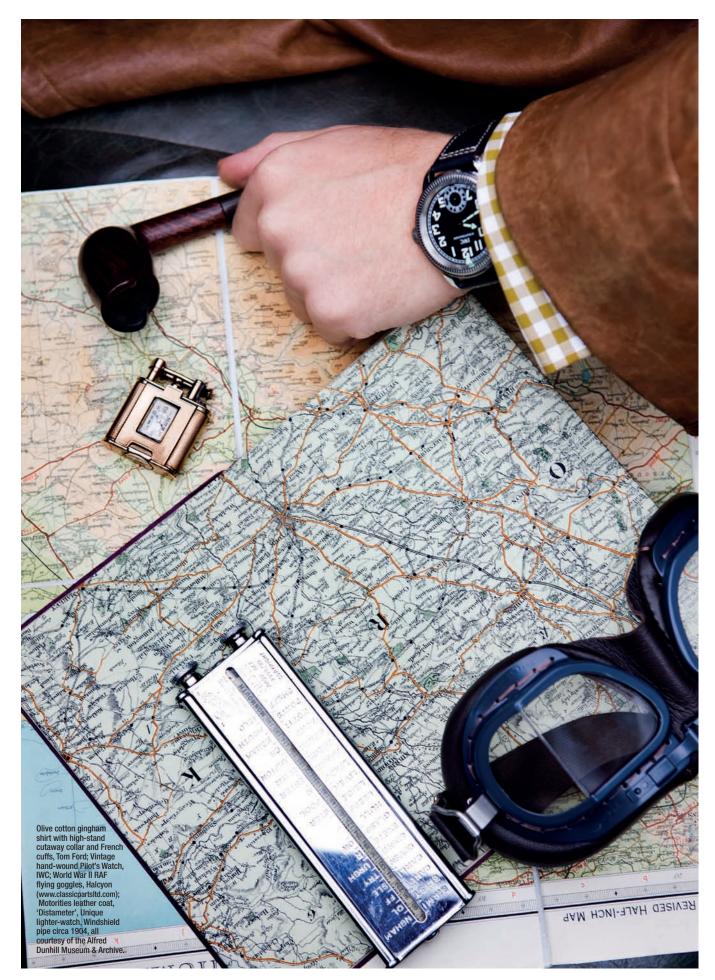




On Sebastian:
Double-breasted charcoal
chalk-striped wool flannel
suit, and silk pocket square
in cream, both Anderson &
Sheppard; Light raspberry
bi-coloured Prince of Wales
shirt with high-stand collar
and French cuffs, Tom
Ford; Chartreuse geometric
Duke of Windsor tie and
silver dome cufflinks,
both Timothy Everest;
Raspberry driving gloves
with navy details, Dunhill.

On Sarah Ann: Beige rabbit fur and leather helmet, MaxMara; Vintage fox fur shawl, stylist's own.

On Mark:
Double-breasted orange
silk linen hopsack peaklapel jacket, and rose silk
canvas sport trousers,
both Tom Ford; White
Mayfair shirt with double
cuffs, Timothy Everest;
White deerskin leather
dress gloves, Anderson
& Sheppard; Silk pocket
square with yellow
geometric design worn as
a neckerchief, Dunhill.





Single-breasted light brown worsted wool three-button blazer with elbow patches, Polo Ralph Lauren; Olive cotton gingham shirt with high-stand cutaway collar and French cuffs, silk canvas trousers in cream (part of a single-breasted peak-lapel two-piece suit), and silk pocket square with abstract ebony and yellow polka-dot design, all Tom Ford; Brown and gold silk Duke of Windsor tie, Timothy Everest; Antique aviator goggles with brown leather trim and hand-made brown leather gauntlets, both Halcyon (www.classicpartsltd.com).



On Mark:
Motorities double-breasted full-length leather coat, circa early 1900s, courtesy of the Alfred Dunhill Museum & Archive;
Olive cotton gingham shirt with high-stand cutaway collar and French cuffs, Tom Ford; Antique aviator goggles with brown leather trim and hand-made brown leather helmet, both Halcyon (www.classicpartsitd.com).

On Sarah Ann:
Men's camel cotton
Ivintage boiler suit,
courtesy of Carlo Manzi;
Mark 49 tan leather
goggles and hand-made
white leather helmet worn
backwards, both Halcyon
(www.classicpartsitd.com);
Leather and knit backed
gloves, property of Fiskens.





